

Melodrama - Learning Journey

In this topic, we will explore the origins of Melodrama and be introduced to stock characters in theatre. We will look at key concepts to communicate the performers intentions and explore key techniques and approaches to stage fighting. This will allow you learn and the develop the skills and style of theatre to independently block , direct and perform your own Melodrama.

- Lesson 1 - The origins of Melodrama & stock characters
- Lesson 2 - Exploring the concept of an aside
- Lesson 3 - Blocking & directing scenes
- Lesson 4 - Key techniques & approaches to stage combat
- Lesson 5 - Rehearsal & development
- Lesson 6 - Performance

What do I need to understand for this topic?
The origins of Melodrama Stock characters Directing, blocking, aside, thought tracking Music to communicate character intentions Stage combat
How will I know how to perform in a successful way?
Each lesson we will concentrate on developing a new skill or technique to inform and developing your understanding of Melodrama.
How will I practice working creatively?
You will work in a number of group each lessons using new skills and styles of theatre. This will encourage you to use a number of skills related to the style of Melodrama.
How will I be assessed?
You will make the artistic decision to create a melodramatic performance, using all the skills you have learnt this term. You will apply this knowledge and understanding in Melodrama into your final performance. This will be rehearsed and developed in week 5 and performed in week 6.

melodrama (n) a play characterised by stereotypical characters , exaggerated emotions, and simple conflict.	stock character (n) Stock characters in melodrama, like their earlier Greek, Roman and Italian counterparts, are types rather than fully-fleshed characters and appear over and over again in different stories.
aside (n) In dramatic works, an aside occurs when a character turns to the audience and makes a comment or remark that only they can hear.	blocking (n) Decisions about where actors enter, exit and stand on the stage is called blocking.
Stage combat (n) Stage combat is a specialized technique in theatre designed to create the illusion of physical combat without causing harm to the performers.	director (n) a person who supervises the actors and other staff in a film, play, or similar production.

Melodrama - Knowledge Organiser

Melodrama

Melodrama is a style of drama in which is characterised by its sensationalism. The characters are stereotypical and their reactions are exaggerated and highly emotional. The storylines extremely eventful, often with 'life and death' situations, intending to entertain and shock the audience. Good triumphs over evil in melodrama, with the baddies getting their come-uppance.

Stock characters

Stock characters are a form of stereotype, which we expect to see in a particular style of drama. Their appearance, behaviour and speech is predictable. In melodrama, we would expect to see, for example, the Maiden, the Hero and the Villain, and we would be able to identify them easily from their actions and appearance.

Language

The word choices made by the playwright/actor. Word choices can say a lot about a character, including social class, educational background, emotional state, relationships with others, nationality and profession.

Structure

The structure of a play is the 'shape' of the action. Typically in melodrama, we begin with **exposition** (who's who and what's going on), build **tension** towards the **climax**, draw the plot together through the **denouement** and end with **resolution**.

Costume design

With the characters being stereotypical, costume design in melodrama would usually reinforce these stereotypes. Colour might be used symbolically (red for danger, black for a villain, white for purity etc) and accessories might be added for dramatic effect, e.g. a cloak to swish menacingly.

Set & lighting

The set in a melodrama should create an atmosphere. There may be shadowy corners in which a villain could lurk. You may need several doorways for dramatic entrances/exits and thrilling chase sequences. Levels could also suggest status, such as high platforms for the powerful characters. The lighting could help create shadowy corners, or sudden flashes could add dramatic effect to surprise entrances. Colour could be used symbolically such as red for danger and white for purity.

