

BRECHTIAN CONVENTIONS

Breaking the fourth wall: This is where the wall between the audience and actors on stage is broken by actors interacting with the audience.

Tickle and Slap: Using humour as a way to make the message, once revealed more powerful.

Use of song, music and dance: This helps to remind the audience that they are not watching real life.

Narration: The narrator will tell the audience what is about to happen in the story, before it happens, because if the audience knows the outcome they may not get emotionally involved.

Coming out of character: To remind the audience that it is a piece of theatre.

Minimal set, costumes, props and lighting: Brecht believes the stage should be brightly lit at all times.

Using placards: A placard, or projection screen can be used to give the audience some extra factual information. This is writing displayed.

Tableaux: Used to break the action so the audience can stop and think critically about the key moment on stage.

Gestus: A clear character gesture or movement used by the actor that captures a moment or attitude rather than delving into emotion.

Bertolt Brecht

PRACTITIONER CONTEXT

Brecht wanted his audiences to remain objective and unemotional during his plays so that they could make rational judgments about the political aspects of his work. To do this he invented a range of theatrical devices known as Epic Theatre.

Epic theatre is a type of political theatre that addresses contemporary issues. Brecht believed classical approaches to theatre were escapist, and he was more interested in facts and reality rather than escapism. Epic theatre doesn't attempt to lay down a clear plot and story, but leaves issues unresolved, confronting the audience with sometimes uncomfortable questions to think about.



WIDER RESEARCH



Verfremdungseffekt, the 'alienation effect,' was used to distance the audience from the play. Brecht did not want the audience to have any emotional attachment to his characters, so he did various things to break it.
