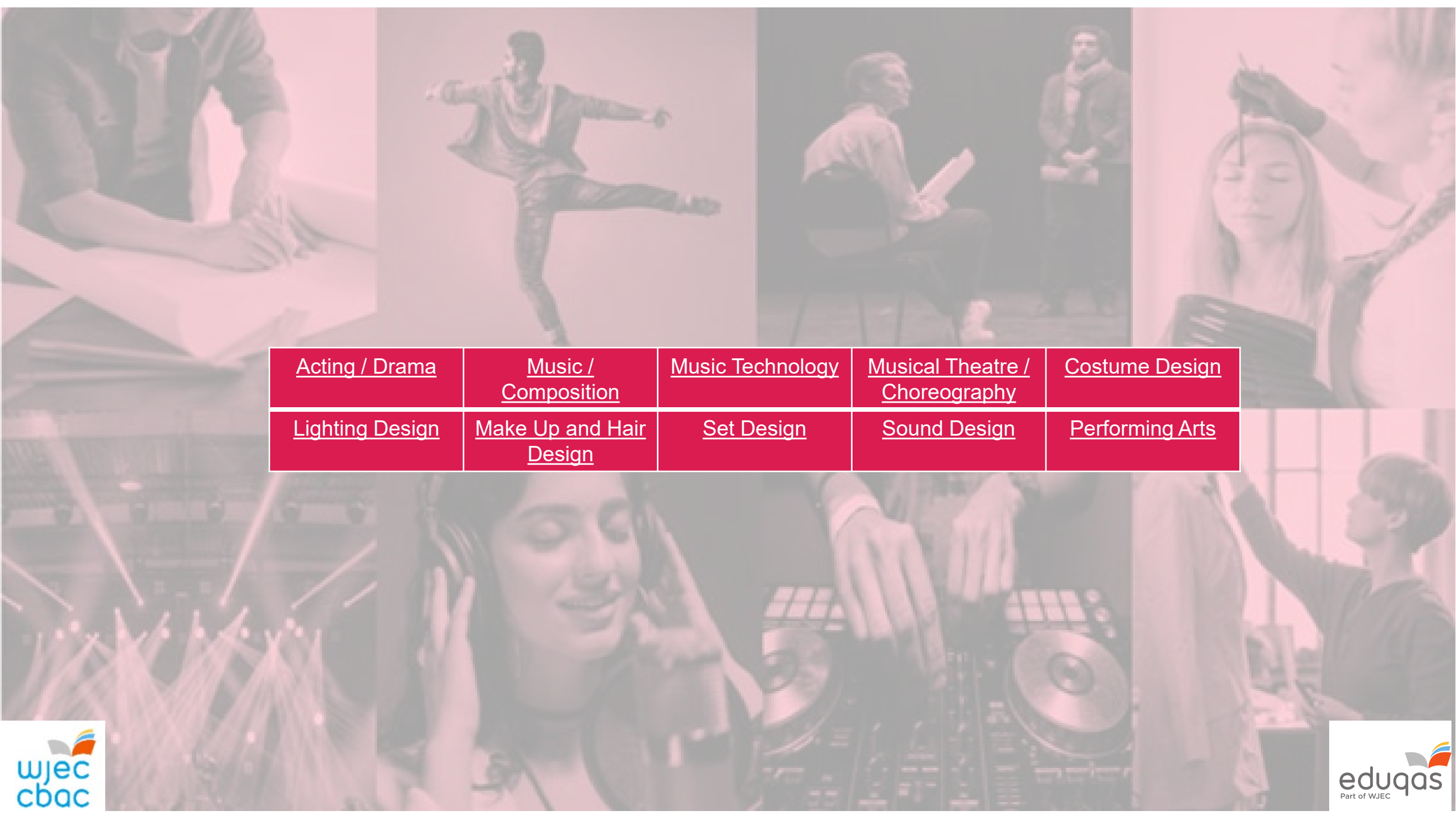




# Performing Arts Key Vocabulary



<a href="#"><u>Acting / Drama</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Music / Composition</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Music Technology</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Musical Theatre / Choreography</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Costume Design</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Lighting Design</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Make Up and Hair Design</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Set Design</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Sound Design</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Performing Arts</u></a>

