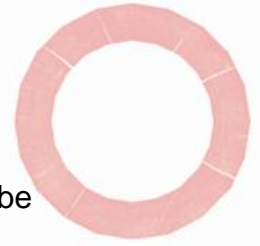


Indoor Playing Terminology

Faculty will be aided by the key terms listed below, which should be incorporated into teaching practice.



The Three A's

The relationship between the actor, the audience, and the architecture. This is our unique selling point and a term which also helps us to articulate what we mean by 'Indoor Playing' and 'Globe Performance Practice'.

Polygonal Horseshoe

The Playhouse is made from a frame of pine and green oak that sits within a brick shell. The seating benches arranged in the pit and two levels of galleries embrace the stage in a polygonal horseshoe shape which is a different shape from what we find in the Globe's distinctive 'Wooden O'.

Visibility and Illumination

Playing on the stage can be a balancing act. The candelabra and sconces light the sides of the stage more brightly than the centre, but the sides of the stage are not completely visible to audience members in the Upper Gallery above the onstage boxes. It is therefore a constant series of judgement calls on the part of the actor and the director regarding where they would be best placed to serve the story and the other actors.

Shared Light

In the candlelit playhouse, unlike modern theatre convention, the actor and the audience are in the same light.

Candelabra ('Branches')

There are 6 candelabras which are operated by a system of ropes and pulleys (now through a tech system rather than by hand) to create different lighting states. Each holds 12 beeswax candles.

Sconces ('Walls')

24 smaller candles are placed in brass reflectors attach to the lower gallery pillars.

Tapers ('Spill')

Tapers are used in productions in the SWP instead of lighters or matches. Tapers will self-extinguish if dropped before burning the stage so are much safer to use and look more authentic in early modern designed productions.

Gallery

The Gallery above the stage is used primarily by both musicians and actors. Members of the audience have sat here during SWP performances too, but it is debatable whether this was the case in indoor playhouses during Shakespeare's time.

Standlings

A modern term to refer to those who stand in the upper gallery. It is a nod to audience members who stand in the Yard at the Globe who are referred to as the 'Groundings'. No standing positions were available in Shakespeare's indoor theatre.

The Pit

The sitting area below stage level. Unlike the yard in the Globe theatre, the pit has no standing area.

The Power Spot

The term used by modern Globe actors for the most powerful place on stage. The position is in front of the central double doors (but see Visibility and Illumination).

The Tiring House

Short for attiring or retiring. Actors would have used it for getting dressed into costume and for quick changes.

Heaven, Earth, and Hell

The ceiling mural is called the **Heavens**. The painted ceiling is a celestial fantasy of clouds, stars, cherubs, and putti surrounding Goddess Luna. Luna has many names and represents the moon, chastity, and the hunt. **Earth** is the stage itself, representing human life. **Hell** is below the stage and can be accessed via the trap door – witches and ghosts would have entered from here.

Frons Scaenae

The scenic stage façade is elaborately decorated with its three doorways richly painted in sable and gold. It serves as the permanent architectural backdrop to the stage.

We acknowledge and should always be mindful of the ableist language we use when describing performance practice at the Globe (e.g. 'sight lines', 'blind spot', 'standing area', etc), especially when working with any students who are D/deaf, visually impaired/blind and/or who identify as disabled.

Please reach out to the Higher Education Team if you have any questions or concerns about the above.

Quick Facts

These 'facts' are a response to some of the most Frequently Asked Questions.

The Second Blackfriars (1596, opened in 1600)

- The Sam Wanamaker Playhouse echoes theatres such as the second Blackfriars, The Cockpit (also known as the Phoenix) and the Salisbury Court. It isn't a precise reconstruction but a self-styled 'archetype' of the indoor playhouses of Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline London.
- Indoor theatres grew out of temporary theatres in existing buildings set up for private performances; but they were open to the public and charged an entry fee. The first permanent indoor theatre was St. Paul's, built in 1575. The first Blackfriars (a different building to the second) followed in 1576.
- Until 1609 the indoor theatres were used by boy companies. Adult companies played at the outdoor playhouses. The boy companies grew out of choir schools and other schools that performed privately. They were made up of boys between the ages of about eight and sixteen. They usually played just once a week, rather than almost every day, as the adult companies did. The audience was thought to be more educated and richer than an outdoor one.
- Shakespeare's final plays – *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, *Henry VIII*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and the lost *Cardenio* – were written with a view to performance at both the Globe and the Blackfriars.
- The Blackfriars, and the form of indoor theatricality it represented, was the crucial link between the traditions of Elizabethan popular drama and the theatrical culture of the eighteenth century from which many conventions of modern drama descended.
- Upper class men would have sat on stools on the stage itself. Although they would have been sat at the side, their legs, swords etc would have taken up a lot of performance space.
- The SWP is probably better lit than the Blackfriars or other historic indoor playhouses. We don't know the total number of candles used to light the indoor playhouses, but it was more like 40 or 50 rather than the c.100 in the SWP.
- There was a fundamental shift in the social verticality which was found in the outdoor playhouses: The pit seats were expensive, although not as expensive as side-stage boxes, on-stage stools, or gallery (if used at all by the audience). The cheaper seats were in the upper levels, but there were no standing areas in Shakespeare's indoor playhouse. This is the same pricing band which can be found now in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse and what you would expect to find in most west end theatres today.

