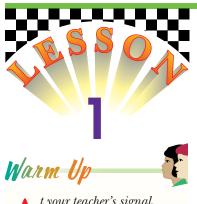


elcome to theatre—one of the most exciting classes you will ever take. Why is theatre so exciting? Because it's entertaining, obviously, but also because it is based on human experience. In a sense, theatre is a class about life. As Roy Scheider, the actor, once said, "Theatre doesn't exist because it's entertainment. It exists because it's a part of the energy of living, of humankind."

In some ways you might think of this class as preparation for living your life to the fullest. This class will provide opportunities for you to get to know yourself, to involve yourself with others, to take safe risks, and to actively participate in activities and projects—all of which will help you respond to the world around you with increased energy and sensitivity. You should begin this class with the eager anticipation of an explorer about to embark on a new adventure.



A tyour teacher's signal, introduce yourself to the students seated around you. Even if you already know each other, go through the introduction process to encourage participation. Speak your name clearly, and listen carefully when others tell you their names.

# **Getting to Know You**

#### **LESSON OBJECTIVES**

- Meet the other members of the class.
- Develop a feeling of acceptance.
- Communicate with people your own age.

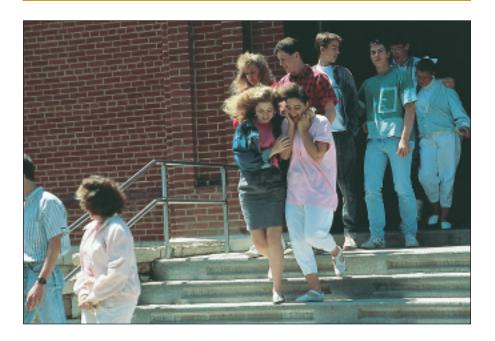
Seeing old friends and making new friends are important parts of the education process. Today you probably arrived at school hoping that some of your friends would be here waiting for you. That's a feeling that everyone knows; everyone likes to connect with someone familiar. For that very reason, one of the first things you will do in this class is become better acquainted with your classmates.

Getting to know the people you will be working with can help you feel *included*. Psychologists tell us that feeling included is one of our most important social needs. We need this sense of belonging in order to work, play, and contribute effectively to society.

In theatre, special "getting-to-know-you" activities help students and teachers learn each other's names and get to know each other in an enjoyable way. These activities will help your class learn to work as a group and will also help you respond to your teacher as the leader. These activities also help you learn to listen and pay attention. These two skills are important both in theatre and everyday life.

In our society, our names are an important part of our identities. One of the nicest sounds in the world is to hear someone call us by name in a pleasant way. It is meaningful to each of us that we be called by name rather than referred to as "her," "him," "the red-haired girl," or "that tall boy." Think of how good it makes you feel when someone you hardly know calls you by your given name. This courtesy is especially important in theatre class, since you and your classmates will be working together throughout the course.

Your theatre experiences will help you and your classmates learn to work together as a group and respond to each other in positive ways.





In this lesson, you will learn the names of your classmates through fun, non-threatening games. Complete one or more of the following activities.

Circle of Friends. This is a game about meeting people. Make two circles, an outer circle and an inner circle, with participants facing each other. When your teacher gives you the signal or begins to play music, the inner circle will move with small steps to the right, and the outer circle will move to the left.

When the music stops or when the teacher calls "Make a friend," stop moving and introduce yourself to the person you are facing. Use the name you wish to be called. For example, if your name is Mary Ann Jones and you wish to be called Ann, introduce yourself as Ann.

Continue for several rounds. Try to connect each person's name with his or her face. After the game, decide how many new names you have learned.

- 2. A-to-Z Name Game. This game helps you recognize the names of others by putting them in alphabetical order. At your teacher's signal, arrange yourselves in a circle or line from A to Z, using first names or the names you want to be called. Students having the same first names can use second names or birth dates to determine their rank order. When your teacher asks for a roll call, step forward and call out your name in a clear voice. Listen carefully to the names of all the other students.
- 3. Right/Left. The purpose of this game is to think quickly and correctly call out the name of the person to your right or left. Begin this game by standing in a circle. The game is easier if you are still in first-name alphabetical order.



The leader stands in the center of the circle and points to someone, calling "right 1 2 3 4 5" or "left 1 2 3 4 5." Before the count is completed, the person to whom the leader is pointing must correctly call out the name of the person specified. The first person who hesitates to call out a name, forgets a name, or calls out the wrong name automatically becomes the next leader.

If, after several calls, the leader hasn't been replaced, the teacher can call "Switch places," and everyone, including the leader, must find a different place in the circle. The person who is left out of the circle becomes the new leader.



# **An Introduction to Theatre**

#### **LESSON OBJECTIVES**

- Recognize a scene written in script format.
- Understand the player-audience relationship.
- Recognize the contribution of theatre to your life.





Form a group of all your classmates born in the same season as you—spring, summer, winter, or fall. Discuss with your group what theatre means to each of you. Write your ideas on a large sheet of paper to share with the class. After all your ideas are shared, discuss the opinions.

#### drama

a story written to be played out on the stage.

### theatre arts

the term used to cover all parts of training or instruction in the field of theatre.

# script

a written copy of the dialogue that the actors will speak. **D** rama, the dramatic tradition which began with primitive people nearly three thousand years ago, comes from a Greek word meaning "to act" or "to do." We usually think of drama as a story written to be played out on the stage. **Theatre arts** is the term used to cover all parts of training or instruction in the field. This lesson is designed to help you understand what drama is, how it has changed through the ages, and how the study of theatre arts relates to your life.

The format of this lesson is unique because it is written as a **script**, a written copy of the conversation between **characters**. Characters are the personalities actors portray in a scene or a play, which are different from their own personalities. Like all scripts, this play is meant to be presented by **actors**, performers who play the roles or take the parts of specific characters, and who project the characters to the audience. Such presentation is called **acting**.

