

Year 11 into 12 Summer Bridging Work

Over the summer break all students in Drama will be completing work to engage and prepare you in the subject ready for the Autumn Term

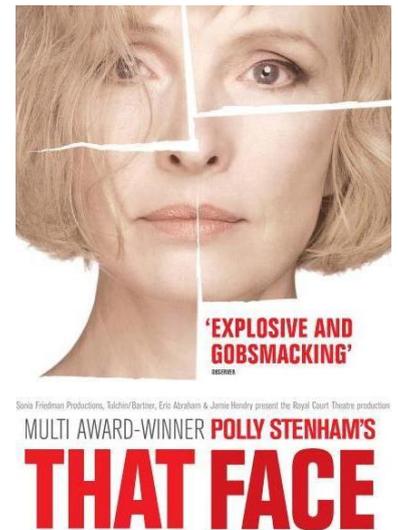
Students will engage with **FOUR** key tasks:

1. Read the set text 'That Face' by Polly Stenham
2. Research the text and create a fact sheet based upon the play and its writer, Polly Stenham
3. Go to the theatre and see a play/live theatre performance (suggestions listed)
4. Write a 1000 review based on the play you have seen ready to talk about with peers (examples attached)

Set Text

Each A Level student needs to create a fact sheet based upon the play 'That Face' and its playwright Polly Stenham. This should include:

- Biographical information about the playwright
 - General biographical info
 - How did they become a playwright?
 - What key people did they work with as they were developing?
 - What is their style of writing?
 - What other works have they written?
Where have they been performed?
 - Have they won/been nominated for any major awards?
- Key information about the play
 - Themes
 - Basic summary of plot
 - Characters



Live Theatre Performance

Each candidate must visit the theatre and see a live performance, preferably a play..

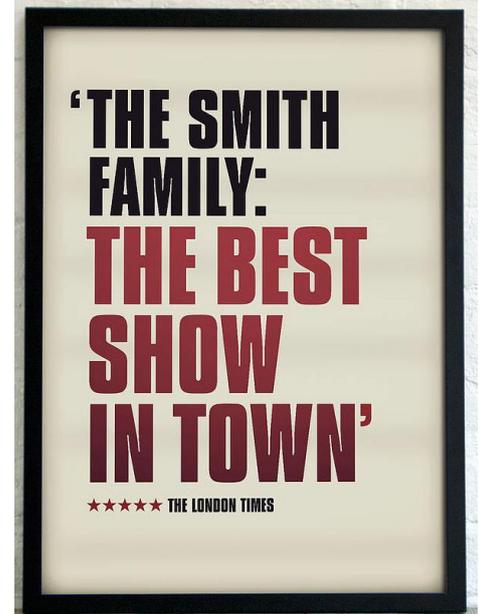
- <http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/> - many different plays between July and early September.

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1000 Word Live Theatre Evaluation

For your review, you need to comment on the following:

- Title of work and where/when it was performed.
- Identify key people involved in the production e.g. the director, lighting designer, accompaniment designer etc. Buying a programme should assist with this.
- Choreographic Style of the work.
- The constituent features of the work and WHY they were effective:
 - Costume
 - Lighting
 - Sound/music
 - Style – can you link to any practitioners?
 - Set Design
- Your experience as an audience member. What was the impact on the audience? Was the piece successful?



NB: reading real reviews of plays online is really useful to assist you in gaining a professional sound to your review. Try to avoid using 'I' and be subjective with your views of the work. There are two example reviews attached to assist your writing.

All reviews must be typed and handed in on paper in the first lesson back after the Summer break.

Review Example 1

Play: Shakespeare's *Richard III*

The Diorama Theatre supplies a range of theatre to London. The Faction often perform here and are well known for their abstract performances. Their interpretation of *Richard III* was a skilful and interesting physical piece which retained the key themes of the original Shakespearian play – corruption, manipulation and evil whilst associating with modern politics.

