

Fall 17 - Introduction to Theater - Learning Resources



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Theater Students of Cleveland State University, Lisa Bernd, PhD, and Heather Caprette, MFA

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Chapter 1.1 Interactive Learning Content: Origins of Theater

Theater History and Production

THEATER STUDENTS AT CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY; LISA BERND, PHD; HEATHER CAPRETTE, MFA; ET AL.

Introduction

Chapter 1 contains interactive learning content in which you can check your knowledge of Theater history and production. The interactive learning content was created with h5p, an open source plug-in that allows authors to build knowledge checks and presentations on their subjects. Within this chapter, you'll find video with questions, drag and drop learning activities, multiple choice questions, fill in the blank type questions, as well as other [content types seen on H5P's website](#).

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Origins of Theater

Ancient Greek Theater

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Bernd, Lisa, PhD. *Ancient Greek Theater*. 2017. *Pressbooks@MSL*. H5P interactivity created by Heather Caprette, MFA. October 2017.

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Gunn, David. *The ancient Roman theater at Leptis Magna, photographed in 2006*. 2006. *Wikimedia Commons*, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leptis_Magna_Theatre.jpg. Accessed October, 2017. H5P transformation created by Heather Caprette, MFA. 24 October, 2017.

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Jim Davis. *Theatrical Worlds*. University of Florida, 2014. Chapter 1. H5P knowledge checks created by Bailey Manke. November, 2017.

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Chapter 1.3 Interactive Learning Content: Acting

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Acting

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Charlie Mitchell. *Theatrical Worlds*. University of Florida, 2014. Chapter 2. H5P knowledge check created by Abigail Brick. November 2017.

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Charlie Mitchell. *Theatrical Worlds*. University of Florida, 2014. Chapter 2. H5P flash cards on acting terminology by Cara Rovella, November 2017.

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Chapter 1.4 Interactive Learning Content: Costume Design

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Costume Design

An interactive or media element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

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April Moore & Heather Caprette. *H5P Costume Design Process Timeline showing the objectives of costume design and the steps of the process throughout a production*. Pressbooks@MSL, April 2018. Based on: Stacey Galloway. *Theatrical Worlds*. University of Florida Press, 2014. Chapter 5: Costume Design.

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Into the Woods interactive video, H5P knowledge check by Emma Cecil, November 2017.

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H5P Knowledge check created by Mia Snyder, November 2017.

Based on: Stacey Galloway. *Theatrical Worlds*. University of Florida Press, 2014. Chapter 5: Costume Design.

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Maci Nestlerode. November 2017. H5P Interactive video of “Designing Broadway: THE KING AND I’s Catherine Zuber on Making Royal Costumes.”

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H5P knowledge check by Emma Cecil, November 2017.

Based on: Stacey Galloway. *Theatrical Worlds*. University of Florida Press, 2014. Chapter 5: Costume Design.

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Chapter 1.5 Interactive Learning Content: Directing

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Directing Vocabulary:

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H5P knowledge check by Carly Huthmacher, November 2017.

Chapter 1.6 Interactive Learning Content: Lighting Design

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Lighting Design

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Chapter 1.7 Interactive Learning Content: Set Design & Theaters

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Set Design

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Stage Areas

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In the following exercises, drag the label for the type of theater represented in the photograph, to the box located over the stage.

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H5P knowledge check created by Taylor Roth, November 2017.

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H5P knowledge check created by Mary Gilchrist, November 2017.

Theaters

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H5P Image Juxtaposition by Heather Caprette, 2017.

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H5P knowledge check created by Madison Zastawny, November 2017.

Chapter 1.8 Interactive Learning Content: Genre and Dramatic Structure

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Freytag's Analysis of Dramatic Structure

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Evan Paganelli. November 2017. H5P ordering exercise over Freytag's triangle of plot structure.

Aristotle's Elements of Tragedy

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Steven Deliman. November 2017. H5P knowledge check on Aristotle's elements of tragedy.

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Jaison Anderson. November 2017. H5P knowledge check over Aristotle's elements of tragedy.

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Jaison Anderson. November 2017. H5P knowledge check over Aristotle's elements of tragedy.

Three Act Structure

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Jaison Anderson. November 2017. H5P knowledge check.

Realism

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Jim Davis. *Theatrical Worlds*. University of Florida Press, 2014. Chapter 5: Costume Design. H5P knowledge check created by Antoinette Cox, November 2017.

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Chapter 1.9 Interactive Learning Content: Oedipus Rex

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H5P knowledge check by Joseph LaCorte, November 2017.

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H5P knowledge check by Joseph LaCorte, November 2017.

Chapter 2: Analyses of Local Live Productions in and around Cleveland, OH

THEATER STUDENTS

In this chapter we share student analyses of local live performances. These can serve as exemplary assignments for others studying Theater, but also provide insight into performances for the public interested in attending a play. At the bottom you will find an example of the completed assignment written by **Heather Caprette**. **This example is licensed as CC-BY 4.0. You may use it with attribution.**

The first five analysis assignments were written by students and copyrighted to the student writer, license CC-BY-NC-SA. If you use them, please credit the author. Derivatives need to be shared alike, and no profit can be gained from their use.