The way plays are written is a special style of writing called dramatic structure. This style is different from the way a short story, novel, or poem is written. In a play, the talk, or conversation between two or more characters is called dialogue. Dialogue is not set in quotation marks. Instead, the character's name appears before the spoken part. Plays are made up entirely of dialogue and stage directions, additional information provided by the playwright or author. Stage directions help the actors know how to feel or what to do when certain lines are spoken. Such directions are usually printed in italics and set apart from the dialogue by parentheses. You'll learn more about the structure of plays in Chapter 8.

#### character

the personality an actor portrays in a scene or play that is different from his or her own personality.

# actors

males or females playing character roles.

# acting

an actor's assumed behavior for the purpose of projecting a character to an audience.

# play

story in dialogue form to be acted out by actors before a live audience.

# dramatic structure

the special literary style in which plays are written.

# dialogue

the conversation between actors on the stage.

#### playwright

one who writes plays.

Participate. You will probably be nervous at first—almost everyone is—but you will soon be as eager as these students to perform for your classmates.

# The Wonderful World of Theatre

# Mrs. Logan's Theatre Class

# **Characters**

Mrs. Logan . . the teacher

Matt . . . . . . a football player taking the class because of his girl-

friend, Sydney.

**Sydney**..... a good student; wants her boyfriend, Matt, to enjoy

**Vanessa** . . . . a new student who hopes to find friends in theatre class.

José . . . . . . . an extremely intelligent student who enjoys studying

history.

**Thomas** . . . . someone who thinks about food and fun all the time.

**Holly** . . . . . . a good-natured person, but not a good student.

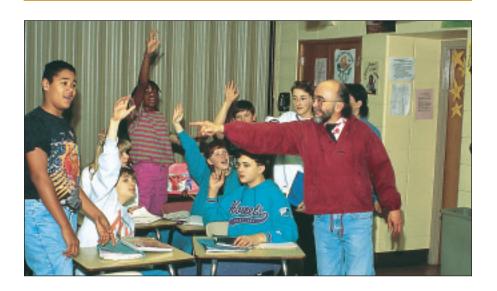
**Rosa** . . . . . . someone who enjoys attending plays with her family. **Kristen** . . . . . an insecure classmate with serious family problems. **Katie** . . . . . . a student who loves to perform and wants to be a

ballerina.

**Lo** . . . . . . . Matt's best friend, a good-natured tease.

**Scene:** A theatre arts classroom in any school. As the play begins, class has just begun. The students are seated and are talking quietly to each other as the teacher finishes checking roll.

**Mrs. Logan:** (After putting away the roll, moves to the front of the classroom.) Welcome to the wonderful world of theatre! (She smiles, and there is excitement in her voice.) This class is going to be fun as we explore theatre together. Theatre requires active participation. Each one of you will have many opportunities to perform, observe, organize, create, and evaluate. You may not be aware of this, but your background in theatre began long before today. Think back on some of your past experiences. When you were little children, did any of you ever like to pretend? (Students respond by nodding their heads and smiling.) What were some of the things you pretended? (Class responds simultaneously with different answers—superhero, cop, doctor, fireman, nurse, etc.)



Everyone likes to pretend. When we're young, it's called *dramatic* play. When we're older, it's called *acting*!





Sydney: (Laughing as she speaks.) I was always a popular movie star.

**Lo:** Every Monday, I always pretended I was sick, so I wouldn't have to go to school. (*Class laughs.*)

**Mrs. Logan:** Most children just naturally pretend as they play. Pretending, or acting out, is an important part of growing up. Through these play experiences, young children learn to use dialogue, act out different characters, and create and solve problems. Acting out, or pretending, is considered dramatic play. (Students nod and respond.) Have any of you ever been in a play?

**Rosa:** I love being in plays. My first starring role was as Cinderella when I was in the fourth grade. That was the year I tripped over a pumpkin.

**Thomas:** (*Reacting with humor.*) Oh, I remember that! Because I was the pumpkin!

**Lo:** (*Boasting.*) When I was about seven, I played a dairy product in a play about food groups.

Matt: Wow! Big deal! Did you "butter up" the teacher to get the part? (Class makes faces at the pun.) I bet you really "milked" that part for all it was worth. (Group responds with such comments as Ugh! Great! Way to go, Matt! Real funny!)

Holly: Ugh, Matt! That was bad!

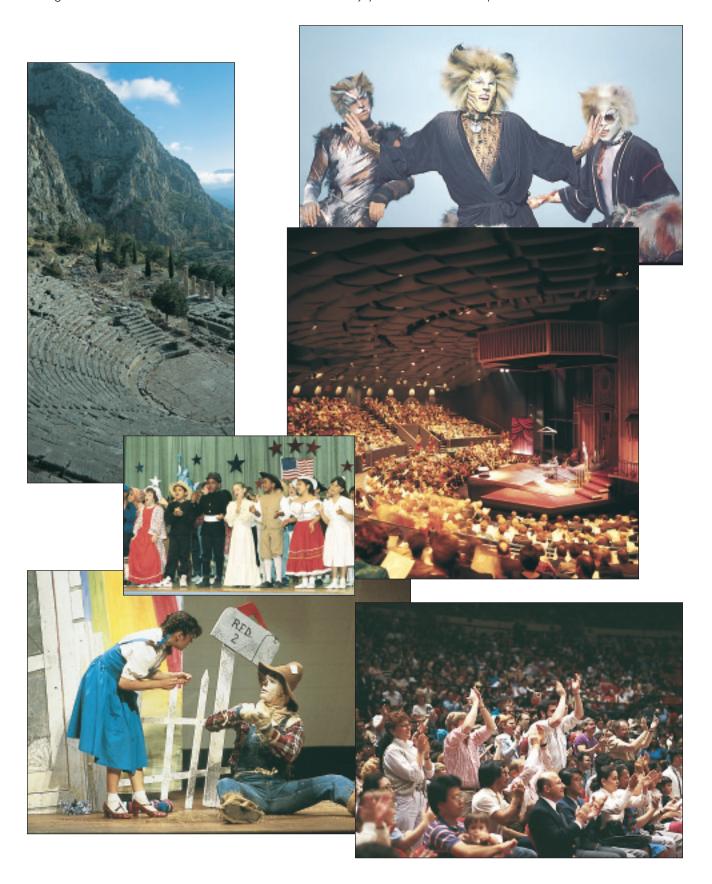
**Thomas:** (*Rubbing his stomach.*) Speaking of milk, I'm hungry! (*Class groans.*)

