

Theatre History Unit – Grade 7

4 Class Days, 2 Exam Days

Caveman/Sanskrit – earliest written work

African – Anansi tales/Native Indian

Greek/Roman

Medieval/Elizabethan

Modern Theatre/Drama (radio – from plays to movies (prairie home companion, war of the worlds), tv – whose line is it, movies – adaptations from literature (lion king), internet – you tube) a brief mention of the forms

- why these theatre types were performed and used
- what was the purpose
- church/government's role in theatre

Theatre terminology

Theatre History 1

Check in – have you seen any concerts, movies, plays, musicals or other performances lately? Do you think that concerts are theatre? What makes them theatre? What does theatre need? (theatre is immediate, you need an audience) What about dance?

Caveman Theatre

10,000 – 40,000 years ago, early man lived in tribes set up as hunter/gatherers and community caretakers and were led by shaman, chiefs, witch doctor and had much superstition involved

Play: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1ZmZXicwugdfeature=endscreen&NR1

- Rituals to celebrate tribal happenings (successful hunt, successful fight)
- Artwork to describe what happened and honour the dead (cave paintings, shrunken heads) Why?
- Rituals to determine placement in their community: hunter/warrior/provider/gatherer, animal spirit,
 - o Dramatic events to set a person's status (determine the strength of a warrior, mating rituals)

Play: www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGgvkjV413M

Sanskrit Theatre

- from the cultures of greater India (used as language for Hinduism and Buddhism)
 - o 14th C BCE
 - o tribal, but organized into thinkers and doers
- 1st C CE is where you find the earliest evidence of written drama
 - o 3 stock characters: hero, heroine and clown
 - o Romantic in nature – Why might a clown be in a romance? What purpose does it have?
- Drama of this nature may have come from a religious nature and were performed by priests who performed on sacred ground and were skilled in dance, music and recitation



Hero, heroine or clown?



Sanskrit Tantrum Dance – still performed and taught in many dance schools.

African Theatre

- Tribal communities
 - o Determined place in the community: hunter, warrior, mate
- Anansi Folk Tales
 - o Similar “folk-type tales” to American Indian; where they solved how things were created

Play – www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWU2oyqCg5o

- Dance drama

Play – www.youtube.com/watch?v=gakNnigj4Ns What is happening (competition or celebration)? Do you see different types of people?

- Same dance set to modern life – note arm movements (may mimic birds and community life).

Pantsula Dance www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEvHmLw91co

- Another version of theatrics is performed by wailers at funerals who are expected to throw fits and cry and wail to show how much a person will be missed.

American Indian

- Tribal communities
- Shamanic healing and rituals in drama forms
- Celebrations to give tribe members a place in the community
- Rich heritage of folk tales and honouring their gods/spirits
 - o Hoop dances and drumming circles

Play - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wz8qAo8N4SY>

Handout – Fill in the blank #1

Handout – Native Symbols

Theatre History – Cavemen/Sanskrit/African/American Indian

Cavemen lived in groups called _____.

Their artwork showed images of _____.

Decisions regarding _____ was part of their dramatic tellings and tribal gatherings.

Sanskrit comes from the early culture of _____.

Stock characters in their plays were the _____, the _____, and the _____.

Early performances occurred on _____ grounds by _____.

Printed scripts date back to _____ CE.

African folk tales feature _____ who was a spider.

One unconventional use of theatrics was by _____ who “performed” around funeral services.

_____ was and is a big part of the drama performance as a tribe or community.

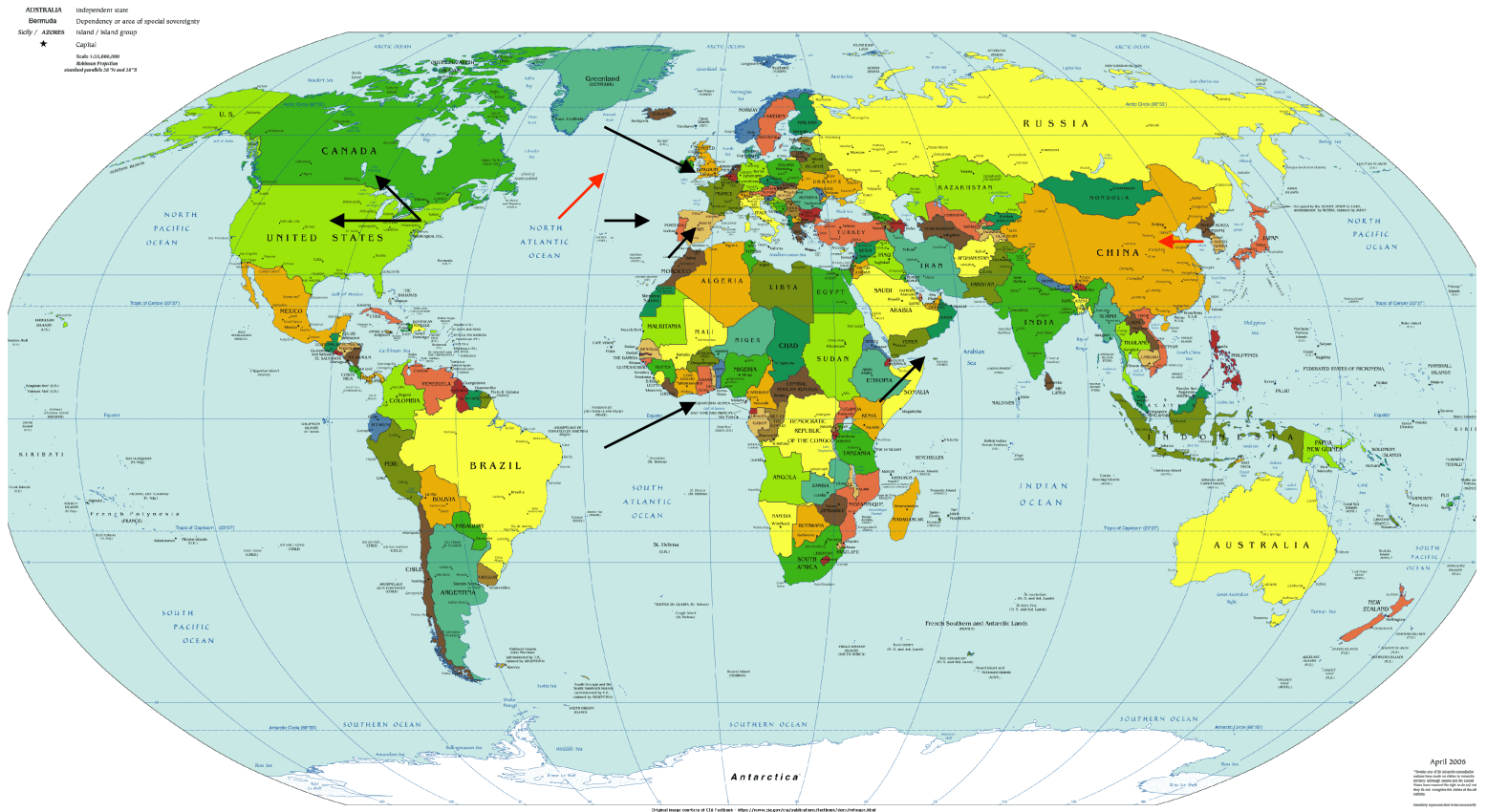
American Indian Shaman performed _____ regarding healing.