## Acting / Devised Drama

**Accent:** a way of speaking which reflects a particular region or country

**Actioning:** giving a verb to a line of text

**Amphitheatre:** circular or oval open air theatre

**Antagonist:** a character who opposes the protagonist

**Apron:** part of a proscenium arch stage which extends past the curtain

**Articulation:** clear and precise pronunciation of words

**Aside:** character speaks directly to the audience

**Backstory:** the history of a character

**Beat:** brief pause in speech or unit of action in a scene

**Blocking:** movement and positioning on stage

**Body language:** non-verbal communication

**Character:** a role played by an actor

**Chorus:** often used in Greek Theatre, a group who comment on the action

**Climax:** the most intense point in a plotline

**Conflict:** a central struggle between opposing forces

**Cue:** a trigger for an actor's entrance, exit, line or action

**Dialect:** a form of language specific to a region

**Dialogue:** the spoken words of a text

**Diction:** the clarity of an actor's speech

**Downstage:** the area of stage closest to the audience

**Dress Rehearsal:** final rehearsal in costume

**Duologue:** dialogue between two actors

**Dynamics:** interaction between characters

**Ensemble:** a group of performers working together

**Epilogue:** a speech or scene following the end of a play

**Fourth Wall:** the imaginary barrier between performer and audience

**Gait:** way of walking

**Gesture:** a movement to express meaning

**Gestus:** developed by Brecht – character gesture or movement which captures an attitude or moment.

**Given Circumstances:** the world of the play

**Improvisation:** creating spontaneously without a script

**Inflection:** modulation of pitch or tone, used to convey meaning

**Intonation:** variation in pitch during speech

**Isolation:** moving one part of the body at a time

**Monologue:** speech by one character

**Motive:** the reason behind a character's actions

**Objective:** what the character wants to achieve

**Pace:** the speed of dialogue or action

**Pause:** a brief break in dialogue or action

**Physicality:** movement skills used by an actor

**Pitch:** how high or low the voice is

**Proscenium Arch:** type of staging where the audience face the main stage

**Protagonist:** the main character in a play

**Proxemics:** the use of stage space to create meaning

**Sight Lines:** what the audience can see from their seats

**Sub text:** underlying meaning in a text, the unspoken story

**Tableau:** freeze frame, usually of a key moment

**Tension:** the suspense or intensity of a scene

**Tone:** the emotional sound of the voice

**Upstage:** area of the stage furthest from the audience



## Music / Composition

**Accompaniment:** musical support to the melody

**Adagio:** slow speed

**Allegro:** fast speed

**Articulation:** the way each note is performed, for example short and detached (staccato) or smooth (legato).

**Balance:** ensuring that sounds are at an equal level

**Beatboxing:** a vocal performance using the voice to create sounds like drum beats

**Belt:** singing high notes with your chest voice

**Binary:** two sections – **AB**

**BPM:** beats per minute

**Breath Control:** controlling the breathing

**Cadence:** progression of two chords used at the end of a musical phrase

**Canon:** the first part starts to play a melody, then a second part plays the same melody but with a delay, for example 2 bars

**Chromatic Harmonies:** harmonies involving notes which are not part of the tonic key

**Coda:** the final section of a piece of music

**Composer:** a person who writes music

**Counter Melody:** a second melody is played at the same time as the original.

**Crescendo:** music gradually gets louder

**Cross Rhythm:** rhythms which conflict with the regular beat of the music, also known as polyrhythm

**Decrescendo:** music gradually gets quieter

**Dynamics:** how loud or quiet a section of music should be

**Falsetto:** high pitched singing

**Fill:** a short rhythmic flourish, usually on the drums

**Harmony:** more than one note is heard at the same time

**Imitation:** one instrument copying another

**Intonation:** small variations in pitch

**Melody:** a single line of music containing pitches and rhythms organised into a tune

**Metre:** the number and type of beats in a bar

**Orchestra:** a large group of instruments, consists of strings, woodwind, brass and percussion instruments

**Phrasing:** the way a melody is shaped by a performer

**Pitch:** how high or low a sound is

**Pulse:** implied or audible steady beat

**Range:** the distance between the highest and lowest notes in a piece of music

**Rhythm:** a combination of sounds and silences of specific lengths

**Riff:** a short repeated musical idea used in pop and rock music

**Rondo:** Section A returns between new section

**ABACAD**

**Sequence:** when a short musical idea is repeated at a higher or lower pitch

**Slur:** a musical notation connecting two or more notes to indicate that they should be played smoothly so that each note joins onto the next