**Mrs. Logan:** Has anyone else been in a play?

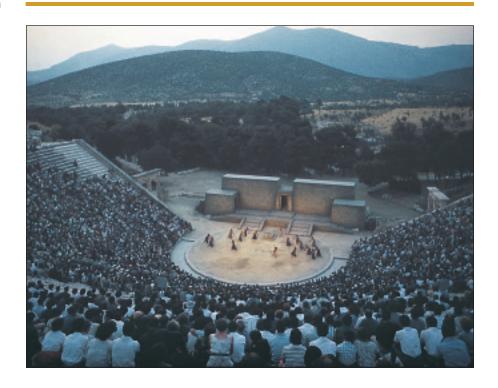
**Katie:** Last year, I was a dancer in *Oklahoma!* at the community theatre. We had a full house at every performance. It was great!

**Kristen:** In kindergarten, I was a partridge in our Christmas play. I was so nervous, I ran off the stage to my mom. She was so embarrassed that she never let me be in a play again. (*Class laughs*.)

Over the past 2000 years, the theatres, the costumes, and even the audiences have changed a great deal. What has not changed is the human need to act out life's situations and to enjoy and learn from those performances.



Imagine what it would be like to perform in an ancient outdoor theatre like this one. What special skills would you need?



**Mrs. Logan:** (Smiling at the class.) Well, I can certainly see that many of you have had stage experience. But perhaps some of you have never been in a play before. (Several students begin to nod their heads.)

**Matt:** (*Leaning over to* Sydney.) I can't believe you talked me into taking this class! All she's talking about is being in a play. I'd rather be in some other class. I think I better go get my schedule changed before they close out all the other classes.

**Sydney:** (Whispering.) Shhh! Be quiet, that's not all it's about. Just wait, you'll see. Besides, you promised that if I would go to your ballgames, you'd be in this class. (Matt slumps down in his chair disgusted.)

**Mrs. Logan:** (Looking at Matt and smiling.) I can see that some of you are a little worried about what we're going to be doing. I promise I'll talk about that soon. (Class settles down to listen.) But first I'd like you to answer a question! Just what is theatre? Does anyone know?

Vanessa: A place to see plays.

**Rosa:** (Excited.) Live performances like the ones my family and I have seen on Broadway.

Kristen: Entertainment.

**Lo:** This class! (Everybody laughs.)

**Mrs. Logan:** You're all right! Today, *theatre* has many different meanings. In this class, theatre refers to the writing or performing of plays, to the buildings where those plays are performed, and to your activities and experiences in this class.

**Thomas:** (*Raises hand proudly.*) Wait! I know something else that theatre is! It's a place to watch movies and eat popcorn!

**Mrs. Logan:** That's true, Thomas. Both movies and television are forms of entertainment featuring actors in a **filmed** or photographed presentation. We will discuss some of the ways in which

# filmed

preserved as a moving photograph.

# theatre

the writing or performing of plays, as well as the formal study of the art form. Also, a building in which plays are performed.

movies, television, and live performances are alike as well as different. But for now, let's think back to the beginning of theatre. When do you think theatre first began? (Students shrug their shoulders and give each other puzzled looks.) Suppose I gave you the assignment to look up the word *theatre* in your dictionary.

Matt: (Leaning over to Sydney and whispering loudly.) Thanks a lot, Sydney! You didn't say anything about homework! (Mutters to himself while Sydney ignores him and continues to listen to Mrs. Logan.) Now I know I'm changing classes! (Slouches down low in his chair.)

**Mrs. Logan:** (*Continuing.*) You would find that the word **theatre** comes from the ancient Greek word theatron, meaning "a place for seeing." But we think that theatre actually began long before the Greeks gave it a name. (Looking directly at Matt.) Matt, when you and your friends get together, how do you tell your friends what happened in a football game?

Matt: (Sits up and speaks hesitantly.) Well, most of the time I just say, "Hey, man, guess what happened to me?" and then I tell it.

Mrs. Logan: (Dramatically.) Well, what if you saw someone make a great catch in a football game on television and you wanted to share it with the team at practice? What would you do?

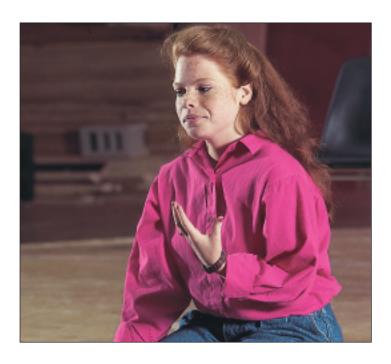
Matt: (Beginning to get interested.) I'd probably grab a ball and show everyone. (He demonstrates catching the ball, then acts out passing to Lo, who catches it. The class laughs.)

**Mrs. Logan:** You know, Matt, you are exactly right. People have always shown, or "acted out," things they thought were important. Historians think that even primitive people may have acted out certain events.

Holly: (Looking puzzled.) You mean the caveman did Shakespeare?

Mrs. Logan: No, Holly, the first theatre wasn't exactly the way you and I think of it. Primitive people told about things that happened to them. One of them might have discovered, just as Matt has, that

We're all actors every day. Think about the ways you use gestures and facial expressions to communicate with your friends.



