

Types of Stages

Thrust Stage: (<http://www.sceno.org/theatre-design-101/stage-types-thrust/>)

- Extends into the audience.
- Gives a nearly all-around view of the action from three sides.
- Backstage area can be present or not. (It is often a shallow recessed construction near the back wall.)
- Constructed backstage allows for a larger variety of design elements to be used.

Proscenium Stage: (<http://www.sceno.org/theatre-design-101/stage-types-proscenium-arch/>)

- Most commonly thought-of type of staging.
- The Proscenium Arch acts like a frame to the stage and the action of performance.
- Audience faces the stage straight on, as opposed to from many sides.
- There are wings to the left and the right side of the stage where actors can wait, exit to, or enter from.
- Scenery or props can also be stored in the wings.
- An "Apron" is a section of the stage that breaks past the Arch.
- Often the Apron is used for actors delivering an aside or soliloquy, speaking to the audience.

What is Scenography?:

- The word scenography is rooted in Greek where it simply is translated as "stage painting."
- H el ene Beauchamp says that scenography is "the science and art of the organization of stage and theatre space" ("Scenography as it Stands" qtd. From P. Pavis 39).
- Successful scenographic design should consider the collaborative nature of the theatre space: the visual interpretation and manifestation of the text/script (the designed space) must work with the performances of the actors. Meanwhile, both the design and the acting, must somehow strive to work with the imagination and perception of the audience to enhance the performance.
- A scenographer must create an environment that is more than just a static backdrop against which actors perform. He or she should work to enhance the characteristic quality of a performance, its atmosphere. When the stage and the performers come together, then the production becomes an organic whole, and is able to produce meaning (Jones 70).
- A good design should be based in the text of the play and should help inform the reading of the text.
- Through the atmosphere generated by the visual cues of performance, a scenographer should strive to engage the members of the audience.
- A scenographer should try to avoid visual clich es; and should be innovative!

Designing Shakespeare

Teachers' Instructions

Activity 4.1 / Shakespeare Learning Commons

Canadian Adaptations of
SHAKESPEARE

www.canadianshakespeares.ca

Some Important Principles of Design

- **Balance:** observing symmetrical or asymmetrical balance of design elements.
- **Proportion:** attention to the relative size and scale of design elements in relation to one another. Effective use of appropriate proportions.
- **Repetition/Rhythm:** Elements of patterning and visual flow through design elements. Often suggests movement.
- **Contrast/Emphasis:** Emphasis might be created through contrast; it is usually the focal point of the design. Can be created through colour, pattern, shape, texture, size or scale.
- **Harmony/Unity:** The elements of the design together are unified and coherent. A consistency and overall harmony of all the parts

Some Useful Resources

Images

- Rewa, Natalie. *Scenography in Canada: Selected Designers*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2004.
- *Designer Shorts*. Peter McKinnon, ed. Streetsville, ON: Associated Designers of Canada, 2005.
- *The Pictorial Stage*. Katherine Holmes, ed. Stratford: Shaw Festival, 1986.
- Davis, Tony. *Stage Design*. Crans-Près-Céligny, Switzerland: RotoVision, 2001.

Design Theory

- Baugh, Christopher. *Theatre, Performance, and Technology*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005.

Stage Templates

- *Scenography – The Theatre Design Website*. (<http://www.sceno.org/index.php>)

Other Resources

- Beauchamp, Hélène. "Scenography as it Stands / The Stands of Scenography." *Canadian Theatre Review*. Summer, (1992): 37-41.
- Jones, Robert Edmond. "To a Young Stage Designer." *The Dramatic Imagination: Reflections and Speculations on the Art of the Theatre*. New York: Methuen Theatre Art Books, 1987. 69-83.