Folk tales spoke of the _____ that the people honoured.

_____ dances, _____, and other performances occurred at pow-wows and were meant to entertain and tell stories of the past.

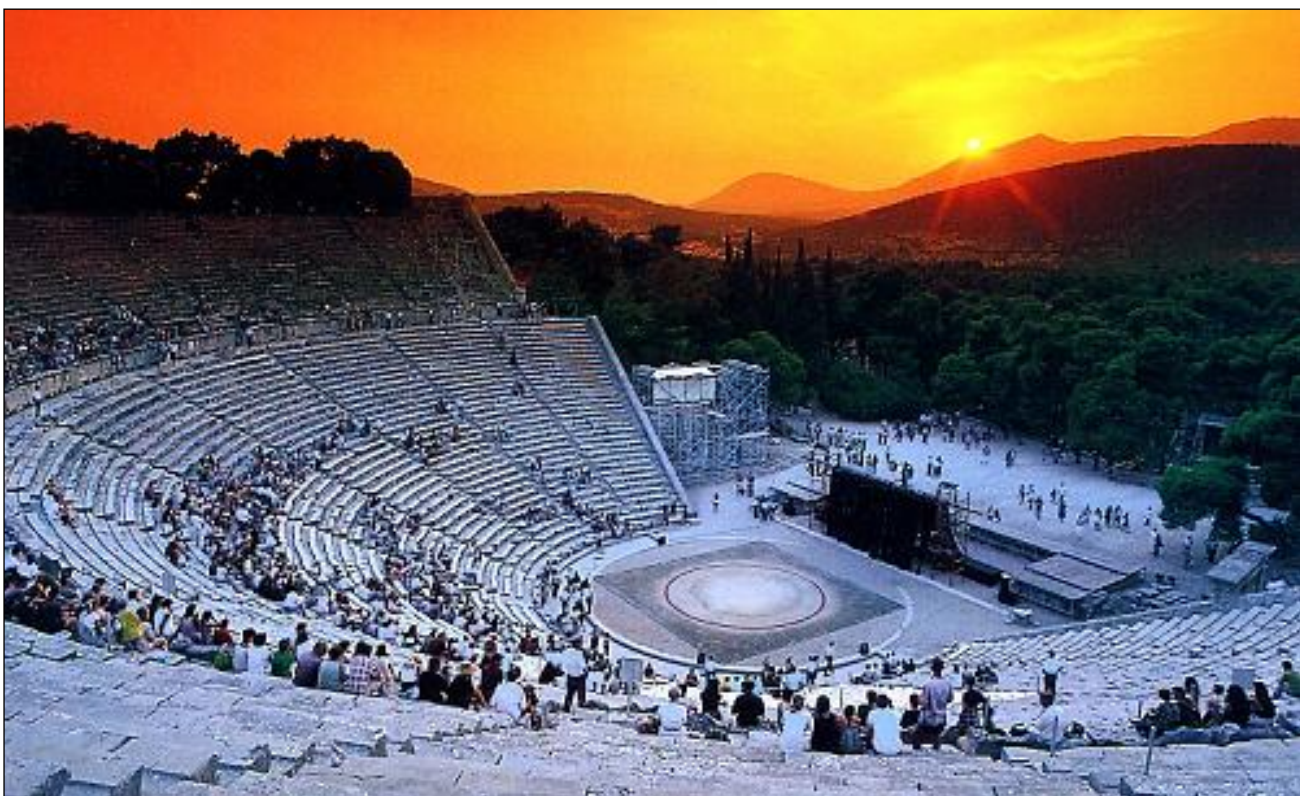
Theatre History #2

Political Map of the World, April 2006



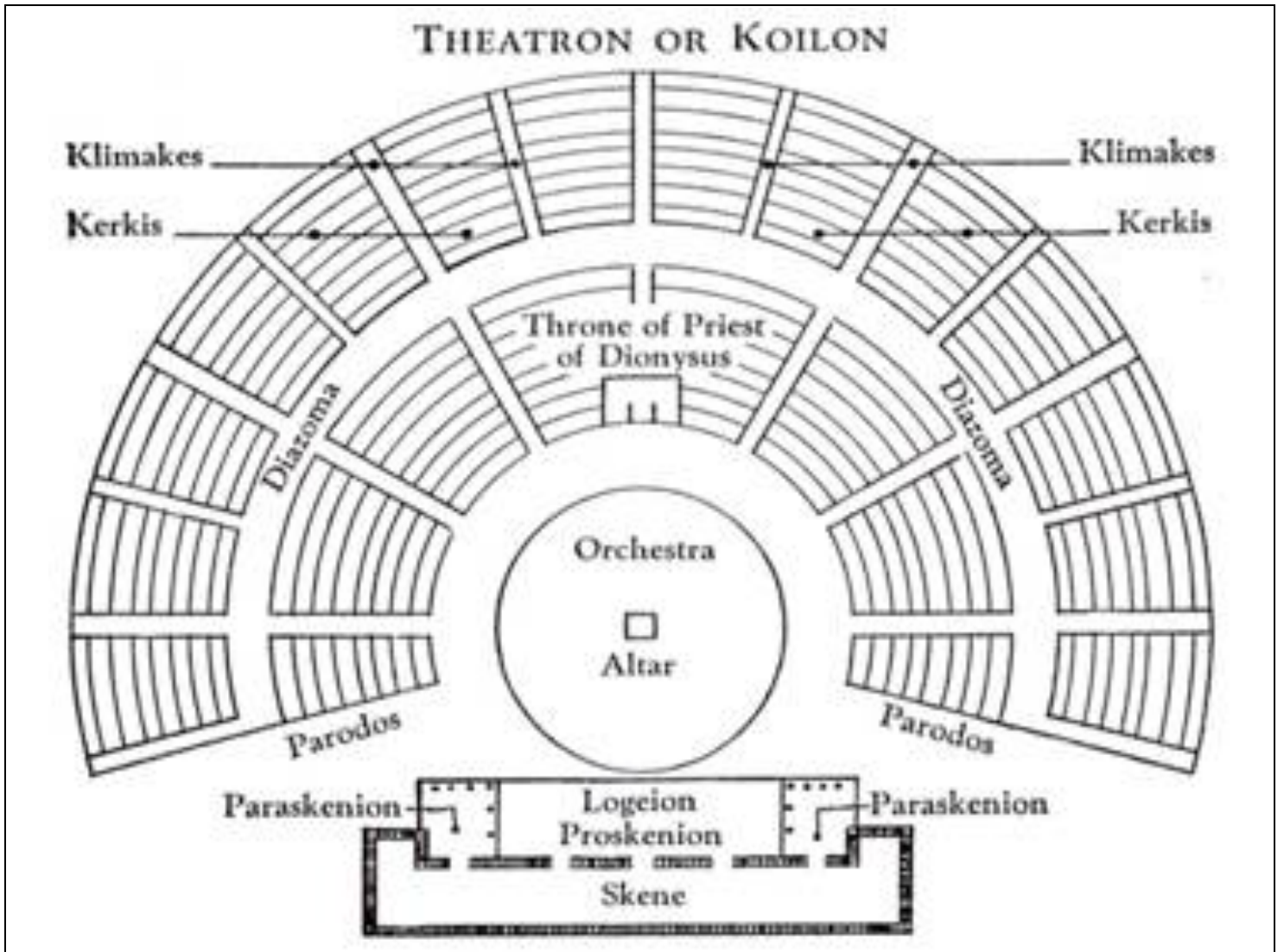
Greece

- **Theatre of Dionysus**; Athens, Greece
- 1500-1100 BCE by Mycean Greeks
 - o Festival in April as a precursor to spring
 - o Still practiced today
 - o Men were the only actors, no females on stage
 - o Celebration of wine (the grape harvest), song and dance