# OUR THEATRE HERITAGE

Historical and Cultural Perspectives



# The Beginning of Theatre



lthough every culture on earth celebrates some **\**form of performance, no one really knows for sure where or how theatre began. Most experts believe that today's theatre began with the myths and rituals of ancient people. Artifacts (hand-made objects such as tools and ornaments) from the Ice Ages have shown that humans may have been performing

rituals of various types as many as 30,000 years ago. From 10,000 to 30,000 years ago, tribes of humans also left records of what seem to be rituals in the wall paintings found in caves in Africa, France, and Spain. All drawings of people performing ritual ceremonies seem to involve man's need to hunt for food.

Anthropologists lieve that early in human history, societies became aware of forces seemed to influence their climate and food supply. With little or no scientific

knowledge, these early people believed that good and bad occurrences were due to magical, unexplainable, supernatural forces. To ensure their wellbeing, societies tried to find ways to win the favor of these unknown forces. In their ignorance of how nature works, an ancient society might have perceived a connection between some of their activities, such as dancing or chanting, and the desired results in nature. The society would then begin to repeat and refine those actions. Over time, these actions would become formal, fixed rituals or ceremonies enacted for the sole purpose of ensuring the tribe's safety and prosperity.

These early rituals have several elements in common with theatre. For example, certain movements in the rituals were performed by a person, possibly a shaman (priest), who wore symbolic clothing and used symbolic items. These priests are in some ways like actors who perform scripted movements while wearing costumes designed specifically for their characters.

Rituals were performed in a space set apart from the other tribal members so that the actions performed by the priest or shaman could be watched by

> members of the tribe. It is easy to see how this spatial arrangement might reflect the stage area and the audience area found in theatres today.

> Still another similarity between ancient rituals and today's theatre is based on the fact that ancient rituals had a set order of events. Participants in ancient rituals probably repeated certain actions many times in a predetermined order to win the favor of the supernatural spirit they were trying to please. This ritual order is roughly equal



Prehistoric cave paintings, such as this one in Altamira, Spain, provide evidence about the nature of early rituals and dances, which many experts believe were the beginnings of theatre.

to the plot of events found in modern plays.

Other theatre historians believe that what we call theatre today grew out of early dances humans may have developed after observing animals in their environments. Still others believe that theatre grew out of storytelling. If hunters returned to their tribes with exciting stories to tell about their day of work, they may have demonstrated some of their adventures to those who were not along to see the excitement for themselves.

We may never know exactly how or why theatre as an art form was invented. However, similarities between ancient myths, rituals, dance, and storytelling, and the structure of theatrical performance today, seem to indicate a close connection. They may have been the beginning of today's theatrical performance.

# ritual

repeated action that becomes a custom or ceremony.

stories really come alive when they are acted out. We also think that primitive people believed that acting out something would make it happen. Their actions were repeated over and over until a pattern, or **ritual**, developed.

**Matt:** (*Now very interested.*) What did they use for a stage?

Mrs. Logan: That's a good question, Matt. What do some of you think? **José:** Didn't they act out and dance around the campfire?

Mrs. Logan: Very good, José. So the campfire would be considered the first stage, and the first audience would have been the other tribe members. What do you suppose were some of the things they acted out?

Vanessa: How about trying to survive a big storm without any shelter or friends? (Whispers.) Like me.

**Holly:** Maybe struggling with a big animal, like a bear.

Rosa: What about things they considered sacred? Did they have some sort of religious customs?

**Thomas:** Maybe they acted out how hungry they were. I know that's what I'd act out. (Class groans, some rolling their eyes, as they look at Thomas.)

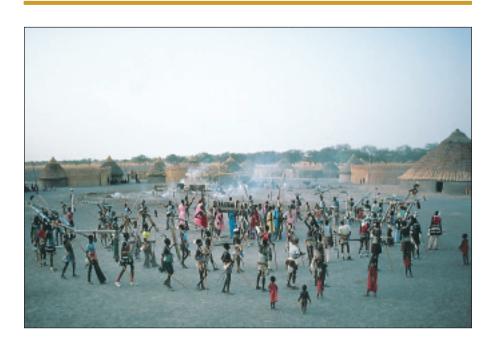
Matt: Oh! (Getting involved.) Oh, I know! They probably acted out one tribe defeating another tribe.

**Lo:** (*Smiling.*) That sounds like our football team. (*The class laughs.*)

Mrs. Logan: All of you are right. From the time humans were civilized enough to have some sort of community, their lives and rituals focused on their attempts to survive, to please the gods, to understand life, to learn about other people, and to be successful despite the problems facing them. At first, no records were kept. But from the time recorded history began, we believe that these rituals included some of the very things that we see in performances today. Historians think that people dressed in masks and animal skins and pretended to hunt while others gathered around to watch the action.

These tribesmen in the Sudan are celebrating the completion of the king's hut, a community activity where they recognize their accomplishments.

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Theatre, as you and I know it, may have its roots in such primitive events.

**Sydney:** That was all so long ago. How did theatre change? When did it become more of a performance or production?

José: I know! As civilizations progressed, so did theatre.

Mrs. Logan: (Smiling approvingly at José.) José's interest in history is really beginning to pay off. As humans progressed, so did their rituals. Much of what we experience in today's theatre we owe to the early Greeks, who participated in dramatic ceremonies and celebrations at great public festivals honoring the god Dionysus. We will follow the progression of theatre through special features in your textbook called *Our Theatre Heritages*. These features will help you see how theatre has evolved since the days when the ancient Greeks began performing for each other.

**Katie:** But what about entertainment? I thought that's what theatre was. I like to watch a play just to escape my own world for a couple of hours. I don't think of theatre as a ritual.

**Vanessa:** Yeah! I like to be in plays to escape my boring life. I don't act in plays to put food on the table. My mom takes care of that.

