

Guide to...

ISU Theatre Audience Member "Lingo"

New to the theatre? Leave the theatre with the ability to speak intelligently about what you just saw! Use this guide to theatre "lingo" and you'll sound like a pro!

Parts of the Theatre Building:

- **STAGE** – The place where the performance takes place. The CPA has a PROSCENIUM (or "picture frame") stage with audience on one side, and the Westhoff Theatre is usually configured as a THRUST stage with audience on three sides. Another possible type of stage is ARENA (or "in-the-round"), with audience on all four sides.
- **HOUSE** – The place where the audience sits to watch the performance.
- **LOBBY** – The area outside of the theatre, but still in the building. Here, the audience can mingle before and after the performance, and during intermission. You will often find refreshments, dramaturgical information (things to help you understand the play and its context), and cast and crew bios. The Box Office is located in the CPA lobby.

Box Office/Ticketing:

- **BOX OFFICE** – The place where you can buy tickets for all performances in the CPA and Westhoff. If you purchase in advance at the box office window, you'll walk away with your ticket in hand. If you purchase by phone using a credit card (call 309-438-2535), your ticket is labeled WILL CALL. This means you should arrive early to the performance to pick up your ticket...or it will be resold! The CPA Box Office is open Mon.-Thurs. 11-5 and Fri. 12-5 for advanced ticket sales, and 1 hour prior to performances for picking up Will Call tickets and last-minute ticket sales. Will Call tickets for Westhoff performances will be available in the Westhoff lobby.
- **BOX OFFICE MANAGER** – This is the person who oversees Box Office Staff. If you ever encounter a problem at the box office, this is the person you should ask to speak with.
- **TICKET** – The piece of paper that gets you into the theatre. When you purchase your ticket, you'll be asked to initial at the top, affirming that you checked that it reads the correct date and time for the performance you wish to see and agreeing that you will arrive at least 10 minutes early for the performance for seating.
- **TICKET STUB** – The usher at the door to the theatre will tear off half of your ticket and return the stub to you. Your ticket stub grants you re-entry into the theatre if you need to leave. If you are seeing the performance for class credit, hold onto your ticket stub, as some instructors may choose to collect it.
- **SEASON PASS** – Season passes are available for purchase at the beginning of the Fall Semester. A season pass will cover your ticket costs for many productions, at a reduced price. If you purchase a season pass, you still need to reserve tickets for each production—you just won't have to pay for them when you pick them up.
- **RESERVED SEATING** – The CPA has reserved seating. This means your ticket will have your specific seat number on it. If you're having trouble finding your seat, ushers are available to help you.
- **GENERAL ADMISSION** – The Westhoff Theatre has general admission. This means that your ticket will NOT have a seat number on it, so you can sit in any open seat. The earlier you arrive, the more of a selection you will have.
- **USHER** – This person is there to help you enter the theatre. He or she will tear your ticket, hand you a program, and/or show you to your seat.
- **HOUSE MANAGER** – This is the person who oversees the ushers and other staff. He or she is there to help make your experience safe and enjoyable. If you have any questions or concerns while at the theatre, this is the person you should ask to speak with.

Box Office/Ticketing (Cont.):

- **PROGRAM** – An usher will hand you a program as you enter the theatre. In the program, you will find information about the play you are seeing. This may include: lists and/or biographies of the production staff, cast, and crew, a director’s note and/or dramaturg’s note, a synopsis and/or scene breakdown, dedications, rules and regulations, etc. If you are seeing a performance for a class, hold onto your program! It will be useful for classroom discussions or assignments.
- **OPENING NIGHT** – The first performance of a production.
- **CLOSING NIGHT** – The final performance of a production.
- **RUN** – The span of dates the play performs.

Structure of the Performance:

- **CURTAIN** – Most theatres (including the CPA and Westhoff) don’t use curtains anymore. Theatres used to use curtains to hide the stage until the performance began. “Curtain” referred to the lifting of the curtains to reveal the set and start the play. When you walk into the CPA or Westhoff, chances are that you will see the play’s set exposed. However, we still use the term “curtain” to indicate the start of the play.
- **SCENE** – A scene is a small section of a play that usually follows one line of action. In many plays, transitions from scene to scene are seamless and you may not even notice. However, some plays may require Scene Changes.
- **SCENE CHANGE** – A scene change is when something in the set (or all of it!) is changed to indicate a new location or a passage of time. The action usually pauses for a scene change, but sometimes scene changes occur simultaneously with the action.
- **BLACKOUT** – A blackout is when all of the lights go out. Sometimes blackouts are used to indicate the end of a scene or Act. Other times they are used for dramatic effect.
- **ACT** – An Act is a grouping of scenes into a longer section of the play. Most plays have two Acts, separated by an intermission.
- **INTERMISSION** – Intermission is a break between Acts of a play. This is a good time to use the restroom, grab refreshments in the lobby, or make a phone call if necessary!
- **CURTAIN CALL/BOWS** – Most (but not all!) performances have a “curtain call” at the end, in which actors take a bow and the audience applauds them!

Selected People in your Program:

- **PLAYWRIGHT** – This is the person who wrote the TEXT of the play. Most likely the playwright is not involved in production of the play, but he or she is paid royalties for every performance. If the play is a musical, a team of writers (composer, lyricist, and librettist) take the place of the playwright.
- **COMPOSER** – If the play is a musical, operetta, opera, etc., the composer is the person who wrote the music.
- **LYRICIST** – If the play has music, this is the person who wrote the lyrics.
- **LIBRETTIST** – If the play is a musical, the librettist is the person who wrote the BOOK, or dialogue that occurs between musical numbers.
- **DIRECTOR** – This is the person who oversees all creative aspects of a production. He or she interprets the text of the play and works with designers and actors to create his or her vision on the stage.
- **MUSICAL DIRECTOR** – If the play is a musical, this is the person who helps the singers and musicians learn and interpret the music.
- **CONDUCTOR** – If the play is a musical, this is the person who leads the instrumentalists.
- **CHOREOGRAPHER** – If the play is a musical or requires dance, this is the person who creates and teaches the movement. In some plays, a FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER is necessary. This person creates movement to simulate combat while keeping the actors safe from injury.

Selected People in Your Program (Cont.):

- **STAGE MANAGER** – This is the person who is in charge of all organizational aspects of a production. He or she attends (and often leads) all meetings and rehearsals, records all details, communicates with the director, designers, crew, and actors on a regular basis, and runs the show (“calling the cues”) once it has opened.
- **DRAMATURG** – This person works with the director, designers, and actors to conduct social, political, and historical research about the play. The dramaturg’s research is then used to influence artistic decisions in the production. The dramaturg often prepares a program note and/or lobby display to help the audience better understand the play.
- **SCENE DESIGNER** – This person designs the set. He or she works with the director to create an environment on the stage that reflects the director’s vision and supports the action of the play.
- **COSTUME DESIGNER** – This person designs all of the clothing that appears on the stage. He or she works with the director to design costumes that fit the world of the play and are functional for the actors.
- **LIGHTING DESIGNER** – This person designs all the light that appears on the stage. He or she uses the intensity, color, and texture of light to direct the audience’s focus and reflect the mood of the scene.
- **SOUND DESIGNER** – This person is in charge of any prerecorded music, sound effects, or microphones used in the production. The Sound Designer uses sound both functionally (to make sure the audience can hear everything that’s going on) and artistically (to enhance the action and mood of the play).
- **CAST/ACTORS** – These are most likely the only people who worked on a production that the audience actually gets to see! They are the people who have worked hard with the text of the play to create characters.