Untitled Essay, Research Paper

I have had many theater-related experiences. Every chapter that I have read in my theater book has allowed me to make a connection to my past experiences with theater performances. I have also seen many plays and could relate to things an audience sees by reading the book. My first theater experience ever is when I was in the Nutcracker. We did a ballet performance for this play. I was very young when I did this, but I remember my instructor always saying that we must make contact with our audience through movements. Since in ballet you can not talk, you have to express the emotions that you are feeling to the audience through movement. This was very difficult. I must say that acting with words is a lot easier than acting through dance. In chapter one of my theater book, I was able to make the connection of “theater” is “work” to my experience of work in a theater with school plays. I know that I did not work as hard as professionals do, but I did work hard. For three months, we practiced everyday except for Saturday and Sunday, from 3:30 to 6:30. I helped with a lot of the choreography, so that made my days even longer and harder. However, this was also an enjoyable work experience for me. While reading the passage, I was able to relate with some of the “theater times” because of my play director. My high school director was very talented in directing plays. He would talk to us as if we were professionals and made us put more into what we were doing. That would be impersonation. When the passage talked about art, I thought of my art teacher who would always design all of the sets and made them look so lifelike. When the passage said that there are more behind the stage workers than on stage workers, I knew that that is very true. We had the front and backlighting, the designing people, who cleared the sets and put on new ones, the directing and the building crews. I was able to relate most of the passage through my own past experiences. Chapter 3 talks about “the actor”. I found this chapter very interesting. I found out that actors had to go to college too. I also found it compelling to learn that in the passage on page 76, under the picture, it talks about how playing “ordinary people” in a realistic play is often the biggest challenge for an actor. I can see how this can be true, but I never realized it before. I am usually very outgoing, and loud in real life, but if I had to act like that on stage, I do not know if I could. If someone asked you to imitate yourself, that would be very hard, since to do not always realize how you act. Chapter 4 talks about the “playwright”. While practicing for my high school plays, I have always wondered who had written them. I still never found out yet because it really was not that important to me. After reading the paragraph about the playwright’s career, it makes it a little more interesting to me to know about who wrote these plays that I was acting out. I ask the question “what made them write the way they did?” I really enjoyed the passage at the top of page 92, which talks about the American women playwrights. The first woman’s name is Meagan Terry. She states that after the woman’s movement, she left the business world that was meant for a man. She felt like there was a necessity to write about very strong women. I admire her for that. The second woman is Marsha Norman. She wrote the book The Second Garden, probably because of the time when she was working in a child’s unit of a state mental hospital. Perhaps she thought about what would happen if one of these children ever found themselves in a place that they could not get out of. That is probably where she got the ideas for her book.Chapter 5 talked about “Designers and Technicians”. Some of this passage got me thinking about my high school plays. Now I know why the lighting for the plays was so essential for setting the mood of the scene. Before, I used to think that the lights were just on the stage or maybe sometimes just on the main characters. There is reason for this, I have learned, after reading this passage. The picture on page 132 of four women and their umbrellas was very interesting. The lighting that is cast down upon them gives me an eerie feeling. Then on page 133, there is lighting being done both in subtle and flamboyant fashions. There is a very ghostly man floating above his jail cell, and he is able to look like that through special lighting. You see, then, how important lighting is. I never used to see it that way. I almost wish that I knew about these things back in high school, so that I would have been able to appreciate theater better. The talk about costumes also brought me back to high school plays. Our costumes usually were always really nice. Costumes really do make the show. Without great costumes, your audience may not know how great a character really is. What about the makeup? We had people come in from the Pittsburgh Theater to do our makeup and it was very lifelike, so at least I had some professional things that I could work with and appreciate. In chapter 6, the passages are focused around “the director”. This chapter got me thinking about how directors really work, what they feel, and how they think when directing a play. While reading about “casting”, I thought about my director Mr. Gryn. He always knew whom to pick for the best parts of the play. There was one kid, whom I know personally, that was very comical. Mr. Gryn knew that too, so when it came time for “Wizard of Oz”, this person was picked to be the cowardly lion. When it came to “Peter Pan”, he was Mr. Smee. Then in “Bye Bye Birdie”, he was Mr. McCafee. He always stole the show, since he could always make the audience laugh. The director knew that. Like it saying in the book The People in A Play, the actors not only attract more audience than any other aspect of the play, but they also represent what the audience care about and will remember the next day. Now, in chapter 9, “The Critic”, I experience the audience perspective. I remember when I went to see the “Nutcracker” at the Pittsburgh Theater. I was able to be the audience that time, and was able to draw my own critical perspective of the play. Now when I go to see a play, I will be able to use the five perspectives test that I learned about in the passage. These are human and personal significance, artistic quality, theatrical expression and capacity to learn. After learning those, I am able to go back and think about the “Nutcracker”, thus putting the critical perspectives into the play. The play had a lot of artistic quality. It was a ballet performance, which made every move have to be artistic. They also had a human and personal significance because they had to act out their feelings through dance. The play “Nutcracker”, was a great production, and I would like to see it again now that I have a better appreciation for it. Taking this theater class has helped me appreciate the acting world. I am glad that I have seen and been in theater performances before, because when looking back now, I can relate to so many things. About a month ago, I saw the play “Cat Among the Pigeons”. I could relate with so many things that I had learned in theater class and in my book. I was able to enjoy and understand the play much better. I believe that taking this course has really changed my views on theater for the better.