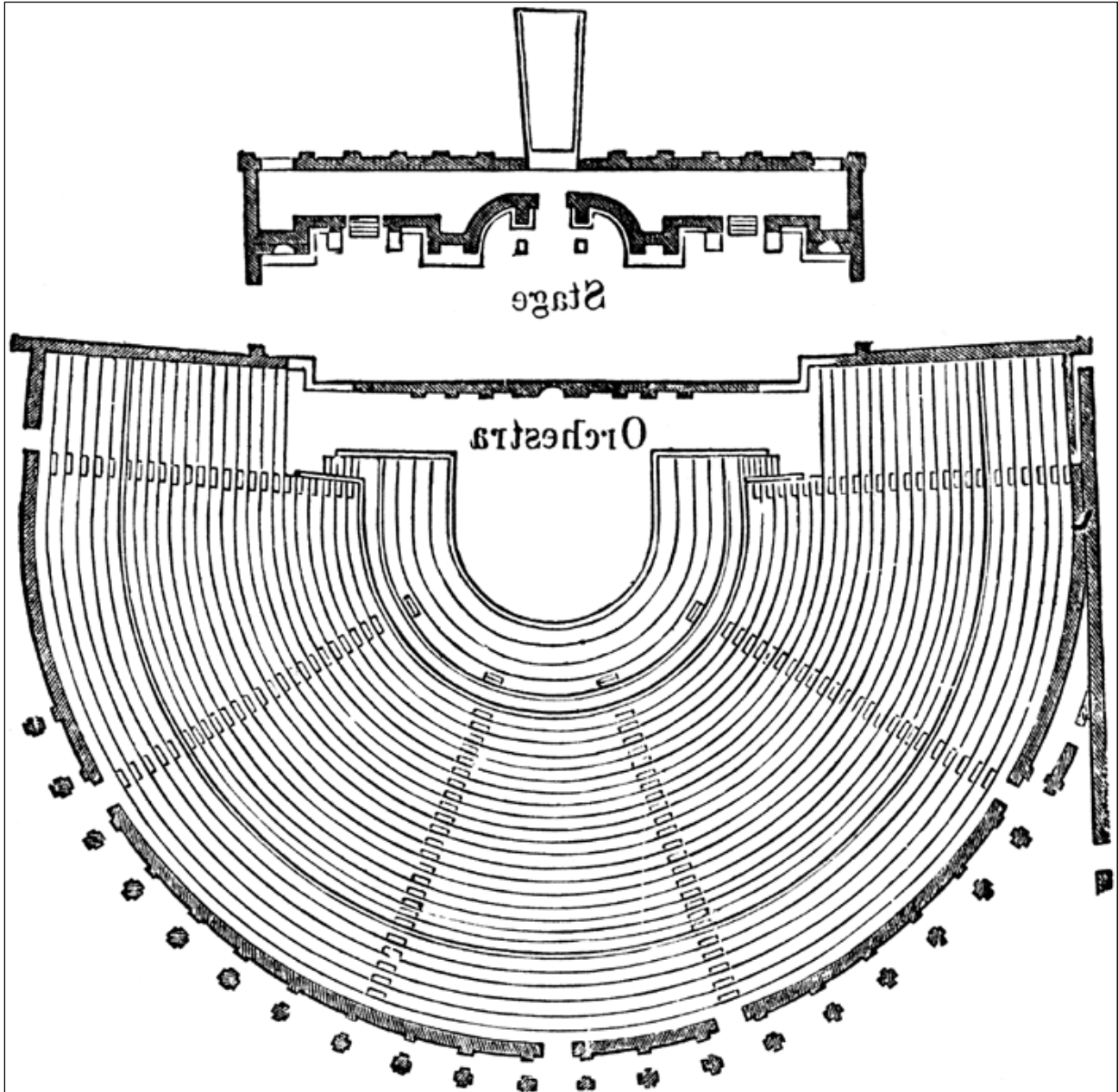
Dionysus Festival; Bulgaria



- **2 Major parts** of the Greek Theatre (Theatron): **Skene, Orchestra**
- Performed by a **chorus**.

Watch: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQXLPhysWqY>

Roman Theatre



- Cavea, Orchestra, Scaenae
 - pleasing the emperor, honouring the gods
 - bloodlust and separating classes and religions

- o Gladiators vs Lions



- Gladiators vs Christians



Watch: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ol67qo3WhJk>

- **Commedia Del'Arte**; Italy

- Clowns and masks; singing, dancing, dialogue
- Performed comedies mostly – and many plays were about the dangers of lust
- Improvised by professional actors
- 3 main stock characters: servant, master and lovers

Watch: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_0TAXWt8hY

Handout – Fill in the blank #2



Theatre History: Greek, Roman and Italian (Commedia Del Arte)

1. The festival that takes place at the beginning of spring is called The Festival of _____.
2. The 2 major parts of the Greek theatre are the _____, and the _____.
3. _____ did not take part in the performances. Only _____ were allowed on stage.
4. Roman theatre was about pleasing the _____ and honouring the _____.
5. Many plays focused on the themes of _____ and separating classes and _____.
6. The emperors and upper class got a front row seat in the _____.
7. Commedia Dell'Arte comes from _____.
8. Commedia Dell'Arte includes stock characters that fit into three categories: _____, _____ and _____.
9. _____ was the central theme for most plays but they also performed plays about the dangers of _____.

Theatre History 3

Elizabethan/Shakespearean Theatre



- Open air performances (originally on wagons stationed outside churches/cathedrals)
- Performed by men

- Visual details of the theatre
 - o Proscenium arch
 - Purpose of this: backdrops, realism, lights
 - o Back of stage was higher than the front (upstage and downstage)
 - o Stage was lit with lights at the front of the stage (footlights)

- Styles of plays
 - o Allegorical/morality
 - o Biblical
 - o Comedy
 - o Tragedy
 - o History
 - o Biography