***Next to Normal Analysis* by Carly Huthmacher, 15 November, 2017**

On November 11, 2017, I had the pleasure of seeing the production of *Next To Normal* at Malone University in Canton, Ohio, directed by David Lee. The lead role of Diana was played by Ellie Zumbach, with Dan Carmany playing the role of her son, Gabe, and Samantha Hudzik as her daughter, Natalie, all students at the university. Malone University, a Christian liberal arts school, is located an hour south of Cleveland, performing everything from classic plays to musicals of all types. This theatre focuses on the education of its students while engaging them in “real world” activities to broaden their creativity. As I walked into the theatre, I was greeted by ushers to scan my ticket, followed by additional ushers to show me to my seat. It was a small black box theatre, seating approximately 60 people. Before the production began, the director welcomed the audience and gave some additional information regarding safety and the university. As *Next To Normal* is one of my favorite musicals and one I have assistant stage managed in the past, I came in with high expectations. Overall, I was pleased with the production, especially with the suicide scene between Diana and Gabe. However, I did have some grievances with the performance.

An extremely iconic scene of this musical is during the song “There’s a World” where Diana is persuaded to attempt suicide by her dead son whom she sees due to her schizophrenia and her other mental illnesses. This is a pivotal point on the plot, as Diana had been fighting through her illness for years prior and finally gave in to her thoughts. The scene is staged beautifully with many elements contributing, the most essential being the music. With a slow and morbid tone, Gabe sings, “There’s a world, there’s a world I know. A place we can go where the pain will go away. There’s a world where

the sun shines each day. There's a world where we can be free. Come with me," as he pulls Diana off stage, as if he's pulling her into death. The lights turned to red and the stage darkened. Along with the music, blocking, and lighting, set design played a big role, as well. Towards the end of the scene, Diana's doctor appeared on the platform above the two, stating the details of the suicide attempt. With all of these aspects, it shows Diana and her decision to end her life, thankfully unsuccessfully. The elements reflect the dark, angry, and ill mind of Diana, along with the function of the play, as it's centered around her fight with mental illness.

The play featured many enjoyable aspects, technical and otherwise. While the technical aspects weren't anything special, they accomplished setting the mood of the production and serving to further the plot. The acting, overall was impressive, however some characters exhibited very basic acting skills, along with being unable to stay still while being frozen during a scene. With *Next To Normal* being a musical, it's crucial to have good voices, as well, especially with the show being almost completely sung, with little dialogue. Zumbach and Hudzik, the women of the show, both had incredible voices. However, Carmany, in the role of Dan, had trouble singing throughout the whole show, cracking on most notes. This became extremely distracting as *Next To Normal* is known for its beautiful harmonies. Overall, though, I was impressed with the acting and singing of the cast.

The show's purpose, what it tries to get across, is all about mental illness. It shows how real it can be, how tough it is to endure, and how it can affect an entire family. Specifically, it shows how difficult it can be on other members of the family, as they don't have a solid support system when their wife or mother is mentally ill. The show and its message is thought provoking, emotional, and it hits close to home for me. All this being said, I believe Malone's production achieved all of what it needed to beautifully. The powerful performance spoke to everyone in the audience, as I could hear sniffles during every scene change. Everything seemed to go just as planned and nothing awful happened from what I could tell, and I thoroughly enjoyed viewing the performance, and even cried at the finale.

As a huge *Next To Normal* fan, I was overall very pleased with Malone's interpretation and performance, particularly the crucial suicide scene, despite the few things that could've been better. With this, I would urge everyone to see a production of *Next To Normal*, as it opens the mind and forces us to ask ourselves tough questions, all through the beautiful melodies and lyrics of the music.

***The Hunchback of Notre Dame* as performed by the Great Lakes Theater Company by Henry Meaney, 13 November, 2017**

From September 29th to November 4th of 2017, The Great Lakes Theater Company put on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in an adaptation that combined the musical elements from the Disney-produced version and the adult themes from the original work by Victor Hugo. The play was directed by Victoria Bussert and had a production team that included: Martha Bromelmeier-Costume Designer, Mary Jo Dondlinger-Lighting Designer, and David Gotwald-Sound Designer. The most notable actors of the play would be Corey Mach as Quasimodo, Tom Ford as Dom Claude Frollo, Keri René Fuller as Esmerelda, and Alex Syiek as Clopin Trouillefou. I, myself, have not seen as many plays as my peers, but

I would have to say that for the professional production that it was supposed to be, I think that *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* was probably one of the most disappointing plays I've seen yet.