Mrs. Logan: Whether we are performing or watching, Vanessa, most of us do consider theatre to be entertainment and also a pleasant escape from reality. But we can also see from our study of theatre history that the theatre of a period reflects the people of that period as well as their behavior. Over 400 years ago, William Shakespeare, a famous English playwright, felt that theatre was such a true reflection of human behavior that it was "to hold as t'wer a mirror up to nature." In other words, theatre reflects life as if it were a mirror.

**Rosa:** I guess you're right. And some human behavior is pretty funny. (*She glances toward* Lo *and* Matt, *who are making faces.*)

**Mrs. Logan:** Theatre also gives us the opportunity to explore humanity. We are able to try on different roles and view life from different perspectives.

**Matt:** I really don't see what good theatre will do me. I don't plan to be an actor. I plan to be in politics.

Lo: Yeah, right!

**Sydney:** Well, then, you'll really have to be a good actor!

**Mrs. Logan:** (*Continuing.*) Matt, whether you are a politician, a teacher, or a football player, your theatre experiences will help you become more self-confident as you talk to others. You'll learn to speak clearly, to think quickly, and to use expression in your presentations. Those skills are important in whatever job or career you choose.

Sydney: See, Matt! (Class laughs.)

**Mrs. Logan:** (*Voice building in enthusiasm.*) Theatre students also learn to make good decisions, form sensible judgments, take safe risks, and develop self-discipline. And those are just a few of the many ways that theatre helps prepare you for life.

**Katie:** I want to be a ballet dancer, not an actress. What can theatre do for me?

**Mrs. Logan:** Well, Katie, you will learn to enhance your creativity through self-expression—showing your true thoughts and feelings, just as you do through ballet. Theatre is so diverse that each of you



will have many opportunities to discover talents and develop skills that will transfer into your other interests.

Lo: Hey, I'm just an ordinary guy. I don't know what I want to do other than just get out of school. What's this theatre stuff supposed to do for me? It's not like I'm going to open my own theatre or anything! (Holly giggles.)

Mrs. Logan: Lo, think of this class as an adventure! You will have the chance to try different experiences, and you may even find a new interest. Theatre has something for everyone. Some students enjoy acting on the stage or performing with puppets. Others enjoy working backstage building sets, running lights, or videotaping the performances. Many just appreciate knowing what it takes to produce a play. Developing such interests in theatre enriches your life.

**Sydney:** (*Turning and looking at* Matt.) See, Matt, that's what I told you! (Matt grins.)

**Thomas:** (*Thinking aloud.*) How can theatre enrich our lives? Only the stars get rich!

Mrs. Logan: (Smiling at Thomas.) Well, that's a good point, Thomas, but that's not the type of "rich" I mean. Enrichment means improving or adding to your life. Theatre not only will give you new interests, but will also give you a different perspective on others. Whether you are playing a role or watching a performance, you will be able to see how others work and live differently from you.

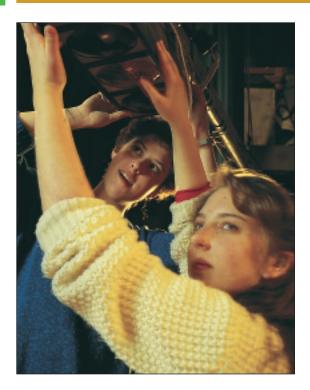
Vanessa: I took theatre at my old school, and the thing I liked best was working with other people.

Mrs. Logan: Yes, Vanessa, and since theatre is a group effort, you do learn to work as a team. (Looking at Matt.) Much like a football team.

At this point you are probably not aware of the many tasks involved in producing a play. The good news is that whatever your skills happen to be, there will be a valuable role for you in each and every production.



It takes many talented people working together to make a performance successful.



You will use the teamwork skills you develop in theatre in other classes and organizations. Later, when you have a job, you will realize that teamwork is one of the most important life skills we can learn. Does anyone else have something they would like to add?

**Katie:** Every time I've been in a play, that special feeling I get performing before the audience is what I remember most. I may forget the songs and the lines from the show, but I always remember that feeling of excitement about performing.

**Vanessa:** That's why they say "there's no business like show business." (*Starts humming the song.*)

**Rosa:** I love going to the theatre! There is something really exciting about seeing a live performance. I like it better than going to a movie.

Kristen: Even when I'm just watching, I always feel I'm a part of the play.

Mrs. Logan: What you are talking about is a special "live" connection, or bond, that develops between the audience and the actors. The audience becomes part of the team. In theatre, we call this the player-audience relationship. The actors respond to the audience, and the audience responds to the actors. Attending a "live" performance is a once-in-history event. Even though the play may have been performed many times before, it will be different on the night you attend because you are there. Your personality and your interaction with the actors will be part of the energy and excitement. They will respond to you, as you will respond to them.

**Matt:** I can relate to that! When I'm on the football field, even though the coach says not to pay attention to the crowd, I can feel them. I

# player-audience relationship

the special interactive and "live" relationship that exists between the performers and the audience, connecting and bonding them into a team.

can hear them yelling, and it makes me feel like I've got to do my best.

Mrs. Logan: It is a similar feeling, Matt. This interaction with the audience can't occur in movies or television, because the relationship between the performers and the audience is not there. In live theatre, the audience is the essential ingredient. Without the audience, there is no theatre.

**Holly:** (Pointing to the wall clock.) Hey, look! The bell's about to ring. This class really went fast.

Mrs. Logan: That was because you were all so involved in our discussion. That's another good point for theatre. There is opportunity for active involvement. Tomorrow, we will continue to see how the study of theatre can enhance your life. I hope I'll see all of you then. (Looks at Matt and smiles.)

(The bell rings. Students gather their books, chatting as they exit.)



Complete one or more of the following activities.

- 1. What is Theatre? Ask five people to answer the question, What is theatre? Record their answers. As a class, compile a list of the many different perceptions of theatre.
- 2. Your Impressions. Working in small groups, write your own scene. sharing your impressions of theatre. Read your scene aloud or act it out in front of the class.
- 3. Videotape Your Play. Develop and videotape a scene similar to the one you read in Lesson 2.

