



SUMMER ASSIGNMENT 2021

THEATER 1 IB

LIVE THEATER EXPERIENCES

ANALYSING MOMENTS OF TENSION, EMOTION, ATMOSPHERE, MEANING

For your Summer Assignment, I want you to watch a number of theater performances from a range of different styles. Your writing will be used in your External Assessment: Director's Notebook, part B: Live Theater Experiences.

- ★ Select **three plays** to watch in total, **no more than one** from each category. (Honors students: 1 total)
- ★ As you watch, take a note of the timestamp of the moments that had the biggest impact on you.
- ★ After you have watched the whole thing, go back to these moments and select the best. Watch it again.
- ★ Is it a moment of Tension, Emotion, Atmosphere or Meaning? Or any combination of the above?
- ★ Now, pay careful attention to the production elements that compose it. **Write 300-500 words** to explain in which ways all the below production elements create Tension, Emotion, Atmosphere, Meaning:
 - What is the **stage design** like? What do we see on stage? Is there a **meaning** in it?
 - How are the **actors** using their **voice, body, face** or **gesture**? How are they **positioned** in space? What **tensions** or **emotions** does their acting reveal?
 - What are they wearing? Do their **costumes** have some **significance**?
 - What are the **lights** like? Are they changing in this scene? What **emotions** or **atmospheres** are they evoking?
 - What is the **sound** or **music** like, if any? What **emotion**, or **atmosphere** does it create?
 - Are there any other elements, like **video** or **image projections**? Describe them. What do you think they **mean**? How do they complement the scene?



A: Naturalism

Option 1: ***A Doll's House***, by Henrik Ibsen, directed by Carrie Cracknell

<https://edu.digitaltheatreplus.com/content/productions/a-dolls-house-digital-theatre>

(scroll to the bottom of this document for DT+ login details)

“In Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*, Nora Helmer, having fraudulently borrowed money to save her husband, is forced to reveal her secret and, in doing so, reassess her life as it stands.”

This is an 1879 Naturalism classic. Henrik Ibsen wrote from the point of view of a woman, something unheard of in his time and age, hence the play’s very bad reception and fierce criticism it received when it was first performed. Since then it has been immortalized as a classic that celebrates the right of every human - including women! - to happiness and self-fulfillment. Carrie Cracknell’s production takes place on Ian MacNeil’s magnificent stage design of a 19th century Norwegian home interior - turned modern.

Option 2: ***All My Sons***, by Arthur Miller, directed by Howard Davies

<https://edu.digitaltheatreplus.com/content/productions/all-my-sons-digital-theatre>

It’s been three years since the end of WWII and since Larry Keller has been reported as missing. Back in the Keller house in Ohio, Larry’s mother, Kate, is in complete denial of her son’s death, unlike her husband Joe and their other son Chris. When Chris brings Ann home, his brother’s former girlfriend, and announces his intention to marry her, the family’s dark secret starts unraveling: from father Joe’s shady involvement in the War business, to Larry’s disappearance. In true Arthur Miller style, *All My Sons* is nothing short of a modern tragedy, following Joe’s fall from ultimate success, to self-knowledge, to self-destruction. Watch Davies’ fast-paced production for its magnificent, detailed acting and real life dialogue.



B: Devised Theater

Option 1: ***A Disappearing Number***, by Theatre De Complicite, directed by Simon McBurney

<https://edu.digitaltheatreplus.com/content/productions/a-disappearing-number>

Ever thought that Mathematics would make a good topic for theater? *A Disappearing Number* tells the true story of the extraordinary collaboration between top mathematician and Cambridge professor G.H. Hardy and self-taught mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan, who made some of the most significant mathematical discoveries of the 20th century. Theatre de Complicite collaboratively explored Ramanujan's story and with it, they brought to light a multitude of other things: the magic of India, the story of a young couple trying for a child, the beauty of poetry, mathematics, as well as some of life's and death's most precious truths. Watch McBurney's production for its imaginative storytelling, use of physicality, transformative set design and use of media.

Option 2: ***The Encounter***, by Theatre De Complicite, directed and performed by Simon McBurney

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NbqScWEUCVNxmBhc5rnesk2rdGuSjDd1/view?usp=sharing>

The Encounter is the story of a man that got lost in the Amazon jungle and of his encounter with Mayoruna, an indigenous Amazonian tribe. It is also the story of a man that wrote a book about the man that got lost in the Amazon and spent time with the Mayoruna tribe. It is also the story of a man that made a play about a man who wrote a book about a man that got lost in the jungle and encountered that tribe. It is also your story, as you watch the man perform the story within the story within the story... This is an original, devised play, directed and performed by Simon McBurney alone, with only accompaniment a 3D - binaural microphone on stage. This is the lockdown render of the performance and it must be experienced with headphones only! Watch for the incredible story telling, compelling sound, and stage simplicity that will nevertheless transport you to the Amazon, or McBurney's own home.



C: Physical Theater

Option 1: ***The Race***, by Gecko Theater Company, directed by Amit Lahav

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRr9otK7_Ac

“One man is on a collision course with his future, sprinting to the most important moment of his life. But will he be ready? What will he feel the moment he sees his child’s eyes? Visually stunning and astoundingly athletic, barely pausing for breath this show chronicles a man trying to reconnect his feelings and truly live. *The Race* is a whirl of masterful movement, vivid colour and emotive music.” Physical Theater uses primarily the actor’s body to tell its story. Watch for riveting physicality, fast paced choreography and intelligent symbolisms.

Option 2: ***LoveSong***, by Abi Morgan, directed by Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett

<https://edu.digitaltheatreplus.com/content/productions/lovesong>

“Lovesong intricately weaves the story of a couple in the first stages of their life together with the same couple as they approach the end of this story.” A delicate mix of storytelling and physical theatre, where naturalistic acting merges with movement, and the past weaves seamlessly into the present. Watch for poetic use of movement, seamless transitions, and beautiful use of media and stage design.



C: Musical Theater

Option 1 and only: ***Hamilton: An American Musical***, composed and written by Lin-Manuel Miranda
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NCHFfXfzal3MMRCdpqOpljLJ1XXxtjZC/view?usp=sharing>

Hamilton tells the story of American Founding Father Alexander Hamilton. Watch this entrancing modern classic with music ranging from hip hop, R&B, soul, pop; elaborate costume and set design and incredible acting, singing and choreography. Non-white actors play the Founding Fathers and other historical figures. Miranda himself described Hamilton as about "America then, as told by America now".

D: Actual Live Theater

Select and watch a live **theater (not dance!)** performance from the official program of the **Athens & Epidaurus Festival 2021:**
<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/65622904/athens-epidaurus-festival-2021-programme>

* Access to [Digital Theater Plus](#):

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