The Great Lakes Theater Company was founded in 1962 originally as a Shakespearean-only theater, but soon expanded its repertoire to include non-Shakespearean in 1965 with the mission of educating the masses on classical and contemporary theater. The mission stayed the same until 1997 when it was redrafted to what it is today, which is "...to bring the pleasure, power and relevance of classic theater to the widest possible audience." Personally, I believe they're achieving their goal, especially now that a) they've made the Hanna theater their hub, and b) they've launched a festival that produces both 5-6 works in Playhouse Square and the Cleveland Metropolitan school District's annual All-City Musical each season September through May. I was fortunate enough to benefit from this outreach when I saw *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* with my class, but while the audience was definitely wide and diverse, I don't believe that this play was an example of a good performance that can be used as a reference for "how good" another play might be for a number of reasons.

My first issue was with the lights, sound, and costuming. To the credit of the ensemble, the chorus was one of the most enjoyable parts of the show to me, *however*, the entire chorus should not have been microphoned for it because at times it was deafening. This was one of the last nights for the show, so I hesitate to think that this had been happening for the month that show had run for, and decided to chalk it up to a soundboard issue. The lighting, however, would have been difficult to change, so I'm fairly confident that it looked modern and jarring throughout the duration of the show because of LEDs and the color choices (like bright purple and pale blue). And speaking of modern, another aspect of the show that prevented me from fully immersing myself in it was how the costumes seemed to be mixed and matched with Renaissance and modern clothes, which might have been ok, if every character was dressed like that. So, while Quasimodo wore jeans throughout the performance, Frollo wore classical clergymen's robes.

The scene that I believe showed the strongest amount of personality that was assisted with acting/lighting/set design/etc. was Frollo's performance of *Hellfire*. The blocking of the scene made it so that the audience was the fireplace and the chorus surrounded Frollo from behind. The lighting was working in this scene with reds to both show the firelight and Frollo's torment, which he accentuated with his toying with of Esmerelda's scarf. The music in this song made this scene the most powerful, however, because it has the feel for something along the lines of *Dies Irae* from Verdi's *Requiem* that really brings the viewer into the era the play was set in.

The final questions one must ask come from Goethe's 3 criteria.

1. "What was the artist (in this case the director, Bussert) trying to do?"

I believe that she was trying to put on a live version of the classic Disney movie but with the darker themes and atmosphere of the original work by Victor Hugo.

2. "Was she successful in doing it?"

I would have to say no.

3. "Is the work worth doing?"

Actually, yes. I would love a *Hunchback* movie like the new *Beauty and the Beast* or *The Jungle Book*.

Ultimately, it could have been a decent show, but with poor design choices and weak performances like that of Esmerelda's (particularly between her and Phoebus), I remain highly critical.

Work Cited

"Great Lakes Theater | Cleveland's Classic Theater Company at the Hanna Theatre." *Great Lakes Theater Festival*, www.greatlakestheater.org/.

***Waitress Serves Up Some Emotion* by Cameron Morris, 25 November, 2017**

Kicking off its national tour at the Connor Palace in Playhouse Square, *Waitress* is a new musical telling a story about Jenna, an unhappy waitress trying to find a happier life, doing her best with what she's been given. Desi Oakley starred as Jenna, playing alongside Bryan Fenkart as Dr. Pomatter. Diane Paulus directed and Sara Bareilles provided the score. I went to the show on the 2nd of November, a few short weeks after the show opened. One of the most important scenes in this production is set near the end of Act 1, with the staging, the music, the lighting, and the acting all coming together to create a perfect atmosphere for an intriguing, hesitant, and isolated moment shared between Jenna and Dr. Pomatter.

I went to see this show with my high school drama club, as we were able to get discounted ticket prices for our group. After purchasing the tickets from Mrs. Garver, my drama director, the entire club got on a school bus and headed for downtown Cleveland. Upon arrival, we got off the bus and entered the doors of Connor Palace, a theatre I very much enjoy seeing shows in. The seats are comfortable, the decor is beautiful, and I have many good memories associated with the theatre. We all got our tickets and took some pictures, then, after a few minutes, we were led to our seats. We sat in the far back of the theatre, as high as you can go, but nosebleed seats were forgivable; I didn't mind. Everyone sat down and got ready, and I could feel the excitement build within me, having heard good things about the show. Finally, the lights dimmed, the music started, the curtain rose, and the show began.

After a very enjoyable beginning to the show, a scene really struck me. By this point, seven songs have already gone by, and I was engrossed in the story. This scene, however, stood out to me, as it marked the furthering of Jenna and Dr. Pomatter's relationship. Jenna met the doctor a few songs back, and by chance they both end up waiting at the same bus stop. The way this scene is staged, the bus stop bench is located front and center. Director Diane Paulus made sure the main point of the scene was clear. The rest of the stage is uncharacteristically empty, as usually, the musical does a good job of keeping audience interest up by giving them things to look at, curtain to curtain, without visual overstimulation, but not in this scene. There is a bench, and there is a backdrop to properly set the scene. The pit band also sits on the stage for this number, with an upright bass on one side and a piano on the other, set far back so as not to give the impression that they were literally a part of the scene. This sparse set gives the scene a feeling of isolation, so that when Jenna sits on the bench beside the Doctor, they are in a

world of their own.