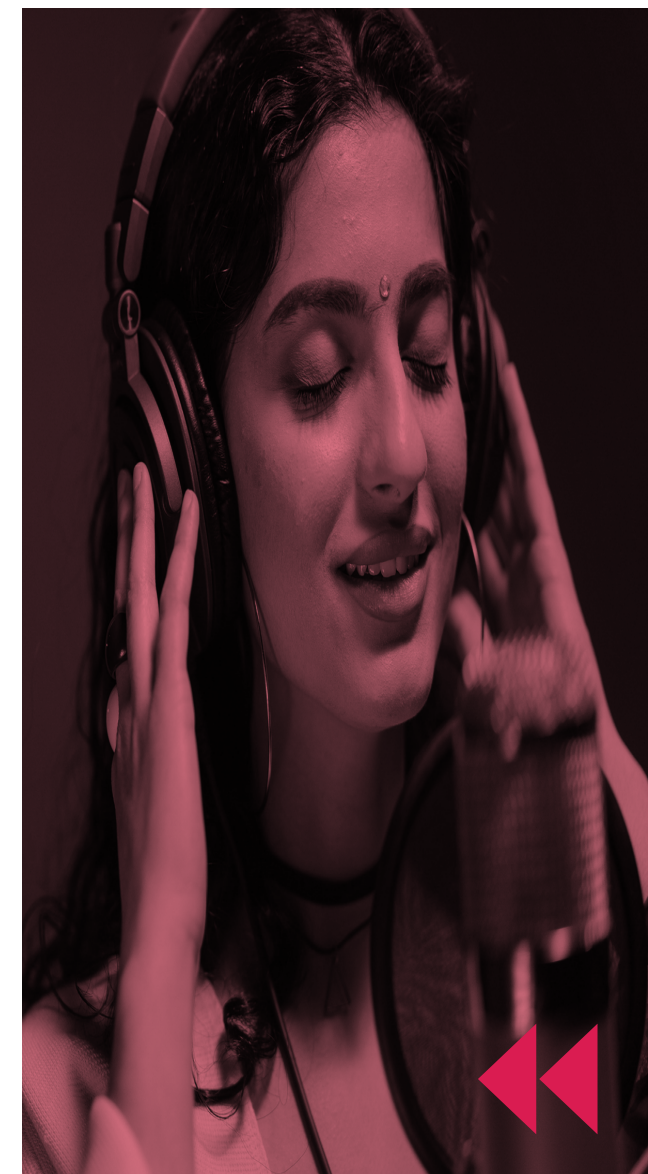
**Tempo:** the speed of a piece of music

**Ternary:** three sections **ABA**

**Texture:** the overall effect of how melody, harmony and rhythm are combined in a piece of music

**Timbre:** the specific tone or quality an instrument has

**Tonality:** the organisation of notes and chords in a piece dependent on a home note or tonic. If a piece is in major or minor key





## Music Technology / Composition Using Technology

**Balance:** the relative volume levels between instruments

**Bouncing:** the process of mixing down material from a number of tracks and re-recording it

**Chorus:** an effect which thickens a sound and adds stereo width to it

**Compression:** a method of squeezing the dynamic range of a signal

**Cue Point:** a specific moment where a track should start playing

**Delay:** a signal is received but played back a moment later, gives a precise repeat of sound

**Digital Audio Workstation (DAW):** this may be in the form of software, for example LogicPro or Pro Tools

**Dynamics:** how loud or quiet a section of music should be

**Echo:** when a sound is heard again a moment later than the original

**EQ:** equalisation – increasing or decreasing the level of certain frequencies in a signal

**Filters:** can change the sound by stopping certain frequencies

**Flange:** an effect which creates a distinct swooshing sound

**Harmony:** more than one note is heard at the same time

**Lead Sheet:** a simplified score containing the lyrics, melody and chord symbols

**Loops:** pre recorded samples of music

**Melody:** a single line of music containing pitches and rhythms organised into a tune

**MIDI:** Musical Instrument Digital Interface

**Mixing:** in a DJ performance, the technique of playing one track at the same time as another. Also the term used to blend tracks in a recording to create a final balanced mix

**Multi-track Recording:** a recording where each individual musical line is recorded onto a separate track so they can be manipulated and mixed afterwards