# Cuntain Call! CHAPTER

# SPOTLIGHT ON TERMS .

An important part of theatre is understanding the terminology, or vocabulary, used. Add the new terms and definitions to the vocabulary section of your theatre notebook or folder.

# ■ FOCUS ON FACTS ■ ■

- 1. Name one of our most important social needs.
- **2.** Why is it important that we call each other by our given names in theatre?
- **3.** Why is pretending an important part of growing
- **4.** Give a theory for the beginning of theatre.
- **5.** What were some of the basic needs that primitive people might have enacted?
- **6.** Where did the name theatre come from, and what was the early meaning?
- 7. How will the term *theatre* be used in this class?
- **8.** What are some of the life skills that are used in theatre?
- 9. What did William Shakespeare mean when he said theatre was a true reflection of human behavior?
- **10.** What is meant by the player-audience relation-
- 11. What is an essential ingredient in live theatre?

### REFLECTIONS = =

Discuss the following questions with your class or answer them on paper as instructed by your teacher.

1. Discuss the ways in which you have seen an audience become part of a team in a live performance. Think about plays, musical concerts, and other live events that require a player-audience relationship.

- **2.** Discuss how theatre can enrich your life.
- **3.** How did the second lesson in this chapter, written as a play, prepare you for theatre class?
- How did you identify with the characters in the play?

# THEATRE IN YOUR LIFE

Make a list of your personal goals for this class.

# ENCORE = =

Complete one or more of the following activities.

- 1. Conduct a survey, interviewing twenty people of various ages, to discover how often each attends the theatre. Report your results to the class. Construct a class graph showing attendance by agegroup. Which age-group attends most often?
- **2.** As a class, prepare a questionnaire to determine the most frequently attended entertainment event in your community.
- 3. Work with a new friend to establish what you believe to be the advantages of live theatre over the movies or television.
- **4.** Choose an idea or an emotion. Compare and contrast its presentation in live theatre with its presentation in one or all of the following: art, dance, music, and musical theatre.
- **5.** Create a collage of advertisements for live theatre events in your community or surrounding communities. Mount your collection on a poster to share with the class.
- **6.** Interview an adult who has taken a theatre course to find out how this person has been able to use what he or she learned in his or her job or life experiences. Share your information with the class in an oral report.

# Exploring Theatre TIME LINE



oday's theatre is the product of many changes. Thousands of years ago, before books, T.V., movies, or computers, human beings felt a need in their lives for art and culture. One of the many ways in which people participated in the arts was to present theatrical productions and dramatic contests. As civilizations progressed, special places were built for these performances. As customs, beliefs, and technology changed, so did theatre. All the playwrights, directors, actors, and technicians who have participated in theatre for thousands of years contributed to the development of theatre into the art form we know today.

This time line is a road map for your journey through theatre history. As you read through the text, you will want to refer back to the time line frequently. Seeing where a particular playwright or new theatre design occurred in relation to other people and events will help you understand and remember the new information.

600 B.C.

Arion, a Greek poet and musician, replaces improvised dithyramb (choral hymn) by writing formal lyrics.

534 B.C.

Thespis, who is credited with introducing the first actor, wins first contest for tragic drama in Athens, Greece.



8500–7000 B.C. (approx.)
Primitive tribal dance
and religious rituals.

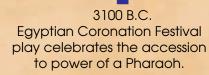


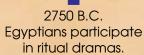
8500

B.C.

600

4000 B.C. (approx.)
Plays written called
the *Pyramid Texts*(fifty-five texts found later in
Egyptian pyramids and tombs).







1887-1849 B.C.

I-Kher-nefert, the first stage director and actor mentioned in recorded history, produces the *Abydos Passion Play*.

Outstanding Playwrights 500 B.C.-486 B.C. Comedy competition 365 B.C. First Roman theatrical begins in Greece. 500 B.C.-500 A.D. performance. Rome (Italy): Greece: **Aristophanes Plautus** 475 B.C. Aeschylus Seneca Aeschylus adds Euripides Terence 365 B.C. a second actor. Menander Many Greek theatres are built Sophocles India: throughout the Mediterranean area. **Thespis** Kalidasa 472 B.C. Aeschylus writes The Persians, earliest surviving Greek play. 240 B.C. Comedies of Livius Andronicus performed in Rome. 471 B.C. 80 B.C. Sophocles introduces a third actor First Roman amphitheatre in tragedy and makes less use built at Pompeii. of the chorus. 55 B.C. 465 B.C. A skene (wooden hut or tent) is added First permanent Roman theatre to the theatre for use as a dressing built of stone. room for actors and chorus. CLASSICAL PERIOD (500 B.C.-500 A.D.) **500** 400 300 100 360 B.C. 458 B.C. Theatre of Dionysus Painted stage scenery 22 B.C. completed. and stage machinery Introduction of are used. pantomime. 449 B.C. First acting competition for tragic actors at 4 B.C. Seneca, major Roman City Dionysia. tragic dramatist, is born. 200-160 B.C. Roman playwrights, 435 B.C. Plautus and Terence, Pericles builds theatre write comedies. honoring Dionysus. 442-441 B.C. Sophocles writes Antigone.

335-323 B.C.

Aristotle's Poetics

sets standards

for tragedy.

431 B.C.

Euripides writes plays

with parts for up to 11 actors.

423 B.C.

Production of Aristophanes' The Clouds.

179 B.C.

Wooden theatre built

in Rome.

80 A.D

The Colosseum in Rome is built. Roman gladiatorial contests become more popular than theatre.

80 A.D.

Actors, called mimes, dress in ordinary clothes without wigs and masks.

80 A.D.

Most actors are slaves, or low-ranking members of society...