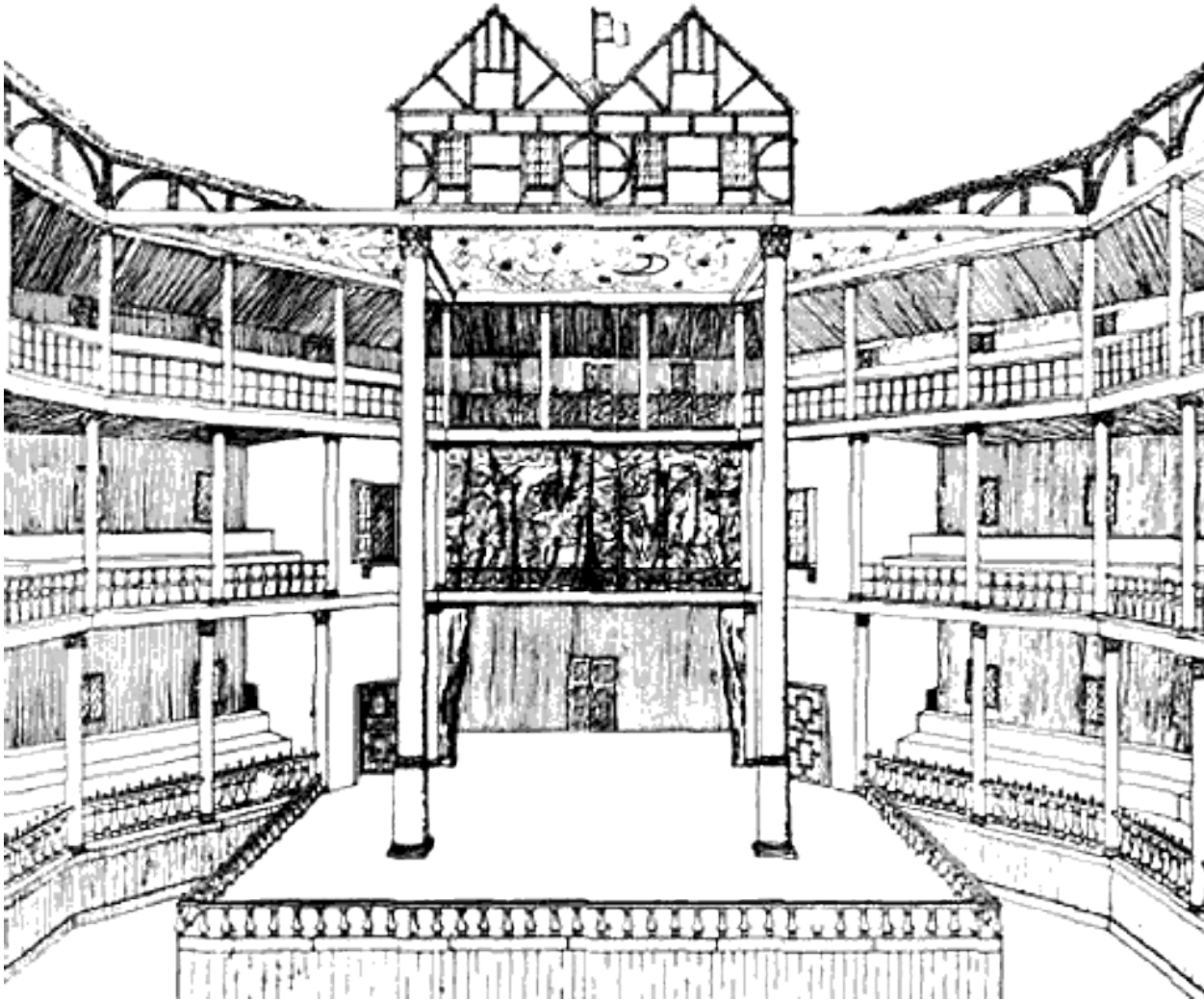
Romeo and Juliet: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6S6IJWilpx4>

Hamlet: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4sj1MT05IAA>

Twelfth Night: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4OhwrMidSU>

- The Globe Theatre
 - o Terms of the modern theatre
 - o Cyclorama, fly gallery, vomitorium, wings, stage right/left, apron, thrust stage, lighting, front of house, house,

Label Your Diagram



- **Hold on to this info for your Theatre History test**

Dates of the test:

