

Types of Staging

Different types of staging and audience positioning have a large impact upon the atmosphere, the set and the way the actors perform.

Proscenium Arch/End On

'Proscenium Arch' is the most common type of staging in Britain. Large offstage areas allow this type of theatre to have complex sets, large casts and numerous scene changes. The audience sits on one side of the stage as if looking through a window.



Key Points

- In larger theatres, the audience can feel separated from the action.
- Scenery can sometimes be difficult to organise.
- It is easier for an actor to 'block out' the audience and perform naturalistically.

Traverse

'Traverse' is the most unusual type of staging. Various scenes can be set up simultaneously to allow movement instantly from one scene to another. The audience can see each other's reactions as they are sat on opposite sides of the stage.

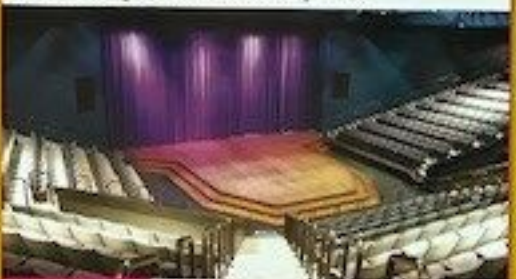


Key Points

- Actors should not keep their back to the same section of the audience for too long.
- Items of set in the central area need to be low level to avoid obstructing sightlines.
- The two ends of the stage are commanding positions where the actors can face the whole audience.

Thrust/Arena

'Thrust' staging is very popular in modern theatres. Complex scenery and ambitious set designs can be created using levels, backcloths or painted flats. The audience is close to the stage sitting on three sides, thus creating an intimate atmosphere.



Key Points

- No curtains separate the audience from the stage.
- It is difficult to change sets during a performance due to the lack of wing space.
- Large sets can be created using stage flats with working windows or doors.

Theatre in the Round

'Theatre in the Round' is commonly used in the circus and smaller venues. Although it is called 'in the round', it is often square shaped. The audience surrounds the stage which is an excellent way to create an intimate atmosphere and to allow interaction.



Key Points

- Staging/furniture must be low level and must not obscure the audience's vision.
- Careful attention to movement is required as the actors will always have their back to one part of the audience.
- 'Theatre in the Round' can successfully create an atmosphere of intimacy or entrapment.