300 A.D. Christians against theatre gain force.

304 A.D.

Genesius, an actor, dies a martyr's death during a performance in Rome.

197-202 A.D.

Christians forbidden to attend theatre.

600 A.D.

Wandering troupes of performers, usually the troupe owner's slaves, entertain in Britain and on the European continent.



700 A.D.

Acrobats, minstrels, puppeteers, and jugglers entertain at weddings, banquets, and festivals helping to keep performing alive.

CLASSICAL PERIOD (To 500 A.D.)

600 **500** 100 200 300 400 700

A.D.

80 A.D.

Theatres, built with the stage and audience as a connected unit, have a sloping roof over the stage.

304 A.D. Christians against

theatre becomes widespread.

712 A.D. Dance-dramas are performed in Chinese court.

175 A.D.

Roman theatre consists of mimicry, mime, pantomime, and spectacle.

197-201 A.D.

The Roman Catholic Church excommunicates actors.

400 A.D. Indian classic, Shakuntala, by Kalidasa is written in Sanskrit.

> 426 A.D. (approx.) Saint Augustine opposes theatre in The City of God.

568 A.D.

Roman spectacles are stopped.

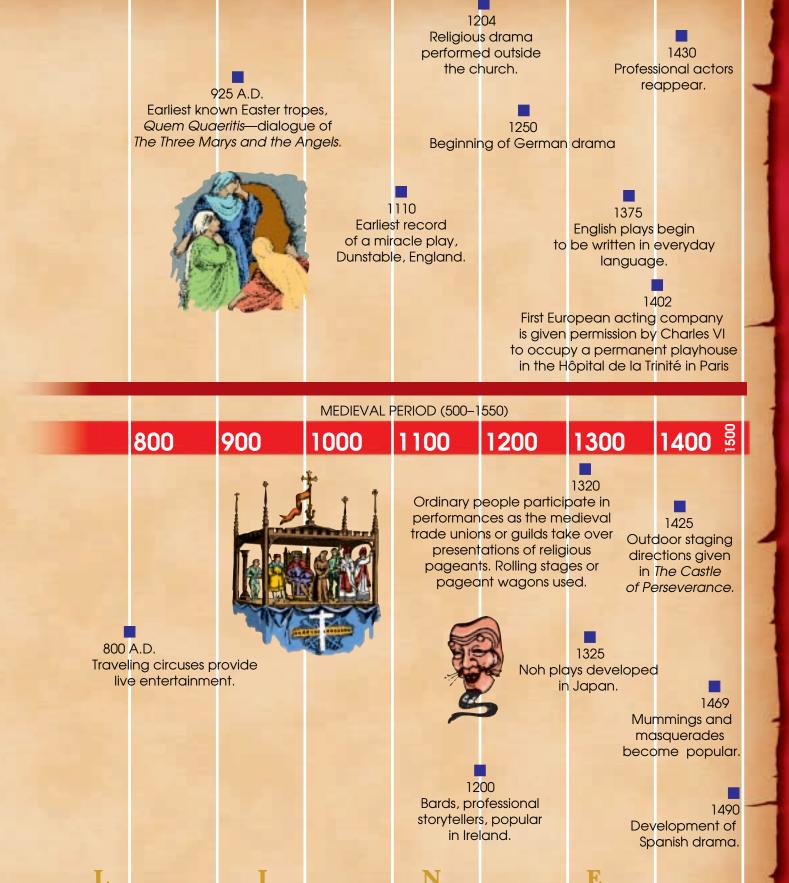
300 A.D.

Earliest recorded religious plays.

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**23** 

Theatre

# Outstanding Playwrights

# 1450-1700

**England:** Jonson Kvd Marlowe Shakespeare Webster

Spain: Calderón Cervantes Lope de Rueda Lope de Vega

Italy: Ariosto France: Goldoni Corneille Machiavelli Molière Tasso Racine

Globe Theatre built. 1599 Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. 1613

1599

The Globe Theatre is destroyed by fire.

1616 Shakespeare's death.

1674 Drury Lane Theatre opens in England.

1680-1780 Bibiena family dominates scene designs using lavish, ornate, baroque-style

scenery.

1500 **Anonymous morality** play, Everyman, personifies virtues and vices struggling for the soul of man.

1558 Elizabeth I forbids writing of religious drama.



1633 First performance of Oberammergau Passion Play in Germany

MEDIEVAL PERIOD (to 1550)

RENAISSANCE, ELIZABETHAN, RESTORATION, GOLDEN AGE, NEOCLASSIC (1550-1700)

# 1500

# 1512 The word "masque"

first used to denote poetic drama.

> Hôtel de Bourgogne, first roofed theatre and first public theatre in Europe since classical

1540 Ralph Roister Doister, English "school play."

1540 Classical drama begins in schools and universities in England.

1548 Religious drama banned in Paris.

1550

1558-1584 Mature plays performed for the English court by companies of young boy actors.

1548 times, opens in Paris.

> 1564 Shakespeare's birth.

1576 The Theatre, first permanent London theatre opens.

> 1595 Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.

1600

1618 Teatro Farnese, first Renaissance proscenium arch theatre, is built in Italy.

> 1634 Théâtre du Marais opens in Paris.

Kabuki Theatre and puppet theatre begin in Japan 1642

1671

Paris Opera

opens.

