

Drama – Musical Theatre



What is 'The Greatest Showman' about?

A musical about **P.T. Barnum**, who creates a circus celebrating unusual and talented people. At first mocked, the performers learn to be proud of who they are, and Barnum realises family and love matter more than fame.

Themes:

- Inclusion & Diversity
- Dreams & Ambition
- Identity & Acceptance
- Family & Belonging

What is Dramatic Intention?

Dramatic intention is **the reason behind a performance** – what the **actor** or **playwright** wants the audience to experience, understand, or feel.

For actors:

- It's about how they use **voice, body language, and facial expressions** to show emotions, ideas, or relationships.
- Example: An actor might play a scene with the intention of making the audience feel sympathy, fear, or laughter.

For playwrights:

- It's about the **message or theme** of the play.
- Example: A playwright might write a story with the intention of exploring friendship, celebrating difference, or warning about greed.

Why it matters:

- It gives performances a clear purpose.
- It makes sure the audience understands the meaning behind what they see on stage.

Writers Dramatic Intention

The writers' **dramatic intention** for *The Greatest Showman* was to:

- **Celebrate diversity and individuality** – showing that people should be proud of who they are, even if society calls them "different."
- **Inspire audiences to follow their dreams** – P.T. Barnum's ambition shows the power of imagination and determination.
- **Highlight the value of love and family** – reminding viewers that true happiness comes from relationships, not fame or money.
- **Entertain through spectacle** – using music, dance, and visual performance to create joy and excitement.

Key Vocabulary and Drama Techniques

Stage Directions

- **Stage directions** are the instructions in a script that tell actors how to move, speak, or react in a scene. They are there to help you show the right emotions and make sure the scene looks and feels the way the writer intended.

Characterisation

- The way an actor uses their acting skills (voice, body language, facial expressions) to create a character.

Dynamics

- How loud or soft the singing is.
- Soft singing (piano) – used to show calm, sadness, or intimacy
- Loud singing (forte) – used to show power, excitement, or anger
- Crescendo – gradually getting louder (builds emotion)
- Diminuendo – gradually getting softer (can show fading or reflection)

Musical Theatre

- A style of performance that combines acting, singing, and dancing to tell a story.

Choreography

- The sequence of steps and movements in a dance

Ensemble

- A group of performers working together on stage

Refine

- To improve a performance by making changes to acting skills or blocking to make it clearer and more effective.

