

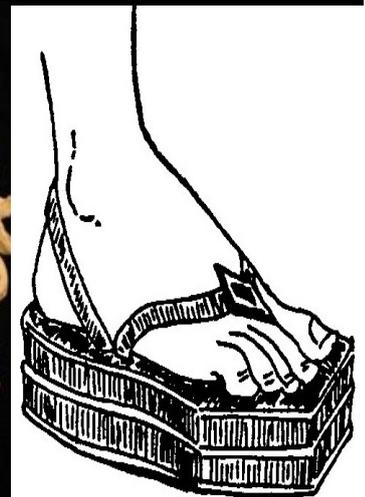
GREEK THEATRE

WHEN? - Most Greek theatre was produced in the 5th century BC. Around this time Greeks wanted to celebrate achievements in sport (the Olympics was invented) and were developing democracy as well as being very religious. They used the theatre to explore the biggest questions about life, death, the Gods and politics.

WHERE? - Mostly in major cities such as Athens. The theatres, called amphitheatres could seat up to 14,000 people and going to the theatre was seen as so important in making you a better person that even prisoners were brought out of jail for the day to watch the plays. The plays were performed at a festival (competition) celebrating Dionysus (the god of wine)

WHO? Thespis is said to have 'invented' the actor (hence the term thespian) when he got someone to step out of the chorus and speak on their own. Aeschylus and Sophocles wrote tragedies and Aristophanes was famous for his comedies. All of the actors were men but as they all wore masks they could easily become female characters.

WHAT? - Greek drama was split in to 3 categories: tragedy which looked at big political issues in a serious way, satyr which were cheeky simple plays and comedy which made fun of everyday life.



DRAMATIC CONVENTIONS

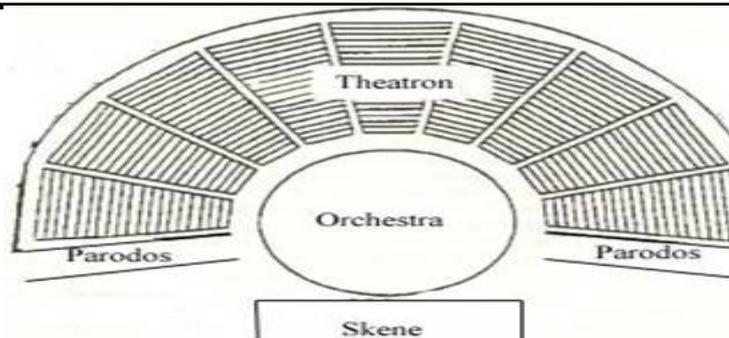
The chorus - a group of actors who commented on the action in the play. They used song and dance to have a bigger dramatic impact on the audience.

Unity of time, place and action- Aristotle said that in a play there should be a single plot (action) set in one place and in the course of one day (time)

Catharsis - the feelings of pity and fear that the audience feel for the protagonist (main character) after his downfall. The Greeks believed that if the audience felt this then they would learn to never do the bad things that the protagonist did.

Hubris - excessive pride—this was often the downfall of the main character

Reporting action - the Greeks didn't want to act out anything that they thought would be too distressing for the audience to watch, so things like battles and deaths were reported to other characters by messengers.



THE BUILDING

ORCHESTRA—Where the chorus sung and danced

SKENE—A building for the actors to change in and a small raised stage for the actors

THEATRON—Where the audience sat—the acoustics were so good you could hear ever word from the back

PARADOS—Entrances for the chorus

FURTHER READING

<https://burtsdrama.com/2016/07/04/20-facts-about-greek-theatre/>

<http://www.historyforkids.net/ancient-greek-theatre.html>