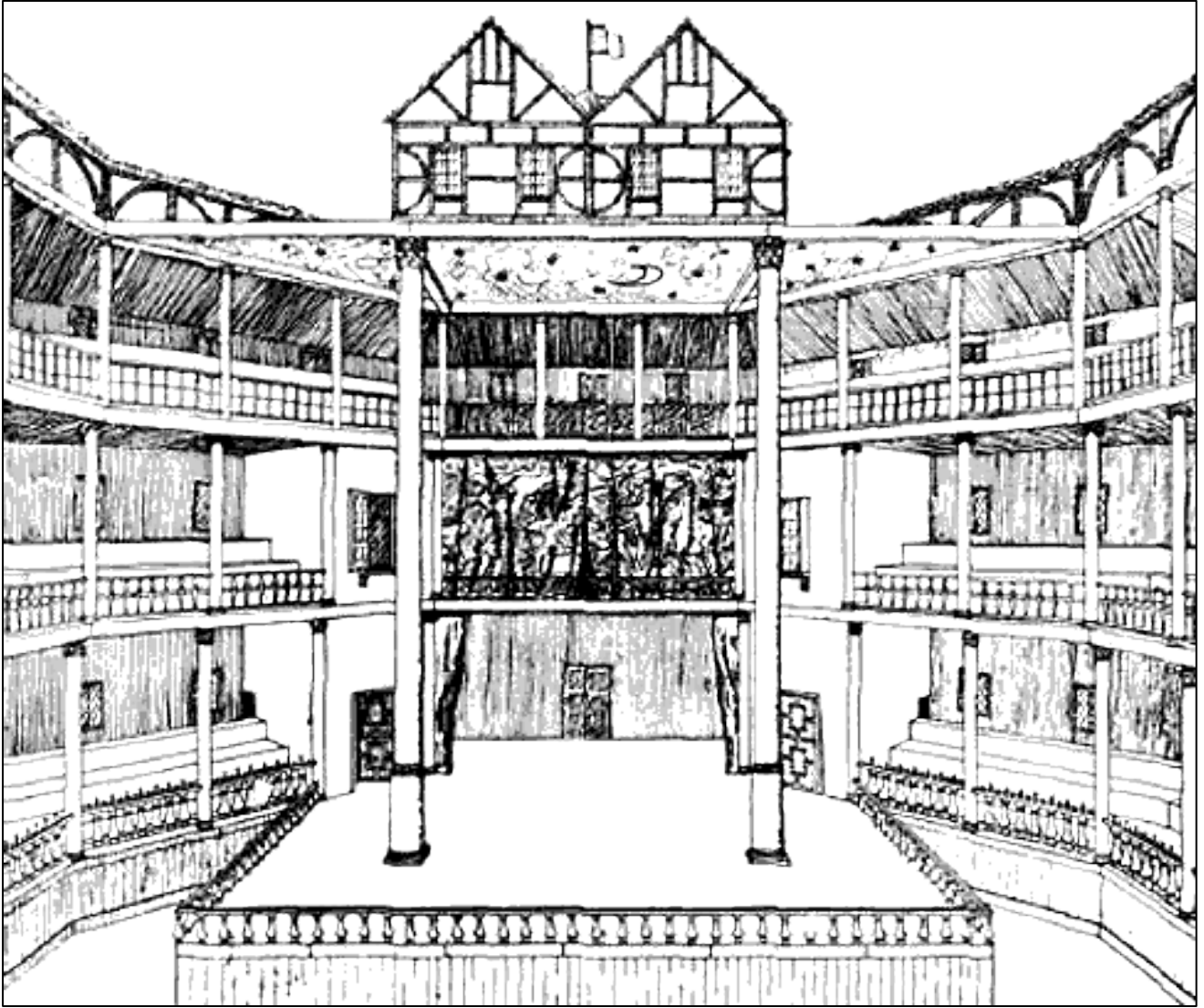
Handout – Fill in the blank #3

Handout – Label the Globe Theatre

Theatre History: Elizabethan/Shakespeare

1. The _____ Arch was becoming more common in theatres.
2. This arch was used to hide _____ and _____.
3. The stage was slanted which created _____ and _____.
4. _____, _____ and _____ are some of the types of plays found in Elizabethan theatre.
5. In order to light the actors _____ were placed at the front of the stage.

Label the Globe Theatre



Draw an arrow and label these parts of the theatre:

Cyclorama, footlights, Proscenium arch, gallery, thrust stage, vomitorium (wings), house, fly gallery, stage right, stage left, apron

Four Depictions of the Thunder God



Noh

Kyogen

Kabuki

Puppet

Nara Period
710 - 784
Imperial court moves to Nara, modeled upon Chang-an in China, at Nara. Though emperors are Shinto deities, they patronize Buddhism in the belief that its teachings will bring about a peaceful society and protect the state.

Heian Period
794 - 1186
Imperial court moves to Heiankyo (now Kyoto) to escape domination of Nara's Buddhist establishment.
961 - Revolt of Taira-no-Muchitaka. Although this revolt was unsuccessful, it signalled the rise of the bushi, or warrior class.

Medieval Period
ca. 1185 - 1600
Warrior replaces aristocrat as center of power.
Kamakura Period
1185 - 1333
Military government established in Kamakura by Minamoto no Yoritomo. Emperor, as figurehead, remains in Kyoto with the court aristocracy.

Muromachi Period
1333 - 1568
The shogunal headquarters move to an area of Kyoto called Muromachi.
1st Ashikaga Shogun, Takauji, 1365 - 1358

1400
3rd Ashikaga Shogun, Yoshimitsu, (1358-1408)

1467-1568
The 10 year-long Onin no Ran (Onin War) brings disintegration of central government, followed by the Sengoku Jidai (Era of the Country at War)

1500
Anshimomoyu Ma Period
1568 - 1600
Oda Nobun starts process of reunifying Japan after a century of civil war. He is followed by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598). Foundation of modern Japan is laid.