**Panning:** positioning of sound anywhere in the left to right spectrum of your speakers

**Quantisation:** used in processing / measuring the amplitude of the analogue signal

**Reflection:** how sound waves bounce off surfaces

**Reverb:** when sound reflects off the surfaces in the environment

**Reverse:** a signal played backwards

**Rhythm:** patterns of long and short sounds

**Sampling:** reusing a portion of sound in a new recording

**Sequencing:** inputting musical information into a sequencer or DAW

**Stereo:** when sound is recorded on two different channels and comes out of two speakers, the left and the right

**Synthesisers:** an electronic instrument

**Tempo:** the speed of a piece of music

**Texture:** the overall effect of how melody, harmony and rhythm are combined in a piece of music

**Timbre:** the specific tone or quality an instrument has

**Velocity:** How hard a note is played



# Musical Theatre / Choreography (Musical Theatre – see also Music and Acting)

**Accent:** a movement or shape performed to give emphasis

**Accumulation:** one dancer performs a phrase, other dancers join in one after another until performing in unison

**Actions:** travelling, turning, elevation, leaps

**Adagio:** slow, flowing and graceful movements

**Alignment:** correct placement of body parts in relation to each other, important for health and safety

**Allegro:** fast, lively movements

**Arabesque:** standing on one leg, working leg is fully straight, extending long behind the dancer

**Attitude:** standing on one leg with the other lifted (front or back). The leg in the air is bent, usually to a 145 degree

**Beat:** rhythmic unit of time

**Binary:** structure of a dance, consisting of two parts **AB**

**Book:** the dialogue and storyline of the musical

**Canon:** choreographic device where dancers perform the same movement at different times, overlapping the previous one

**Chorus:** type of refrain, repeated between verses / group of performers

**Contact Improvisation:** creation of movement without planning, where working with another dancer, parts of the body must always be touching

**Contraction:** curving the spine forward, starting from hips

**Contrast:** movements or shapes with nothing in common

**Duet:** performance with two dancers

**Dynamics:** qualities of the movement based on speed, strength, flow

**Episodic** – choreography with several sections, linked by a theme

**Improvisation:** creation of movements without planning

**Inversion:** performing phrases or sections upside down

**Isolations:** movement which only involves one part of the body

**Jukebox Musical:** a musical with a plotline based around existing songs

**Mirroring:** two or more dancers perform the same movement while facing each other

**Motif:** a movement / phrase repeated in different ways

**Narrative:** the story of the dance

**Phrase:** a short sequence of linked movements

**Posture:** the way the body is held

**Relationships:** the way dancers interact

**Repetition:** repeating movements or motifs

**Retrograde:** reversing the actions of a phrase or sequence

**Revue:** a musical show without a narrative storyline

**Ronde de Jambe:** movement where the leg is moved in a circular motion

**Rondo:** structure, three or more sections, alternating between the main theme and additional ones – **ABACAD**

**Solo:** one dancer

**Syncopation:** movements which do not occur on the main beat

**Tempo:** the speed of the dance

**Ternary:** structure of a dance, in three parts – **ABA**

**Transitions:** movements linking phrases or sections

**Unison:** two or more dancers performing the same move at the same time





# Costume Design

**Accessory:** an item worn with a costume but not part of the main outfit, for example, a scarf, belt, jewellery

**Applique:** a decorative technique, fabric shapes are cut and sewn onto larger pieces

**Backstitch:** hand stitching technique

**Basting:** sewing fabric together with long temporary stitches

**Bias:** diagonal direction on a fabric

**Boning:** thin strips of material used to stiffen garments

**Box Pleat:** a pleat often wider and flatter than a traditional pleat

**Brocade:** rich, decorative fabric with raised pattern

**Cable Knit:** style of knitting where textures of crossing layers are created

**Calico:** plain woven textile made from unbleached cotton

**Chalk Wheel:** a tool for marking fabric with chalk

**Cincher:** a type of belt or underwear worn to cinch the waist

**Cotton:** type of material, easy to dye or alter, cheap and easy to replace, can rip easily and is slow to dry when wet

