Musical Theater Definitions

Musical – a play with singing, speaking, dancing, acting, costumes, scenery, etc…

Composer – the person who writes the music to a show

Lyricist – the person who writes the words to a song

Director – the person who directs the action and actors

Choreographer – person who creates and teaches the dance routines

Producer – the person in charge of the finances for a musical

Royalty – the money paid to the writer of the show for its use

Score – the book that contains the music of a musical

Script – the book that contains the words (dialogue) and *some* stage directions

Plot – the story of the musical; the main idea

Scenery – background material used to create a setting or place

Props – objects used by actors while performing

Costumes – clothing worn to create a specific look

Make – up – cosmetics used to highlight the face, create different looks, and enhance physical features

Upstage – the portion of the stage furthest from the audience

Downstage – the portion of the stage closest to the audience

Opera – musical drama that is ALL sung, plot is usually serious, little or no spoken dialogue

Operetta – similar to opera with a plot, songs, dancing, and spoken dialogue between the music

Minstrel Show – first form of musical theater created in America

Vaudeville – a variety show or revue with no plot… came after the minstrel show

Revue – a form of theater featuring skits, dances and songs; often based on one primary theme

Concept Musical - a musical with a non-traditional or non-linear plot, or no plot at all (Company, A Chorus Line, and Cats are examples)

Rock Opera - a musical in rock style, all sung with no spoken dialogue

Overture – opening instrumental music that plays themes from the show