Then the music kicks in, “It Only Takes a Taste”, and the steady quarter notes from the piano run in tandem with Dr. Pomatter’s lyrics, as he speaks to Jenna in his signature awkward manner. Jenna slowly gets to know more about the Doctor after their brief meeting at the office before, and I could see the chemistry behind them building. Oakley as Jenna and Fenkart as Pomatter both nail the acting necessary to set the mood of the scene. Jenna is hesitant to get to know the man but it is apparent there is interest there, and Dr. Pomatter is clumsy with his words, but slowly and steadily continues talking to the young waitress. Bareilles’s score compliments the characters’ intentions, with steady notes that begin with Pomatter’s dialogue, and a more fleshed out sound as the two become closer. The final, very important touch in this scene is the lighting. The whole stage is bathed in cool, blue hues, which further support the mood being created by the staging, acting, and score. It shows how the pair still aren’t completely comfortable around each other, neither of them have their guard down. There is a coldness to the scene, which fits perfectly and completes that which the other stage elements started. These theatrical elements all work together to create the cold, careful mood of the scene.

It is apparent that there was a clear intent for what this scene was to show, and it succeeded in that intent. For “It Only Takes a Taste”, Paulus wanted to show the audience two characters, who were not yet comfortable with one another, slowly warming up, and setting the scene for their relationship to grow and further the plot in a natural, human way. With the score, the lights, the staging, and the acting, the intent was fulfilled completely in my opinion. This was an important scene, and without it, the character relationships would not be able to progress in a natural way.

This scene is one that really stood out to me in the show, due to how all of the theatrical elements came together to create one cohesive mood. This mood allowed the story to be furthered, and was instrumental for the plot of the production. I am glad that the show I chose to see was able to create something so real and complete, and I believe this scene made the production better as a whole.

A Moment of “Manning Up” by Evan Paganelli, 15 November, 2017

Ever since it’s very first performance back in 2011, “The Book of Mormon”, created by Trey Parker, Matt Stone, and Robert Lopez, has been a hilarious musical sensation with nearly every production of it that has been put on. This musical tells the story of two missionaries of Mormon Church, Elder Price and Elder Cunningham (played by Gabe Gibbs and Conner Peirson in this production), a mismatched pair that is sent to Uganda, Africa as part of their 2-year mission to convert the people of a remote village to their church. Through struggles and conflict, these two desperately try through faith and “imagination” to help and convert those that they meet while overcoming their own inner doubts. Elder Arnold Cunningham specifically has one of the most memorable scenes in the show when he takes center near the end of the first act, utilizing the music and visuals of the moment to tell his resolve to “man up”.

Nearly two years after my first viewing of the show, I saw “The Book of Mormon” once again on September 13th at Playhouse Square. Specifically, I saw this show at the KeyBank State Theatre where

several other popular shows are shown off-Broadway. It was just getting to be nighttime as my family and I walk down to the theatre from a nearby parking lot before getting our tickets checked as we head inside. Considering the tickets were bought in advance, I do not know the exact price of the ticket but imagine it to be in the \$30-60 price range considering the popularity of the show nationwide. Once we get out of the lobby and into the actual theatre, it's nearly a full house as we make our way to our seats and sit down, feeling somewhat cramped as we looked down from the upper left side of the house. The somewhat cramped feeling of the seating didn't bother me for much longer though, as I intently watched the show once it began.

Nearing the halfway point of the show and intermission, Elder Cunningham is presented with his biggest conflict yet. Up to this point, Cunningham has been "using his imagination" to tell the Book of Mormon in his own semi-fictional way to the villagers. Enjoying and believing his stories more and more, the village girl Nabulungi calls upon Cunningham to lead her people in converting to the church. With his mission companion, Elder Price, leaving to be reassigned to another location, Cunningham is left with no choice but to take responsibility as he confidently proclaims in his musical number, "Man Up".

This song is not only catchy but is also well-sung by this production's Elder Cunningham. It acts as a turning point for Cunningham while keeping a lot of his original character intact, giving him a newfound confidence to lead his new followers while keeping him somewhat childishly goofy and dorky with lyrics such as "Time to be a hero and slay the monster" and "I'm gonna man up all over myself". Not only that but other characters of the cast such as Nabulungi (Myha'la Herrold) and Elder Price sing from their own perspectives while the other villagers declare their own confidence in Elder Cunningham.

To go along with the music is the visuals and scenery to back it up. Throughout the song, Elder Cunningham is progressively built up as having new confidence by first having him dance with "bad boy" Mormons to give him almost a tough guy persona before upping the ante with lights and even pyrotechnics on the sides of the stage. Elder Cunningham still delves into his childish and dorky side by fighting off an almost cartoonish "monster" and a knock-off Darth Vader. He eventually elevates higher with the use of a platform attached to a spiral staircase that moves while he is on top of it, all while singing with everyone else on stage before the scene eventually ends.