1600
Edo (Tokugawa) Period
1600 - 1868
Japan enters an age of peace and national isolation. 1603 - Ieyasu named 1st Tokugawa Shogun.

1700
Genroku Era
1689 - 1720
Tokugawa Tsunayoshi (1646-1709) Shogun from 1680-1709

1800
Meiji Era
1868-1912
The emperor is restored; Japan makes transition to nation-state.

1900
Taisho Era
1912-1926
Japan expands economic base within Asia and the Pacific.
Showa Era
1926-1989
Japan experiences World War II and its aftermath, as well as economic recovery.

1945 - End of WWII

1990
Heisei Era
1989-



Gigaku introduced by an immigrant from Korean Peninsula. Performances were held at Buddhist temples, and consisted of a procession of masked figures, followed by dances and mimes accompanied by flutes drums and cymbals.

Bugaku replaces Gigaku, & becomes the ceremonial music of the court. Music and Masked dance that included elements from China, Korea, India & Tibet. Aristocrats sometimes performed Bugaku dances.

Sarugaku (sangaku) imported from China. Acrobatics, music, magic, dance, comic pantomime & trained animal acts. Sarugaku performers were usually itinerants.

Imayo songs become popular at court, due to the interest of retired emperor GoShirakawa (1127-1192).

Soka (soga) songs become popular for warrior class in Kamakura. Songs drew on past literature as well as contemporary activities.

Shirabyoshi, female dancers, who donned male court caps and white robes, danced to percussion accompaniment, & sang songs, including imayo.

Successors to the shirabyoshi, the **Kawamae** dancers more closely integrated song and dance and had a lively rhythm.

Katarimono, or narratives recited to the rhythmical accompaniment of a closed fan tapped against the palm of a hand, a hand drum, the plucking and striking of the biwa, or, later to the shamisen.

ca. 1350 **Darugaku**, which combined Song, dance, and mime, was supported enthusiastically by the first Ashikaga Shogun, Takauji.