**Elastic Shirring:** gathering fabric using elastic thread to create a ruffled effect

**Darning:** sewing technique for repairing holes or worn areas of fabric

**Distressing:** techniques used to make costumes look worn

**Dress Rehearsal:** final rehearsal in costume

**Dye:** changing the colour of fabric using a solution

**Eyelet:** small hole, usually used for decoration or lacing

**Filigree:** delicate work of fine silver or gold

**Fittings:** adjusting the costumes to the performer's body

**French Cuff:** double length cuff folded back and fastened with cufflinks

**Gondola:** moveable costume rack

**Herringbone:** V shaped weaving pattern, often found in tweed

**Mannequin:** dummy used to display costumes

**Millinery:** the art of creating hats and headpieces

**Monogram:** a motif of two or more letters, usually a character's initials

**Mood Board:** visual representation of an idea, swatches of fabric, colours

**Naturalistic:** style of performance, a costume would need to be realistic and believable

**Pinking Shears:** scissors with a serrated blade, creates a zig zag effect and prevents fraying

**Pleat:** a fold in the fabric

**Swatch:** sample of fabric to demonstrate the colour, texture, themes of costumes

**Trimming:** decorative detail

**Tulle:** lightweight, fine stiff netting, often used for underskirts or veils

**Quilting:** two or more layers of fabric are sewn together with padding in between

**Smocking:** decorative embroidery

**Swatch:** a sample of fabric

**Underlining:** material sewn directly into the back of a costume for stability

**Wardrobe:** general name given to the costume department

**Weave:** interlacing threads to form a fabric



# Lighting Design

**%:** the percentage of light used on a lamp, the intensity of light will create different moods

**Backlight:** lighting from the back of the stage, creates depth and makes the actor stand out

**Barn Doors:** can be used to create sharp edges of light

**Beam:** a beam of light

**Blackout:** creates moments of darkness on stage

**Chasers:** an application used to flash lanterns on and off to create the effect of movement

**Cross Fade:** moving from one lighting effect to another, this is done by softening the effect into each other to create a smooth transition

**Cyclorama:** a white wall or cloth at the back of the stage where light of images can be projected

**Dimmer Board:** allows the lighting operator to pre-set an effect while another is running

**Flood:** type of lamp which gives a strong stream of light over the stage

**Follow Spot:** type of lamp which can follow an actor around the stage

**Footlights:** lamps placed low at the front of the stage. This throws a strong light on actors' faces

**Fresnel:** a spot which has a soft edge to the circle of light, this can be reduced or extended

**Gauze:** material which can be lit from both sides, it is transparent when lit from the side and opaque when lit from the front

**Gels:** thin pieces of heat-resistant plastic in different colours. Placed in front of lamps to create colour on stage

**Gobo:** creates an effect, mood or location, by projecting an image on stage. Made from thin metal cut into different shapes and placed in a profile lamp

**L.E.Ds:** available in Profile, Fresnel, Flood, Parcan. Colours can be changed by a lighting desk or the back of the lamp instead of using a gel

**LFX:** abbreviation for lighting effect

**Mirror Ball:** large ball, containing hundreds of tiny mirrors, hung above the stage, throws circles of light around the room as it moves

**Pre-set:** lighting state while the audience take their seats. Usually done to create the mood or emphasise a part of the stage, character or action

**Profile Spot:** a lamp which creates a circle or square of light intended specifically for one part of the stage, with a soft or hard edge

**Pyrotechnics:** special fireworks designed for the stage. A licence will be needed for these

**Rig:** structure of metal frames above the stage where the lamps are hung

**Side Lights:** lighting from the side of the stage to light half of the stage, creates a dramatic effect

**Slow Fade:** lights fade up or down slowly, usually at the end of a scene

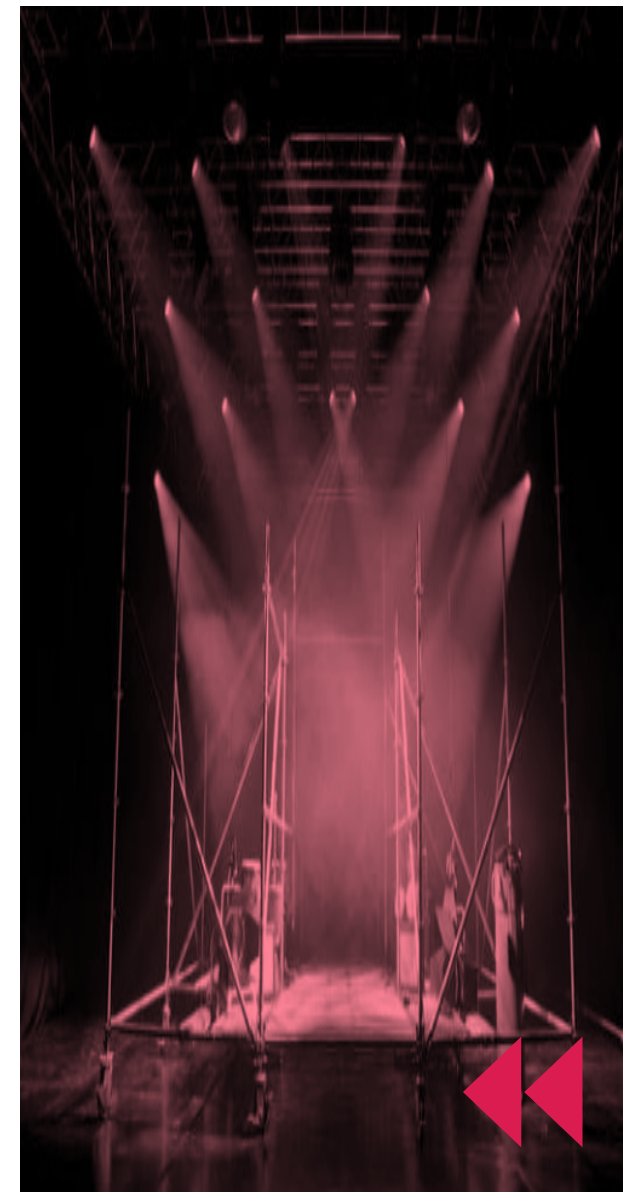
**Snap:** the lighting change is quick and instant, switched on / off in one movement