In trying to create a humorous musical experience that parodies several aspects of the Mormon religion, the creators of the show and those behind each production succeed in doing just that. With its witty dialogue, lovable and well-written songs, and a great cast to sing them, all combined with sets and visuals in numbers bordering on over-the-top, this show is effective in creating this enjoyable comedic experience. Everything about this show was worth putting together and creating, and should be for its many other productions.

Analysis of Waitress by Dylan Sell, 15 November, 2017

Waitress is a musical based upon a novel by Jessie Nelson, as well as the 2007 film of the same name. The musical was written by Adrienne Shelly with music and lyrics by Sara Bareilles. Waitress made its

Broadway debut in April of 2016. It is now on a U.S. national tour that began in Cleveland at the Connor Palace of Playhouse Square on October 20th of 2017. Playhouse Square is home to six beautiful theatres, one being the Connor Palace. The Connor Palace is one of playhouse squares oldest theatres and performances on the Connor stage vary from standup comedy to off-Broadway performances. The Connor is a large proscenium staged theatre venue, seating up to 2,800 guests. During the performance of *Waitress*, I was seated in the balcony of the house. It was a beautiful viewing point with a clear view of the stage.

Waitress takes you onto a journey through the life of Jenna Hunterson, played by Desi Oakley, who is a waitress at a small diner that struggles with a failing marriage, an unexpected pregnancy, and an affair that ends in heart ache and relief. During the show there were many scenes that could have been critically analyzed, but the scene that this paper will be focusing on is the scene and performance of "She used to be mine" during act two sung by Jenna. During this scene Jenna breaks down, allowing herself to grieve over her long-lost control over her own life. Not only does the acting and blocking allow this scene to flourish, the technical aspects including lighting and set design lays ground for the overall emotion for the rest of the show.

Before Jenna performs "She use to be mine", the scene begins with Earl, played by Nick Bailey, Jenna's husband angerly brings Jenna home from a wedding. Earl is angry because he has found Jenna's secret stash of money she has been hiding to join the pie making contest. When Earl confronts her about the money, Jenna is forced to lie about the reason she has been hiding the money in fear of what Earl might do if he found out the truth. She tells him she has been hiding the money, so she can buy the expected baby a crib. Earl still angry, leaves with the money and Jenna is left on the sofa. This is when Jenna performs "She use to be mine". When the song begins Jenna is sitting on the sofa, the lighting goes from the entire scenes set in normal lighting to darkened hues of blue and red, creating a purple hue as well. There is also a follow spot on Jenna during her performance. The lighting of this scene really allows you to understand Jenna's emotions more. The colors of blue can be evaluated that Jenna is deeply saddened about what is going on in her life, while the red also indicates that she is angry about her situation as well. Having both colors together create a purple color that really draws in your attention and focuses your view point of the scene. The entire scene is transformed into a cinematic view of Jenna. The follow spot also deepens the audience's attention towards Jenna. The lighting allows the audience to follow her through her self-reflection and begin to understand Jenna and her actions that have led up to this point more.

The set of this scene is also a key aspect of bringing this scene to life. The scene takes place in Jenna's living room, where the sofa is center stage and the background is of cluttered shelves and a door frame. The set is minimal, but it works very well in bringing the scene together. The space allows Jenna more room for movement and the minimalism of the scene makes sure there are no distractions during her performance. The colors of the sofa and background work together with the lighting as well. The sofa being a deep green as well as the background being neutral colors allows the lighting to engulf the entire setting and bring the audience to be drawn into the scene.

Desi Oakley's acting, blocking, and vocals also brought all aspect of the performance together for this

scene. When watching the performance, you could feel the emotion in every word that she said and sang. The blocking added more of an emotional element to the scene. As she crosses back and forth from the center to stage left to stage right back to center, it can be interpreted that she is struggling with choices that she has made and still needs to make. Her back and forth action can symbolize that she does not know what to do. The blocking was simple, but it made a large impact on the performance of the scene.

In conclusion, when evaluating the entire production, I think that the ideas of the creative team behind the show all worked together in harmony and allowed the audience to relate on a personal and realistic level and is done specifically well in the acting, lighting and set design, and vocals. I believe it was well worth staging and is a musical that many should see.

Analysis of *The Country House* by Heather Caprette, 25 March, 2018, Licensed as CC-BY 4.0. The following is an completed example of the assignment #2, Analysis of a Live Performance

The Country House is a contemporary comedy-drama, written by Donald Margulies and directed by Brian Westerley at the Chagrin Valley Little Theater in Chagrin Falls, OH. The story takes place in a summer home in the Berkshires, during the Williamstown summer theater season. The entire play is performed on a set that is the living room. Pinks, golds, and animal patterns on furniture, as well as book shelves, theater posters, and family photos on the backdrop, make the illusion of this country home, cherished by the matriarch. Anna Patterson, played by Margo Parker, gathers her family, a group of actors, together during the anniversary of the death of her daughter. The play conveys a range of human emotions exhibited by all six actors: humor, jealousy, lust, bitterness, reminiscence, and regret. All actors conveyed them well, with tone of voice, body gestures and facial expressions. I found myself laughing at their behavior and expressions throughout and fighting the urge to cry at the end. There is humor at some point in every one of them, but I found myself watching the performance of Elliot most closely. Elliot Cooper, played by Roland Moore, is the son of the matriarch and highly successful actress, Anna Patterson. Elliot is a bit of a comedian, but very depressed underneath. His desperation comes to a head with the events of the stay.