Kanami (1333-1384) while the head of a sarugaku troupe, attracts the attention of the third shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. Kanami and his son Zeami perform in 1374 for the shogun at the Inayama Shrine in Kyoto. Sarugaku Noh becomes part of the Cultural life of the capital. Zeami (1363 - 1443)

ca. 1450- 1600 Noh and Kyogen performed by both male and female professional troupes, as well as by amateurs.

1578 Earliest Extant Kyogen Scripts

Tokugawa Ieyasu orders 3 days of celebratory Noh and Kyogen performance, a practice continued by his successors.

Kita Shichiyasu Oshoyoshi (1586-1653) permitted to found the troupe, the first and last of the official Noh schools.

1697 - Shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi main actor (shin) 71 times, in 21 different plays, & performed independent noh dances 150 times. Also required his retainers and feudal lords to practice noh and sponsor plays and performance.

The Stage for Noh and Kyogen

Instruments used in Noh and Kyogen

Unewaka Minora I (1828-1909), & Hocho Kuro XVI (1837-1917) both actors, struggle to preserve Noh.

1869 - Duke of Edinburgh visits Japan, Noh drama presented for him.

1871 - Iwakura Tomomi (1825-1883) leads delegation of diplomats to West, sees connection between Noh and opera.

1878 - Iwakura Tomomi entertains Imperial family with Noh performances by Unewaka and Hocho, thereafter the Imperial family began to patronize Noh.

1879 - Ulysses S. Grant visits Japan, entertained by Noh and Kyogen play. Grant urged that the forms be preserved. As a result, Iwakura establishes the Noh Society.

1881 - Noh Society builds first permanent stage for the public in Shiba Park in Tokyo.

1947 - Women given legal right to perform Noh along with men.

1983 - National Noh Theatre opens in Tokyo

Gigaku Mask, Nara Period, 751

Bugaku Mask, Heian Period, 12th Century

Ippen (1239-1289) popularizes *nenbutsu odori*.

1603 Okami performs the first Kabuki dance (*kaibuki odori*) on the dry riverbed of the Kamo River in Kyoto.

1629 -- the shogunate bans women from appearing onstage.

1652 -- Only ADULT males allowed to appear onstage

1673 - Ichikawa Danjuro I (1660 - 1700) debuts in Edo, introduces aragoto (bravura style) acting

1683 -- due to number of quarrels in the playhouses, an ordinance was passed banning wearing awards in the theatre.

Sakata Tojuro (1644 - 1709) in Kyoto, introduces *wagoto* (gentle understated style) acting

1688 - 1703 Chikamasa Monzaemon writes Kabuki plays for Sakata Tojuro

1722 -- the "love-suicide" theme is banned, and performers in kabuki and puppet theatres forbidden to portray members of leading families, or important current events.

Namiki Shozo (1730-1773), playwright, borrows heavily from puppet theatre, also employs elaborate stage machinery. *Tsurayama Namboku IV* (1755-1829), Playwright, develops "raw-life" pieces, (*kiwaza mono*) depicting lower classes.

1796 - Namiki Gohki I, playwright, (1747-1808) moves to Edo from Osaka, marking the triumph of Edo as the theatrical center.

1813 - *Onnoda and Hisamatsu* (Namboku) 1817 - *Scarlet Princess of Edo* (Namboku)

Kawatake Mokuami (1816-1893), last great Kabuki playwright, portrays life in Edo. Raw life pieces, (in the tradition of Namboku) about thieves, murderers, and lowlives.

1840 - The Subscription List premieres (based on the noh play *Anaki*), an example of *manabumono*, dance plays derived from Noh and Kyogen, borrowing elements of Noh performance, as well as story.

Ichikawa Danjuro VIII (1791-1859) called for his opulent lifestyle.

1842 - authorities in Edo force theatres to outskirts of town, near the Yoshiwara pleasure district, banned performances within the precinct of shrines and temples, and prohibited publication of theatre related woodblocks.

1843 -- Ban on theatres at religious institutions lifted.

1859 - *The Love of Inayoi and Seishin* (Mokuami) 1865 - edict forbids excessive realism in the portrayal of thieves and prostitutes to avoid encouraging people from entering those professions.

1872 - Modern Kabuki Theatre commenced in the heart of Tokyo 1873 - the metropolitan government licensed ten theatres

1887 - Emperor goes to see a Kabuki play for the first time in history. Upper classes followed suit.

1889 - Kabuki Theatre opens with a Western style facade Ichikawa Danjuro IX (1834-1903) produces "living history plays" emphasizing historical accuracy, and dealing often with the recent past. Once Kikugoro (1844-1903) produces "clipped hair" pieces, domestic plays about contemporary men who had cut off their topknots and wore western clothes

1911 - Teikoku-gekijo (Imperial theatre) opens, Japan's first purely Western style theatre

1926 - theatre building burns down, destroying most of the valuable old puppets

1930's - government begins to support Bunraku as a traditional Japanese art

1955 - Bunraku designated an important intangible cultural asset by government

1966 - National Theatre opens in Tokyo, used mainly for Kabuki and Puppet plays

1984 - National Bunraku Theatre opens in Osaka

Odori (*nenbutsu odori*) dancing as a religious practice, advocated by the priest Kyoz (903-973). It involved more jumping or leaping movements than other types of dance. Decorative dancing, *furyo odori*. Processions of dancers in elaborate costumes with masks and decorated props. Frequently banned. Sometimes combined with *nenbutsu odori* in a syncretized form called *nenbutsu furyo*.