The cast of The Faction were to be able to engage their audience through their performance and skilful imagery. Richard, played by Christopher York, was a captivating member of the cast portraying Richard as a twisted hunchback, with barefoot crossed toes and a flickering hand. This physicality

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seemed like a manifestation of Richard's evil. However, the hunchback wasn't always physically displayed, and it only appeared when things weren't going accordingly to him. The hunch retreated back when his plans were heading in the right direction. This technique was cleverly used to show when he was at his weakest or his strongest. One particular scene which supports this view is when Edward V and Richard were play fighting and he had jumped onto Richards back. In doing so the disfigurement was caused again, showing that he was in a weak position, manipulating those around him to perceive him as weak.

Clarence's death was the most cleverly captivating scene. This scene was serious as well as comedic and the director, Mark Leipacher, used the two executioners as a metaphor for the two protagonists from the film 'Dumb and Dumber' directed by Peter and Bobby Farrelly. The scene was set in Clarence's chambers with no props; however the movement and certain actor's gestures helped the audience differentiate from the corridor and Clarence's chambers. This was well executed through their limited use of space and consistent bumping into each other. The humour, kept me on the edge as it helped to build tension and foreshadow death. When the two executors entered Clarence's bedroom they entered through a rather large door. I could infer this from the sound effects and the executioner's gestures. This was well-executed, although the sound itself did seem a little weak and the director could have further utilised his large cast to create a more visual portrayal. Upon their entrance to the jail cell, the lighting subtly changed to a royal blue, which successfully exposed Clarence's fear and foreshadowed his death of drowning. As the second agent slowly approached Clarence from behind, the lighting changed again to a bloodshot red to imply that Clarence had been stabbed in the back. He was then dragged across into the corner of his chamber near a barrel. The other executioner had grabbed Clarence's head positioning it in order to drown him into the barrel filled with water. A gurgling sound was used to reflect the moment. This empty warble didn't truly mirror the terror of the moment, and was a weak way to demonstrate the characters death.

The Faction also used many aspects of physical theatre. A scene, which represents this well, is when Richard takes to his throne. People who he previously murdered physically constructed the throne. This shows that whatever crimes he committed, they all contribute to his attainment of the crown. They quite literally represented the people he had stamped on en route to power. The hierarchy amplified Shakespeare's original portrayal of Richard III as a Machiavellian villain. When the executioners were lifting Christopher York, the men were crouching with their heads facing the floor whilst the lighting was corresponding- a dark tinted black that allowed the audience to faintly see the starting of his rise. As Richard started to arise, the lighting became more vibrant in colour- to a rose gold. I felt this signified the vicious actions he had done in order to get to the royal seat. Firstly killing everyone in his path to attain this name, then using these same people he murdered to symbolise his throne. This is a wicked metaphor meaning that those who were killed by Richard's hands helped him rising position in the kingdom. The dark lighting at the beginning of the scene could have portrayed the evil plans conjured by Richard in order to gain his place on the throne. On the other hand, the rose gold lighting may have symbolized his prized thoughts even after forgetting about the brutality of his acts.

I felt the close proximity of the stage to audience was well used towards the end of the performance. Those who were wronged or killed by Richard stood on the steps beside the audience's seats as if they were witnessing his death for amusement or pure revenge. I felt that this had an impact on the audience's emotion towards Richard, he was deliberately portrayed to be

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hated and so he was. The fact that those killed or wronged were on the audience's side also watching his death as if it were their entertainment, also made me feel as if we were all in abomination against him. All on one team. The climax towards Richard's death was extremely nerve racking to watch as he was placed right in the centre of the battlefield dodging the arrows, along with the whole-cast physical portrayal of the battle. As the battle continued the background music got louder and faster as if in anticipation of Richard's death. Along with the speed of the music, the characters on the stage had quickened the dynamic of their movements. This could have been a representation of Richard's fast heart beating due to the fright and worry as he may have known that his death was approaching. However, once the arrow had struck him, all the havoc had slowed down. Therefore time was caught upon him in order for him to receive the pain he deserved, slowly but surely.

The Faction's interpretation was a successful visual, one which drew the audience into a world which they face every day – that of power-hungry leaders and backstabbing politicians. I felt that this was the message they were trying to communicate, that Richard's manipulative techniques are still used today.