1675-1750

1650

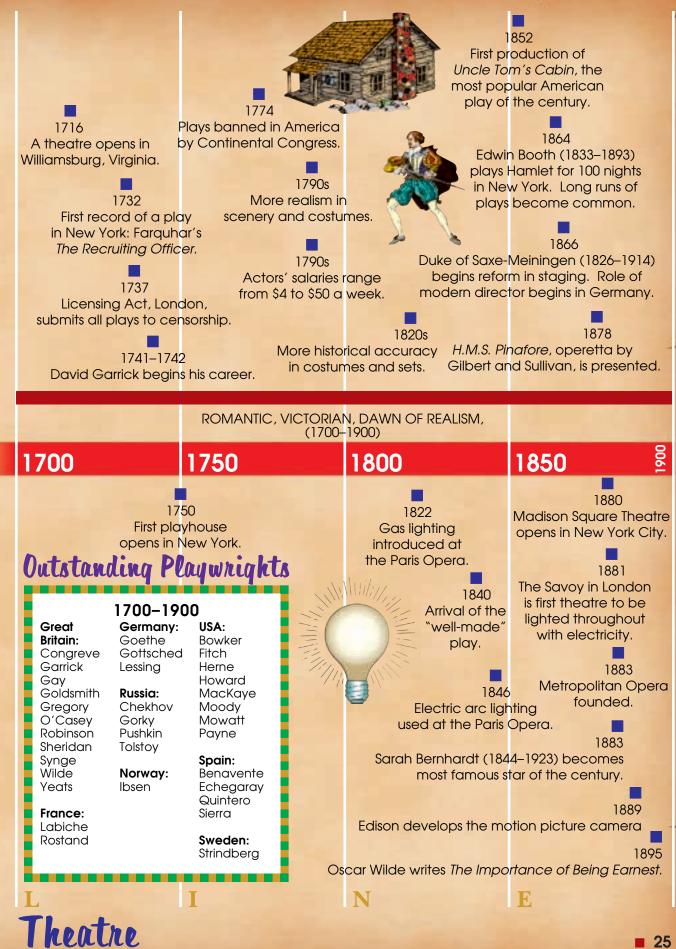
Theatres are closed in England.

> 1660 London theatres are reopened.

1660 Actresses play female roles.







# Outstanding Playwrights

# 1900-1945

Great Britain: Barrie Coward Pinter Shaw Synge

Thomas Williams

**Brecht** 

France: Anouilh Cocteau Feydeau Giraudoux

Italy: D'Annunzio Pirandello Belgium:

linck

Sartre Cromme-USA: Hellman

O'Neill Germany: Rice Van Druten Wilder

Russia: Chekhov

1905

Gordon Craig writes

The Art of the Theatre.

1924

Stanislavsky's My Life in Art begins revolution in actor training.

1934 Lillian Hellman writes The Children's Hour. 1927

Audiences are lured from theatre to the "talking pictures."

1927 Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II write Showboat.

1929 First Academy Awards (Oscars) presented for the 1927-1928 year by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.



Rogers and Hammerstein's Oklahoma! integrates music, story, dance, and setting.

1943

1946 Electronic computer invented.

> 1947 Antoinette Perry (Tony) Awards first presented for excellence in Broadway theatre.

1949 First Emmy Awards presented for excellence in television.

# EARLY MODERN (1900-1945)

1900

1910

1920

1930

1930

1940

1903

Pioneering film,

The Great Train Robbery, is produced.

1920 Television is invented.

Marc Connelly writes The Green Pastures. 10,000 employed in 40 states. Plays are written for and presented by black actors.

1912

Non-professional acting companies—"little theatres"—

appear in the U.S.

1931 Group Theatre, modeled after Moscow Art Theatre, is founded by Lee Strasberg, Harold Clurman, and Cheryl Crawford.

1935

Depression motivates founding of Federal Theatre Project.

1938

Thorton Wilder writes Our Town.

1945

Tennessee Williams writes The Glass Menagerie.

1947

Actors' Studio, founded in New York City, emphasizing Stanislavsky's "Method".

> Theatre threatened by rapid development of TV.

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1948

Exploring

1903

George Pierce Baker (1866–1935) begins to teach playwriting at Radcliffe College.

1914

U.S.'s first degree program is established in theatre at Carnegie Institute Thomas Edison of Technology. produces the first sound motion picture.















1980s 1954 Musicals by Stephen Sondheim, Joseph Papp establishes Andrew Lloyd Webber, and the New York Shakespeare Leonard Bernstein win Festival. Moves to Central popular acclaim. Park in 1957 as free theatre. 1990s 1965 Over 200 non-profit National Endowment for 1955 theatres exist in U.S., mounting the Arts established. over 3,000 productions. Jim Henson's Muppets star 1980s in the television show Broadway productions use Sam and Friends. spectacular high-tech 1990s 1968 special effects. Escalating production costs Negro Ensemble 1959 force price increases of Company founded. 1982 First play on Broadway Broadway tickets. Annie closes after written by an African American 2,377 performances. woman—A Raisin in the Sun— 1971 by Lorraine Hansberry. 1993 John F. Kennedy Center A spoken drama on Broadway for the Performing Arts costs over \$1.2 million to produce. opens in Washington, D.C. 1966 A musical costs \$12 to \$13 million. Movie studios contract movies made for television.

LATE MODERN (1945-PRESENT)

1950

1960

1970

1980



Great

**Britain:** 

Pinter

**Broadhurst** 

Osborne

Rattigan

Shaffer

France:

**Beckett** 

Albee

Conley

Hansberry

1962

Outstanding Playwrights

1945-Present

Henley

Hwang

Mamet

Medoff

Sarovan Shepard

Miller

Rabe

Simon

Williams

A. Wilson

L. Wilson

Theatres introduce subscription tickets to finance productions.

Canada:

Campbell

Deverell

Australia:

De Groen

Williamson

Holman

Beissel

Foon

Ryga

Buzo

Davis

1975

Michael Bennett's A Chorus Line opens.

1975

Videocassette recorders marketed.

1977

Charles Strouse's Annie opens.



1993

Broadway meets MTV in the telecasted rock opera The Who's Tommy.

Theatrical companies film plays on video cassette for new VCR market.

1979



1980

Ronald Reagan, an actor, is elected U.S. president

1995

14 fall "openings" occur on Broadway.

Fauquez Ionesco USA:

Africa: Clarke

Zeder

**Fugard** 

China: Yu

Theatre



10