

Cosmic Stages: Astronomy in Theatre

Drama And Theatre · Answer Key · 20 Questions

1. Which famous 17th-century play by Bertolt Brecht dramatizes the conflict between the astronomer Galileo Galilei and the Catholic Church regarding the heliocentric theory?

A) Life of Galileo

- B) The Copernican Revolution
- C) Starry Messenger
- D) Planetary Motions

2. In modern theatrical production, what type of projection technology is frequently used to simulate the movement of planets and stars on a cyclorama?

A) Analog film looping

B) Digital LED mapping

- C) Mechanical shadow puppetry
- D) Oil-wheel light projection

3. The play 'Inherit the Wind' is famous, but which playwright wrote 'The Physicists', a play set in a sanatorium that deals with the implications of the universe's scientific discovery?

A) Friedrich Dürrenmatt

- B) Samuel Beckett
- C) Tom Stoppard
- D) Arthur Miller

4. What is the term for a circular stage or room, often used in theatre and planetariums, designed to create an immersive 360-degree view of the heavens?

- A) Proscenium
- B) Black Box
- C) Cyclorama

D) Rotunda

5. Which playwright wrote 'Arcadia', which features discussions on chaos theory, thermodynamics, and the heat death of the universe?

A) Tom Stoppard

- B) Harold Pinter
- C) David Mamet
- D) Caryl Churchill

6. In classical Greek theatre, what was the 'deus ex machina' machine originally used for, which metaphorically placed a character 'above' the terrestrial world?

A) Rotating the stage

B) Lowering a god from the sky

C) Moving planets

D) Creating star effects

7. What theatrical device is commonly used to create the illusion of twinkling stars on a black-draped stage?

A) Fibre optic curtains

B) Strobe lights

C) Fog machines

D) Reflective mirrors

8. The Globe Theatre's ceiling, representing the heavens, was traditionally known by what name?

A) The Sky

B) The Vault

C) The Shadow

D) The Canopy

9. Which astronomical event is often depicted in theatre using 'gobo' patterns on spotlights to project light through stencils?

A) Total Solar Eclipse

B) Lunar Phases

C) Meteor Showers

D) Supernova explosion

10. In the play 'Constellations' by Nick Payne, the plot revolves around the scientific concept of what?

A) The Multiverse

B) The Big Bang

C) Black Hole Singularities

D) Orbital Mechanics

11. What is the primary function of a 'star drop' curtain in a theatre production?

A) To block sound

B) To create a realistic night sky backdrop

C) To provide fire resistance

D) To hide actors during scene changes

12. Which historical astronomer's work was the primary inspiration for the play 'Kepler' by Philip Glass and Martina Winkel?

A) Johannes Kepler

- B) Tycho Brahe
- C) Nicolaus Copernicus
- D) Edwin Hubble

13. What specific lighting colour is most commonly used in theatre to represent the cold, dark vacuum of outer space?

A) Deep Congo Blue

- B) Amber
- C) Warm White
- D) Leaf Green

14. The play 'Silent Sky' focuses on the real-life astronomer Henrietta Swan Leavitt, who was instrumental in calculating what?

A) Distances to stars

- B) The mass of Jupiter
- C) The rotation of Saturn
- D) The temperature of the Sun

15. In theatrical set design, a 'traveller' curtain is often used to reveal a backdrop, which frequently depicts what astronomical feature?

A) The Milky Way

- B) A solar flare
- C) A planetary orbit
- D) A comet's tail

16. Which planet is most frequently referenced in theatrical metaphors regarding instability and change, due to its historically 'erratic' orbit?

A) Mars

- B) Jupiter
- C) Saturn
- D) Venus

17. What stage craft technique involves using small, high-intensity pin-lights to replicate the positions of constellations?

A) Fiber-optic star mapping

- B) High-key wash
- C) Side lighting
- D) Backlighting

18. What is the name of the theatrical play by Michael Frayn that explores the uncertainty principle, a concept fundamental to quantum mechanics and the universe?

- A) Copenhagen**
- B) The Universe
- C) Quantum Leap
- D) Atomos

19. In staging science-fiction theatre, what material is often used to mimic the surface of alien planets?

- A) Textured foam and acrylic paint**
- B) Real lunar regolith
- C) Hardwood flooring
- D) Velvet fabric

20. The 'celestial spheres' of ancient cosmology were a common motif in Renaissance theatre; how many were traditionally thought to surround the Earth?

- A) Seven**
- B) Nine
- C) Twelve
- D) Twenty