We can see the shock and jealousy on his face when he sees the actress he loved many years ago, Nell, enter his mother's home with the man who was married to his recently deceased sister. Elliot hangs back, upstage, by the backdrop that is the house, frowning, putting his hand to his head, turning toward the wall in avoidance and then back again. His eyes burn with intensity, behind round glasses, as he witnesses the entrance. We often see him standing upstage, hanging back from the other actors.

Elliot is childlike and humble in his body language. Jaw dropped while listening to others at times, bottom lip protruding at others, holding himself with arms crossed and frowning while his mother criticizes him, arms out stretched and pleading for love at the end. He has a looseness when walking sometimes, similar to Johnny Depp's character in *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Elliot also has a drinking problem. The clothing selected for him is casual compared to that of the handsome actor, Michael Astor,

who wears long sleeved button-down dress shirts. Elliot wears an open, short sleeved button down over a t-shirt, with cargo shorts in the beginning. Elliot's character is the only one that wears glasses.

Throughout the play, Elliot is the character who is given the short end of the stick time and time again. Nell, the actress he fell in love with many years ago, rejects his advance and admittance of love for her, playing them down. His mother openly criticizes the first play he writes, and honestly expresses that he was a disappointment to her. His brother-in-law, Walter, is a director who has given work to both his mother and sister, in the past, but turned him down. Walter blames Elliot for being "radioactive" and making people feel as if they don't want to work with him. As Walter turns from the conversation, Elliot kicks his leg out and then leaps on Walter, hands at his throat. Elliot is pulled off by fellow actors who hear what is going on. Elliot runs out, disappearing for a long time. He comes back soaking wet from rain, revealing to Michael, that he's had an epiphany, *his mother never loved him*.

At the end, we learn just how sad Elliot really is when Susie, his niece, asks him if the man in his play that commits suicide is himself. He denies it at first, but then admits to it. The most pain I felt was watching him sitting on the floor at the end, crying and in desperation, saying he knew what it was like to feel so much pain that you think you are better off dead, just like the character in his play. Anna, his mother, doesn't help him but stays cold and critical of him, when he expresses that what he really needed was a mother that would give him hope. Elliot, at this low moment says that his sister, who passed away, was his closest friend. We realize how alone he feels. He's a soul, searching for validation of his worth, fighting depression. His comedic commentary, I believe, is what helps him. It reminds me somewhat of Robbin Williams, who eventually gave up when he took his life.

The Country house performed at the Chagrin Valley Little Theater is a performance worth seeing. It will run you through the gamut of laughter to sadness that the playwright intended. My one caveat: for anyone whose grown up with an overly critical, at times cold, hard working mother, prepare yourself for the gut wrenching end!

Work Cited:

The Country House. By Donald Margulies, directed by Brian Westerley, performances by Kaytie Leonard, Kevin Jones, Margo Parker, Roland Moore, Sean McCormick, and Kerry Scanlon, 25 March, 2018, Chagrin Valley Little Theater, Ohio.

Chapter 3.1 A twist on Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

HEATHER E. CAPRETTE, MFA

The following is an example of how the third open assignment might be done. It involves rewriting some of the dialogue towards the end of Romeo and Juliet, along with explanation of plot change, ideas for scenery & lighting, costumes, and accompanying music. This is being created by Heather Caprette, MFA under a CC BY 4.0 license. It's the desire of the author that any use involving adaptation, alteration, remixing, revising also be shared freely.

Citation

Shakespeare, William. "The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet." Project Gutenberg, November, 1997, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1112>. Accessed 03 April 2018.

Prologue

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers **with blackened destiny**;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Do with their death bury their parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love,
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.

End of Scene 8:

(Picking up after Juliet's father tells her to marry Paris on Thursday, or he'll disown her, throwing her

out of his house, after her mother turns her back on her, and after Juliet's nurse tells her to marry Paris, and forget her first husband Romeo)

(Juliet's Bedroom, Evening. The set is blue light filtering in through the doorway and falling on one side of Juliet while faint warm candle light falls on the other, creating a contrast between blue and orange light. She's in her bedroom deciding what to do next.)



Juliet before leaving home. Warm yellow light bathing the right side of her face towards which she looks. Cold blue light is on the left. Image is from Pixabay. Pixabay, <https://pixabay.com/en/woman-brunette-portrait-female-918583/>. Accessed March, 2018.