Late medieval records mention Noh plays staged with puppets

15th Century - *Kowaka*, recited narrative, mostly battle tales, and dancing to rhythmic accompaniment of hand drum or fan.

Seikyo bushi (sermon ballads) recited stories, accompanied by a variety of musical instruments, eventually added puppets to the performance. Stories were full of human emotion, particularly grief.

1555 Puppeteers associated with the Ebisu Shrine at Nishinomiya, invited to perform at imperial palace.

1570 - shamisen introduced from Ryukyu Islands. Shamisen accompaniment added to recitations of *A Tale in Twelve Episodes* (about Lady Joruri), Joruri Chanting form.

ca. 1600 *Joruri* chanting and Puppets combined and puppet theatre (or *ningyō joruri*) becomes a fully developed theatrical form.

1657 - Fire in Edo destroys most of the theatres and most leading *Joruri* chanters returned to Osaka.

1684 - *Joruri* chanter Takemoto Gidayu (1651-1744) opens theatre in Osaka. Develops new musical structure for puppet plays & collaborates with Chikamasa Monzaemon (1653-1724) 1690's - puppets given functional arms

1703 - Chikamasa returns to writing for *Gidayu* and the puppet theatre

1705 - Puppets perform in full view of audience, chanter and shamisen player moved from behind a curtain to a platform at stage left

after 1724 - puppets' eyes, mouths, and fingers made to move.

1734 - Yoshida Bunzaburo (d. 1760) introduces three man puppet, increases the importance of visual aspects of puppet theatre

1746 - *Sugawara and the Secrets of Calligraphy*

1747 - *Yoshitsune and a Thousand Cherry Trees*

1748 - *Chushingura*

1765, 1767 - The two major Puppet theatres in Osaka close, puppet theatre kept alive only in small urban theatres and countryside.

1780's - Masai Kabuki (d. 1810), stage name Bunrakuken, takes his troupe to Osaka and begins performing on riverbanks.

1811 -- Bunrakuken's daughter and her husband allowed to set up a theatre at the Inari Shrine.

1842 - *The Love of Inayoi and Seishin* (Mokuami) 1865 - edict forbids excessive realism in the portrayal of thieves and prostitutes to avoid encouraging people from entering those professions.

1872 - The Puppet Theatre moves from Inari Shrine to western part of Osaka, and is renamed the Bunraku Theatre

1909 - Poor management of the Bunraku Theatre led to its sale to the Shochiku Company

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Theatre History 4

Japanese Theatre

- Kabuki

- Traditionally performed entirely by men
- Popular entertainment
 - Linked to exaggerated expression for dramatic effect
 - Popular performances include tales of revenge and loyalty
- Linked to prostitution



- Bunraku

- Puppet theatre
 - No strings
 - Puppets are large – about one-half life size
 - Puppets are operated by 3 puppeteers
- Bunraku plays are historical and deal with the conflicts of social obligations and human emotions



- Noh Theatre

- Japanese claim it is the oldest existing form of theatre
- It is a combination of performing arts including a dance called **dengaku**
 - **It is a combination of song, dialogue** (mostly poetry & prose), **music and dance.**
- Acting troupes were patronized as shrines and temples because their performances were sermons as much as they were entertainment.
- Often performed outside but usually in a large theatre venue



- Actors
 - Shi-te – principal actor (centre stage)
 - Costumed in a mask and elaborate costume (5 layers of it!)
 - Last to arrive on stage
 - May change his mask mid-performance to reveal true self
 - Tsure – companion (stage left)
 - Waki – secondary actor (far right)
- No scenery, just props

- Plays (5 types) – **VERY LONG**
 - Gods
 - Warriors
 - Beautiful women
 - Various figures (modern figures or crazy women)
 - Demons

Watch: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o--VbWf6M0c>



Mask Activity

- Group into 4 students,
- Each student chooses a mask
 - o Using blank mask on a stick, colour the mask to suit a character
 - Gods
 - Warriors
 - Beautiful women
 - Various figures (modern figures or crazy women)
 - Demons
- Act out a scenario **WITHOUT WORDS** (may use musical sounds) using mask and body movement
- Perform for yourselves, perform for other groups in the last week of class.

Please leave your masks behind for us!

Handout – Fill in the blank #4

Handout – Laminated Noh masks

Theatre History: Japanese Theatre

Kabuki:

- Traditionally performed entirely by men
- Popular form of entertainment linked to exaggerated expression for dramatic effect.
- Popular performances included tales of revenge and loyalty.
- Also linked to prostitution

Bunraku:

- Puppet theatre
 - o Without strings
 - o Large puppets that were about half the size of real people
 - o Puppets were operated by 3 puppeteers
- Bunraku plays are historical and deal with the conflicts of social obligations and human emotions.

Noh Theatre:

- Japanese claim that it is the oldest existing form of theatre
- Combination of performing arts including a dance called **Dengaku** (combination of song, dialogue, music and dance)
- Often performed outside but was also done in large theatre venues
- Actors:
 - o **She-ti:** principal actor (centre stage), costume and mask were both very elaborate (often consisted of 5 layers of costume), last to arrive on stage, sometimes changed his mask mid-performance to reveal his true identity
 - o **Tsure:** companion (stage left)
 - o **Waki:** secondary actor (far right)
- Plays (5 types) VERY LONG
 - o Gods
 - o Warriors
 - o Beautiful women
 - o Various figures (modern figures or crazy women)
 - o Demons