**State:** the term used to describe what lights are on at a given time

**Strobe:** light which moves at a fast beat, often used to create the effect of movement in slow motion

**T-bars:** T-shaped moveable bars to hold lamps, useful for a small scale touring company

**Wash:** term used to describe a general lighting cover on stage

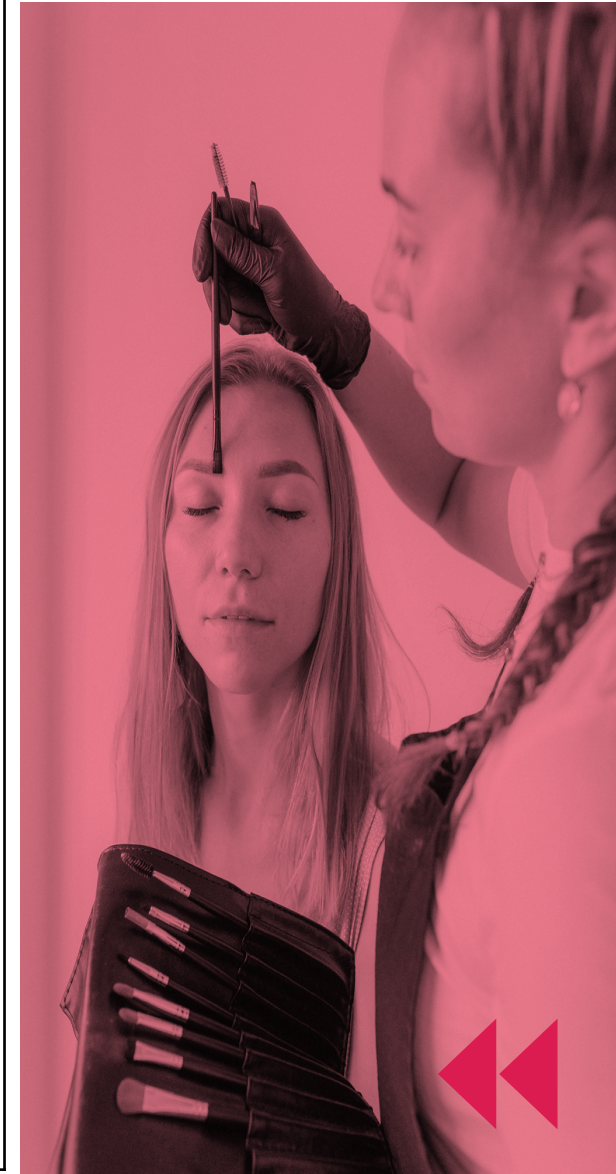




# Make Up and Hair Design

**Acetone:** solvent used to remove skin adhesive from wigs  
**Alginate:** a powder made from seaweed, used to make casts of body parts  
**Applicator:** a tool used to apply make-up, for example, brush, sponge or wand  
**Backcomb:** combing hair from the end of the strand towards the scalp, creating a thicker look  
**Bake:** technique involving applying a thick layer of translucent powder over foundation, then leaving it to sit before dusting off  
**Balayage:** hair colouring technique  
**Bald Cap:** usually made of silicone or latex  
**Base:** initial layer of make-up applied to create an even skin tone  
**Blend:** merging different make up colours or products to create a smooth finish  
**Braid:** hairstyle created by weaving strands of hair together  
**Collodion:** liquid make up for creating scars  
**Contour:** technique used to define areas of the face  
**Derma Wax:** putty used to create skin wounds  
**Dewy:** a make-up finish giving a healthy, radiant glow  
**Exfoliate:** process of removing dead skin cells from the surface of the skin  
**Flashback:** when the camera bounces off make up, for example, some powders, creating a white appearance  
**Greasepaint:** make up supplied in stick form  
**Guide Comb:** comb with graduated teeth  
**Hairpiece:** a small section of hair attached to the scalp or performer's own hair to create volume or a specific style  
**Halo Eye:** technique used where a lighter colour is applied to the centre of the eyelid, this is surrounded by a darker colour

**Henna:** a natural dye, often used to create temporary tattoos or hair colour  
**Highlighting:** using a lighter shade of colour to bring attention to certain features  
**Illuminator:** product used to add a subtle glow or shimmer  
**Infill:** adding new hairs or filling gaps in eyebrow or eyelash extensions  
**Intensity:** level of pigmentation in a product  
**Iridescence:** gives off a shimmering effect in the light  
**Kabuki Brush:** a dense, short handled brush  
**Kohl:** eyeliner ingredient made from soot or charcoal  
**Liquid Latex:** used for special effects, can be applied on skin to create wrinkles  
**Matte:** a finish which has no shine  
**Neutralising:** using make up to balance