

Drama – Musical Theatre



What is Hairspray about?

Hairspray is a book musical set in Baltimore, USA in 1962. Some of the key themes explored in this musical are racism, body image, acceptance, equality, dreams, and social change. Hairspray follows Tracy Turnblad, a plus-size teenager with big hair and an even bigger dream- to dance on the popular Corny Collins Show. After winning a spot, she uses her new fame to fight for racial integration on the show. Along the way, Tracy challenges society's narrow standards of beauty and fairness, proving that anyone can make a difference.

Hairspray is entertaining and upbeat, but also carries an important message about equality and fighting prejudice. It celebrates difference, challenges stereotypes, and shows how young people can lead social change – all through music and dance.

What are counts of 8?

- In music there are typically 4 counts, or beats, per bar.
- In dance we usually pair two bars together. These two bars equal a total of 8 counts, which is why dancers count in sets of 8.
- 8 counts keep track of the beat and tempo, but break up the song into manageable sections.
- After every 8 count, another 8 count begins, then another, and another.

Why do we count in dance?

- The counts help dancers move with correct timing and rhythm to match the music.
- Execute the same movements at the same time as a group. This is also called unison.
- By counting the music, dancers can better focus on their movements. As a result, they are able to create a more fluid and expressive dance.
- It also helps them to know when to change their dance steps and it allows choreographers to create specific patterns and shapes with their dancers.

Key Vocabulary and Drama Techniques



Book Musical

- A type of musical where the songs, dances, and story all work together to tell one full story. The 'book' means the script.

Choreography

- The sequence of steps and movements in a dance

Choreographer

- Creates the dances and teaches them to the cast. They must ensure all of the cast know their movement and are confident performing it.

Understudy

- Covers for lead roles when they are poorly, on holiday or need a rest.

Swings

- They cover all the ensemble parts, learning all lines and dances.

Ensemble

- A group of dancers who perform together as a team in a dance piece

Performer

- Learns the songs, choreography and dialogue for their role, rehearses and performs these combining the three disciplines

Formation

- Formation is the way dancers are arranged or positioned on stage or in the performance space.

High Energy

- High energy means dancing with a lot of power, speed and excitement.

Cue

- A cue in dance is a signal or sign that tells a dancer when to start, change, or stop a movement. It can come from the music, another dancers movement or a lighting/stage effect.

Refine

- To make your movements better and cleaner by practicing and fixing small details. Improving things like timing, shape, technique, expression and control.