You can create the color lighting effect on a standard portrait by following the Youtube [Fantasy Duo Color Effect on Portrait | Photoshop Tutorial](#)

Juliet

Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend!
Is it more sin to wish me thus forsworn,
Or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue
Which she hath praised him with above compare
So many thousand times? Go, counsellor;
Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.
I'll to the friar, to seek my remedy:
Now is the time for courage and not despair.
Though my earthly fortune I have forsworn,
My love did I give to Romeo and it is with him I should be.

If all else fail, myself have power to die. For now am I dead to my lady and lord.

(Juliet gathers some belongings into a large bag and dresses for travel. When she leaves her house, a short segment of music would play from Crystalize by Lindsey Sterling. The music is meant to convey sadness, as well as transition to something new. This can be played at intermission or as short transition.) Sterling, Lindsey. "Crystallize," Youtube, <https://youtu.be/aHjpOzsQ9YI>. Accessed March, 2018.

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Set Design for end of Scene 8



Above in an example of a set design for the end of scene 8. It shows a source four fixture on the left, with a blue filter, angled down toward stage right, or Juliet's right side. Another source 4 fixture with a yellow filter is angled down from stage left, toward Juliet's left side. Fresnel light fixtures with yellow filtration, and less intensity help to illuminate the walls and background. The door to her balcony is open on stage right. Another door to the rest of her family's house is on stage left. A wood cabinet is behind her. A wooden dresser with three candles is also behind her, against her bedroom wall. He bed with a surrounding canopy is on the left front of the stage. Juliet is central on set to start. She'll move to collect belongings to put in a bag, from the dresser and cabinet behind her, before leaving. She'll exit

through the door to her balcony, leaving the same way Romeo has before.

New - Scene 9

(Friar Lawrence's office or counseling room, church, evening. Warm candle light within. Brighter lighting than at end of scene 8.)

Juliet

Good father my soul is heavy.
My husband Romeo, in passion slew my cousin, Tybalt.
Now my parents slay me.
For my earthly father has sworn to disown me should I not marry again this Thursday to Paris.
My lady mother turns her back on me.
I would die before allowing this second marriage.
Thus turned out must I away to Romeo in secrecy.
What love is left here?
What hope amongst so much hate?
Two families with blood and ill will between them.
My lady and lord father must never know.
For knowing, they might take revenge.

Friar Lawrence

Oh what news!
Is there no delaying?
So be it young Juliet.
I joined you and Romeo in hope that old hatreds and rivalries would dissipate.
So, does this hope for new love go on, though in a new place.
We will clothe you as a nun.
In this disguise will you travel with brother John to Mantua.
There will he see you delivered to Romeo.
Rest here while I seek my brother.

(Exit Friar Lawrence. Enter Friar Lawrence into another area of the Church. Friar John sits at table studying a book. Bright candle light.)

Friar Lawrence

Holy Franciscan friar! brother, ho!

Friar John

Ho, brother!

Friar Lawrence

Dear brother, I ask for your help and confidence.

Friar John

You have my devotion and trust. What may I Do?

Friar Lawrence

The fair youths Juliet and Romeo did I join together in matrimony one day ago,
their love and intentions being true.

The two families we know feud, know not of the marriage.

I need you to deliver her safely to her husband, Romeo, in Mantua.

Disguised as a nun, she can travel unknown.

Take rest for the night at the church in Monsua.

There will you go unnoticed.

For their sake, speak not of the journey,
and let love live true wherever they may go.

God be with them.

God be with you.

Friar John

Thus will I do.

God be with you til I see you again.

(Friar Lawrence re-enters the room where Juliet waits. He carries a nun's dress and habit.)

Friar Lawrence

Dear Juliet, take these nunnery clothes.

In this disguise will you leave with Friar John.

You'll leave at once, and rest at the Church in Monsua.

With morning's light, he'll take you to Montua.

There, he'll reunite you with your new lord and husband.

God be with you, child. I pray no harm will come to you.

Or forever punished be the one who deals it!

(Scene of Friar John walking beside Juliet dressed as a nun crossing out of town and into the countryside, on the road to Montua.)

[Information about nuns clothes in the middle ages](http://www.medieval-life-and-times.info/medieval-clothing/medieval-nuns-clothing.htm) is at <http://www.medieval-life-and-times.info/medieval-clothing/medieval-nuns-clothing.htm>

(Transition to Montua. Friar John finds the room where Romeo stays. With Juliet dressed as a nun by his side, he knocks. Romeo rests his hand on his sword. Daylight, bright outside of room.)

Romeo

Ho! Who's there!

Friar John

It is John, brother to Friar Lawrence. I bring good tidings.

Romeo

What good could come to me, unless it be the Prince's pardon?

(Romeo opens the door and sees Juliet's face as she pushes aside the nun's veil. They smile, kiss and embrace.)

New Scene

(Lady Capulet in Juliet's room, in despair. Morning, daylight.)