out certain colours, for example redness  
**Pancake:** water based make up powder, applied with a wet sponge  
**Pigment:** the colour or tint of make up or dye  
**Prosthetics:** the use of sculpting and moulding to create a different look, for example different facial features. Usually glued to the performer, rather than painted or moulded onto the skin like in SFX  
**SFX:** special effects  
**Waterline:** area below the eye but above the lower lashes  
**Wig Block:** head shaped block  
**Xanthan Gum:** natural ingredient often used as a thickener



# Set Design

**Amphitheatre:** a circular or oval open-air venue

**Apron:** part of a proscenium arch stage which extends past the curtain

**Auditorium:** the part of the theatre where the audience sit, often referred to as the 'house'

**Backdrop:** large canvas or cloth on the back wall, usually painted and hung

**Brace:** support used to strengthen scenery, for example a flat

**C.A.D:** computer aided design

**Carpentry:** building set pieces using structures of wood

**Composite Set:** a set which remain the same throughout a play, often reflects a mood or theme

**Counterweight System:** a series of pulleys and weights used to balance and move scenery

**Cue:** a signal for a scene change

**Cyclorama:** a white wall or cloth at the back of the stage where light of images can be projected

**Downstage:** the area of stage closest to the audience

**Flat:** a frame covered with wood or canvas, used to create walls or scenery onstage

**Fly System:** a system of ropes, weights and pulleys used to move scenery vertically

**Gauze:** material which can be lit from both sides, it is transparent when lit from the side and opaque when lit from the front

**Ground Plan:** a scale drawing which shows the layout of the stage and set pieces

**Model Box:** a 3D scale model representation of the set

**Muslin:** cotton fabric used to create backdrops

**Naturalistic:** style of performance, a set would need to be realistic and believable

**Promenade Theatre:** the audience move around different spaces and follow the action rather than sitting in one place

**Properties:** items used in performance, either on stage or personal props for a character, for example drinking glasses, telephone

**Proscenium Arch:** type of staging where the audience face the main stage

**Rake:** a sloped stage

**Revolve:** staging which can rotate

**Rostrum:** raised platform

**Sight Lines:** what the audience can see from their seats

**Spattering:** a painting technique that involves flicking small droplets of paint onto a surface to create texture or a speckled effect

