

Theatre History II Paper

Performance Criticism

Dr. Larsen

For this exercise, evaluate the experience of seeing the play on its own terms, separate from reading it. Use this guide also if you are writing critiques for extra credit.

Format:

- 3-5 pages
- typed, no contractions, proper spelling, etc.
- ticket or program stapled to top left corner

Style:

MLA – no contractions

The first time you mention the character, put the name of the actor in parenthesis next to the character name. Also make sure you refer to the director or designers' name when you refer to them (keep your program)

Write about the performance in the past tense

State your personal opinion

Content:

Start with a general introduction that includes your opinion about the show (which you will explain as you continue the paper)

- Organize the body of the paper so that you answer the questions: What was this production trying to communicate (concept)?
 - If you participated in the show, discuss perhaps: what the director told you about the concept or what you inferred from working with the director.
- Was it successful in communicating the concept? HOW and WHY? You will discover this by examining the following:
 - Did the theatrical experience make sense to you? WHY? Did the various elements (acting, design, directing) work well together? HOW? Did each element support or detract from the message – HOW and WHY? Did one element or actor stand out for you? What was it about them that made you pay attention? Be prescriptive in your criticism.

- How did this play relate to the historical time period it was written in? set in? produced in? Did it make sense? How did the play perform for a contemporary audience? Note the response of the audience, Be prescriptive.
- Conclude with a paragraph in which you summarize your reaction to the show, and state your opinion about whether the play was worth doing (for the theatre) and seeing (for you).

What counts in your writing:

- Make sure you clearly answer HOW and WHY and support your arguments **specifically**.
- Punctuation, grammar, spelling, syntax
- Having a **definite** opinion