Lady Capulet

Oh cursed day!
First my nephew Tybalt slain,
and now my daughter gone.
What is left?
My hope is gone with Juliet.
Where has she gone?
What relief can I have now?

New Scene

(Setting is a dark dwelling outside of Verona. Bright outdoors, dimly lit interior. Lady Capulet knocks at the door of a mercenary. The sinister looking man opens the door. Spot light on table.)

Mercenary

Good day lady. How can I be of service?
(Mercenary guides her to sit down at table with his arm moving in arc)

Lady Capulet

Through word of a friend did I learn of you.
Know you that Tybalt was slain by Romeo?

It doesn't sit well with me that he lives,
having been exiled to Montua.

Mercenary

Aye, this I know. (Saying with slyness) Where would you have him live?

Lady Capulet

I would have him lie with his forefathers in the Montague tomb.

Mercenary

Aye, and how would you have him do this?

Lady Capulet

I have need of a man to deliver this dram (she holds up a vial of poison) that can be mixed with wine.
Swiftly, upon drinking, I am told it will stop the heart of even a horse.
Can you deliver it such to Romeo?

Mercenary

That so, I will find a way for a price.

Lady Capulet

(Handing a purse and the vial to the mercenary) Take this to get you on your way.
Having heard the news of Romeo's death,
will I deliver the rest to you.

Mercenary

(Smiling slyly) The deed is as good as done.

Lady Capulet

Go then. Good day.

(Lady Capulet turns and leaves through his door)

New Scene

(Juliet, content and happy to be with Romeo, prepares a dinner in a small kitchen with table nearby. She pours wine into their glasses. They are finally free to be together. Day, interior and table brightly lit.)

....

New Scene

(The mercenary returns home. Lady Capulet hears of Romeo's death. She goes to the Mercenary's home to give him the final payment and confirm. Dim interior, overcast outdoors, bluish colors.)

Lady Capulet

I hear in the streets mourning for young Romeo.
His father travels to Montua to retrieve the body of his son.
I take it the deed is done.

Mercenary

(smiling grimly) Aye. Two for the price of one!

Lady Capulet

(Aroused and demanding to know) Two, you say?

Mercenary

(Boasting) Him and his new wife.
A beauty was she with long dark hair.
Couldn't have been much beyond fourteen.

Lady Capulet

A young woman with long dark hair.
Did you happen to catch her name?

Mercenary

He called her **Juliet**.

Lady Capulet

(Pale as death, holding back, then gasping.) Speak no more of this (she drops the purse at his door and runs away).

The closing song after Juliet's and Romeo's deaths is [Angels by The XX](#). Youtube,

<https://youtu.be/Z9HIQTvF4uw>. Accessed March, 2018. This song could be sung on stage at the close of the play by a vocalist or by the orchestra as an instrumental. Within the background of the set, a large screen will reflect projected photographs from Romeo and Juliet's time together. The whole song doesn't need to be played if performed between scenes. Then, a brief portion of the song could play.)

Lyrics to **Angels** written and performed by The XX.

Written by James Thomas Smith, Oliver Sim, Romy Anna Madley Croft • Copyright © Universal Music Publishing Group. Youtube, <https://youtu.be/Z9HIQTvF4uw>. Accessed, March, 2018.

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Costume Design Ideas

For Juliet's dress when she leaves her father's house, including a bag idea, see [Blue Renaissance Gown with Bag](#)

The embed of the image is below.

For Juliet's purse or bag that she packs when fleeing her father's house, a Renaissance design can be seen below:

[Renaissance four sided pouch](#)

An embedded image of it is below.

[See the Pragmatic Costumer site for ideas for purses and sachals.](#)

For the nun clothing when Friar Lawrence disguises her when she leaves with Friar John to join Romeo in Montua, I found examples of medieval nun's clothing and pinned it on Pinterest at:

[Medieval Nuns Clothing](#)

See the embedded image for examples below.

Juliet could wear one like that seen in top center, with a cloak the covers head to foot.

An example of the Friar's costume can be found at:

[Carlo Ceresa:Portrait of a Friar](#)

See the embedded image below.

For Juliet's dress once she arrives in Montua, I wanted something in green, because it was frequently used in wedding gowns in the Renaissance period. This could be the dress she dies in, when she and Romeo unknowingly drink the poison in the wine. I'll embed and link to some ideas below.

[The green dress on doll is from Antiquelilac.com.](https://www.pinterest.com/pin/405816616403517405/)

<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/405816616403517405/>

Romeo's final costume when he dies could be similarly dressy. See [Men's Renaissance Doublet](#)
The doublet image is embedded below.

A possible costume for lady Capulet can be seen at: [Red Renaissance Dress from AntiqueLilly.com](#)
An embed of the dress is below.

A costume for the mercenary can be seen at [Men's Renaissance Costume by NINYA MIKHAILA](#)
An embed of the costume is below.

Or, for a more sinister look that includes more dark clothing from head to toe, see [Men's dark Renaissance costume](#)
An embed of this costume is below.



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This is where you can add appendices or other back matter.