**Strike:** the process of taking down a set

**Tab:** a curtain which splits in the middle and opens to the side

**Technical Rehearsal:** in theatre, a rehearsal where the play is run from cue to cue

**Thrust Stage:** staging extends out into the audience on three sides

**Trap:** an opening in the stage floor

**Truck:** a moveable platform on wheels

**Upholstery:** the materials used to cover furniture

**Upstage:** area of the stage furthest from the audience

**Vomitory: (Vom)** an entrance or exit leading directly to the seating area

**Wings:** the area to the side of the performance space





# Sound Design

**Acoustics:** the way sound travels around a room or space

**Amplification:** increasing the volume of sound

**Automation:** the use of software or systems to control audio changes during a performance

**Boom Microphone:** a mic mounted on a boom arm

**Cardiod Microphone:** unidirectional microphone, picks up sound from the front

**Cue:** signal for an effect, possibly a line of dialogue or action

**Diegetic:** sound the characters can hear on stage, for example a telephone ringing

**Drone:** one long note held for a considerable period of time to create an atmosphere of terror

**Echo:** when the voice or sound is thrown back, imagine the actor is in a cave

**Fade:** an effect or cue is gradually increased / decreased

**Handheld Mic:** a microphone held by a performer, useful for singing

**Harmonics:** frequencies that are multiples of a fundamental frequency, contributing to the timbre of the sound

**Hiss:** high frequency noise, often caused by electronic devices or poor-quality recordings

**Input:** where a signal enters a device or system

**Isolation:** reducing the sound leakage between different microphones

**Jack:** a type of audio connector

**Leitmotif:** a short musical phrase which tells a story to represent a character or idea

**Live Music:** music played live on stage

**Loop:** a repeating section of sound material

**Loudspeaker:** placed carefully around the space can throw the sound from different directions

**Mixer:** electronic device which combines, processes and manipulates audio signals

**Monitor:** a speaker used on stage and in recording studios to allow performers to hear themselves

**Mono:** audio recorded and played using one channel

**Mute:** silencing a specific channel or track

**Non-Diegetic:** sound which the character can't hear, for example an underscore

**Normalisation:** adjusting the gain of an audio recording to a standard desired level without altering the whole mix

**Offstage:** area of the stage not seen by an audience, this is often where sound cues are managed or effects created

**Radio Microphone:** a microphone usually placed on the face, in the actor's hair, or clipped onto their costume

**Reflection:** how sound waves bounce off surfaces

**Rifle Microphone:** a microphone which can lift sound from far away

**Sequencer:** device or software for recording and playing back music by using pre-recorded sounds and samples

**SFX:** abbreviation of sound effect

**Sound Effects:** can be recorded or created live (**Foley Effects**) for example glass shattering, gunshot, rain falling

**Soundscape:** a montage of effects layered to create a mood, can be done live by performers using their voices, or recorded

**Technical Rehearsal:** in theatre, a rehearsal where the play is run from cue to cue

**Underscore:** quiet music played under the dialogue or action to create a particular mood

**White Noise:** head noise, interference



# Performing Arts

**Audition:** opportunity for a performer to showcase their talent

**ASM:** assistant stage manager

**Book:** copy of the script kept by the stage manager which includes all the cues

**Box Office:** where tickets are sold

**Choreographer:** someone who creates a dance

**Commission:** an opportunity for an artist to create new work usually in response to a given brief or set of instructions from a client

**Composer:** someone who writes music

**Ensemble:** a group of performers

**Equity:** a union for people working in the performing arts

**Flashmob:** a large public gathering where people take part in a seemingly random action. Can be used to generate interest in an event or start a discussion

**Fringe Theatre:** often experimental in style, usually small scale venues

**Front of House:** the public area of a venue

**Get-in:** setting up for a performance

**Get-out / Strike:** packing up after an event

**Insurance:** legal protection

**Licence:** permit to do something, for example, play music, sell items

**Marketing:** how a performance is promoted

**Matinee:** an afternoon performance of a show

**Merchandise:** items for sale at an event, for example, copies of CDs, T Shirts, programmes

**Orchestra Pit:** the area of a theatre where the musicians perform in a musical or opera

**Playwright:** someone who writes a script

**Practitioner:** someone working in a specific area of Performing Arts, for example, an artist, a theatre company, director, choreographer. They will often have a unique style or approach

**Pre-Production:** process of planning the elements of a performance

**Preview:** a performance for the public before an official opening of a show

**Promenade:** a performance which takes place in different locations, the audience move around

**Royalties:** payment to be able to use existing work of an artist

**Schedule:** A plan for how time is used, what needs to happen when?

**Set List:** list of the songs / tracks a musician intends to perform

**Sitzprobe:** first rehearsal between singers and the orchestra

**Swing:** a performer who understudies a number of roles

**Synopsis:** A breakdown of scenes in a play

**Target Audience:** who the performance is aimed at. It is important to know this when planning and promoting an event

**Technical Rehearsal:** rehearsal for plotting light and sound cues

**Understudy:** a performer who learns the part of a leading or supporting actor in order to step in if needed

**Venue:** location of the performance

**Warm Up:** a rehearsal to prepare for the upcoming performance, usually vocal, physical, mental preparation