Sam Wanamaker Playhouse (2014)

- Named in honour of our founder, the Playhouse is based on indoor candlelit theatres known to Shakespeare and his contemporaries. It is the first candlelit theatre in London for several centuries.
- It's not a reconstruction of a specific venue, but it echoes the Blackfriars Playhouse, used by Shakespeare's theatre company from 1609.
- 340 capacity including 50 standing positions in the gods.
- The stage is 20 feet wide by 15 feet deep.
- The attic winch allows for sophisticated flying effects. Shakespeare's Blackfriars had a winch too – but our technology is more 21st century!
- The decorative features in the Playhouse are based on those in recorded or surviving Jacobean buildings.
- The painted ceiling is based on an early seventeenth century mural in Cullen House, a former stately home in Scotland which burned down many years ago.
- The Sam Wanamaker Playhouse opened with a production of John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, directed by then Artistic Director, Dominic Dromgoole in 2014.
- The Globe is radically democratic whereas the SWP is a much more conservative, intimate (perhaps even claustrophobic) space, and some argue that it is more challenging to perform in. There is a huge difficulty of including everyone in the audience with its deep pit, high galleries, and blind spots.

Candles

- Candles are referred to many times in Shakespeare's plays.
- The theatre is lit by over one hundred beeswax candles per show that hang in candelabra (branches) affixed to the ceiling, gleam from sconces (wallers) attached to the carved gallery columns and/or are carried by the actors themselves.
- The default lighting height for the candelabras is 2 meters 20cm off from the stage. This is the best lighting state for light on faces and on the audience.
- Candles only have romantic associations since the 1970's when they began being used on tables for 2 in restaurants. Before then they were more commonly used for practical reasons.
- Hand held candlesticks lanterns and torches are used for location, time or moods.
- Each candle is 25 cm high and 2cm wide at the base.
- A rush candle (also called a taper) was a long, thin candle which was used in early modern indoor theatres like the Blackfriars. They can be dangerous and so aren't used much in the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse.
- Short and stubby candles with a short wick cast a better glow for your face and less likely to go out.

Ceiling Mural

The decoration of the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse was influenced by what we knew about the elaborately-painted indoor playhouses of Shakespeare's time. As it cost more to visit an indoor playhouse (than an outdoor one), at the time they attracted a richer audience and so were always spectacularly decorated with rich colours that shone brightly in the candlelight. However, it is worth remembering the outdoor playhouses were just as densely and gaudily decorated (although possibly with less expensive designs and materials).

Prior to decorating our present-day Playhouse ceiling, our researchers gathered information about carving and decoration methods used in original Seventeenth-century buildings. The final mural was based on photographs of a seventeenth-century ceiling in Scotland's former Cullen House (also known as the 'Astral Ceiling') – the original design showing the Goddess of the moon, Luna, between clouds, stars, cherubs, and putti. The Cullen House ceiling was damaged beyond repair by a fire in 1987.

The entire of the Sam Wanamaker ceiling was painted with these motifs – the piece created by a specialist team, led by artist Zaza Opperman. It was painted in panels on the ground, off-site, before being put together in the theatre, assembling for all to see.

Reflections on the SWP Space

Atmosphere of closeness / Familiar and intimate / Homeliness / Lived in / Domestic / Bedroom / Home / Part of the home. Therefore, there are challenges of making the space become outdoors.

Reflections on SWP Stage Craft

- The balcony can work for all audience members if you lean over the banister or lower yourself.
- Like the Globe space, diagonals work well.
- Asides are best placed to those on the opposite side to you.
- Like the Globe with its figure of 8, the SWP works best when action oscillates between the two sides.
- Helping to light your fellow actors with the intention of wanting to communicate can bring along a sense of ensemble, collaboration, and a spirit of togetherness.
- Actors are encouraged to fight against the lulling atmosphere the candles can create.