



Summer Festival Guide

From new work to old classics, from Red Hook to Ramsey Field... all the boroughs of New York City are ablaze with free and cheap theatre events this summer!

The summer issue of *PxP* will soon be at your school, giving you and your students the best of New York City Theatre. Please distribute it right away.

Also... School may be almost finished for the year, but your students' learning opportunities don't have to be. Consider copying and distributing this **Teacher Guide to interested students along with *PxP* magazine**—it's full of exercises, debate issues, and other springboards for students trying to stay theatre-savvy this summer. You can also find all of this season's Teacher Guides and *PxP* issues online at www.tdf.org/pxp.

PxP: In This Issue

Interviews with David Adjmi and Lucy Thurber

Two of New York City's hottest young playwrights discuss their work, their inspiration, and the importance of writing and seeing new plays.

Coraline

Featuring music by Stephin Merritt of alt rock band *The Magnetic Fields*, this Off Broadway production taps into the imaginative fantasy of the hit book by Neil Gaiman.

West Side Story

Thanks to Lin-Manuel Miranda (*In the Heights*), Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim's iconic musical has gone multilingual.

Hair

It's the Age of Aquarius once again. Get out your bell bottoms...the "tribe" is back on Broadway!

Next to Normal

Michael Greif (director of *Rent*) helmed this musical biopic of a seemingly typical suburban family, which has garnered eleven Tony nominations.

In This Teacher Guide

Conscience Calling

Use this in-class "do now" writing exercise inspired by *PxP*'s featured productions.

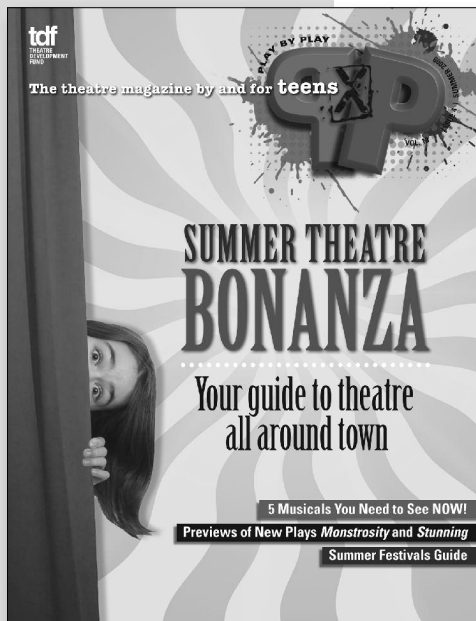
Summer Scramble

Have some fun with your students while introducing them to the Summer Festivals happening throughout all five NYC boroughs

Teacher Toolbox

Get background info on featured *PxP* shows, and idea prompts to create your own *PxP* lesson plans

PLUS...Student Writing Opportunities, Curricular Connections, and the A to Z worksheet!



WANTED: Student Writers!

Do you teach talented young students who love writing and going to the theatre? Encourage them to join next season's team of *PxP* PLOGGERS! It's a great opportunity to see some of NYC's hottest shows, and write about its coolest stars. For more info, contact Julia at JuliaR@tdf.org or by phone at (212) 912-9770 ext. 332.

Curricular Connections

Many Broadway and Off Broadway productions can support the curriculum you teach. The list below includes shows featured in *PxP*, as well as other productions that may or may not offer a discounted student ticket.

Literature:

- **Coraline** (in this issue)
- **Our Town** David Cromer directs Thornton Wilder's classic. Barrow Street Theatre, 27 Barrow St. (212) 868-4444. www.barrowstreettheatre.com

Current Events/Ethics:

- **Next Fall** Naked Angels presents the world premiere of a new comedy about a Christian who saves an atheist from choking. Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42 St. (212) 279-4200. www.playwrightshorizons.org
- **Everyday Rapture** This coming-of-age story centers on a Mennonite girl who moves to Manhattan. Second Stage, 307 W. 43 St. (212) 246-4422. www.2st.com
- **Groundswell** A psychological thriller about hunger and hope on the barren diamond-diving coast of South Africa. Acorn Theater @ Theater Row, 410 W. 42 St. (212) 279-4200. www.thenewgroup.org

Ethnicity/Multicultural:

- **Joe Turner's Come and Gone** August Wilson's meditation on the northward migration of African Americans, set in a Pittsburgh boarding house in 1911. Belasco Theatre, 111 W 44 St. (212) 239-6200. www.lct.org
- **Irena's Vow** Tovah Feldshuh stars as a real-life Polish Catholic who endeavors to save a dozen Jewish refugees during World War II. Walter Kerr Theatre, 219 W. 48 St. (212) 239-6200. www.irenasvow.com
- **Things of Dry Hours** Naomi Wallace wrote this play, about a black Sunday school teacher who gives shelter to a white refugee. New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4 St. (212) 460-5475. www.nytw.org

History:

- **Hair** (in this issue)
- **South Pacific** Lincoln Center Theater presents the first Broadway revival of the iconic 1949 musical, about American sailors stationed in the South Pacific during WW II. Vivian Beaumont Theater, 150 W. 65 St. (212) 239-6200. www.lct.org
- **The Rivalry** Norman Corwin wrote this play, about the 1858 debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas. Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22 St. (212) 727-2737. www.irishrep.org
- **Mary Stuart** Friedrich Schiller's account of the relationship between Elizabeth I and her rival and cousin, Mary Queen of Scots. Broadhurst Theatre, 235 W. 44 St. (212) 239-6200. www.marystuartonbroadway.com

Shakespeare and the Classics:

- **West Side Story** The classic Bernstein-Sondheim-Robbins re-telling of Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* is back on Broadway. Palace Theatre, Broadway at 47 St. (212) 239-6200. www.broadwaywestsidestory.com
- **Twelfth Night** Anne Hathaway stars in Shakespeare's time-honored story of cross-dressing and mistaken identity, all in the name of love. Delacorte Theater in Central Park, enter at W. 81 or E. 79 St. (212) 539-8750. www.publictheater.org

Conscience Calling

The plays in this issue of *PxP* feature characters faced with life-changing temptations...and potentially serious consequences. In *West Side Story*, Maria's love for Tony could prove disastrous. The "other" world of *Coraline* is probably not as perfect as it seems. Stunning, according to playwright David Adjmi, is about a teen "grappling with making choices and deliberating about the kind of person she wants to be."

Temptation is part of the human condition. Sitting perpetually like angels and devils on our shoulders, the battle between common sense and desire can lead to very difficult decisions... and very compelling stories and plays.

Exercise: Write a letter of advice to someone you know (real or fictional) facing a tempting decision.

- 1. Brainstorm** a list of temptations that teens face on a regular basis. (Doing drugs, sneaking out of the house, etc.) Include specific situations that you or someone you know has faced, as well as fictional situations from class reading, etc.
- 2. Discuss** one of these situations in-depth. What's at stake? What are the pros and cons? What do you gain if you give in...and what do you lose? What's the impact of peer pressure? Are there situations where there is no clear 'right' and 'wrong'?
- 3. Optional: Role-play** a scene where someone is being tempted to do something potentially dangerous; or use the "angel/devil" exercise (below) to improvise dialogue and inspire discussion.
- 4. Identify** someone you know who has recently faced a difficult decision. It could be a best friend or classmate; it could be a character from a book you're reading.
- 5. Write a letter** to that person offering your advice. Give them some perspective, and help them understand the consequences of their choices. If you were in their situation, what would you do?
- 6. Re-read** the reviews in this issue of *PxP*. What potentially tempting situations can you identify?

Angel/Devil

Recruit three volunteers. Ask one student to stand at the center of the room. Have them choose a situation where they're tempted by something with serious consequences (sneaking out of the house for a party, etc.).

Ask the other two volunteers to stand on opposite sides of the room so the first student is between them. In the improv that follows, they play the 'angel' and 'devil' of the first student's conscience. The 'devil' will tempt the student in the middle to give in; the 'angel' will remind him/her why giving in is a bad idea.

Have the 'angel' and 'devil' take turns convincing the student in the middle to take their side. As they argue, ask the student in the middle to move toward the person making the most convincing argument. Moderate the debate if necessary, giving each side equal time to make counterarguments. (Hint: It sometimes helps to brainstorm with the class beforehand on the tactics each side might use.)

Let the debate continue until it's clear that one side (or neither side) is going to win. Discuss what worked, or didn't work, about each argument.

Obviously in some situations there is no clear 'right' or 'wrong' side, in which case the assignment of 'angel' and 'devil' is entirely arbitrary.

Teacher Toolbox

Want more background info on productions featured in PxP reviews? Need a springboard for more classroom activities? Look no further.

West Side Story

The iconic musical adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* is set on Manhattan's West Side, where in the 1950's a Latino immigrant population was steadily growing—and meeting discrimination, cultural rivalry and turf wars. The effect of gentrification in NYC neighborhoods is, of course, as timely as ever. This production is multilingual; many songs and some dialogue are now in Spanish to reflect the characters' Puerto Rican heritage.

- If *Romeo & Juliet* were set in your neighborhood, who would the rival families be? Write a brief summary of this version of the play.
- Which plays, books or movies do you know that have characters of varied backgrounds, and could be multilingual? Which parts would you translate from English, and into what language? Why?

Coraline features the music and lyrics of Stephin Merritt, from iconic 'alt' rock band The Magnetic Fields. This imaginative adaptation of Neil Gaiman's fantastically menacing children's book also features the unconventional casting of Jayne Houdyshell, age 56, in the 9-year-old title role.

Hair is now on Broadway, after last summer's Central Park success. The "Love-Rock Musical" tells of a group of Hippies fighting against the Vietnam War and living a bohemian life together in New York City. Friends Claude and Berger struggle to balance their lives and loves with their pacifist rebellion against the war and the conservative impulses of society. Ultimately Claude must decide whether or not to resist the draft, as his friends have done.

- **DEBATE TOPIC:** The U.S. Army should use the draft for all wars.
- **DEBATE TOPIC:** Seeking exemption (legally or illegally) from the draft for moral reasons is acceptable

Next to Normal is an "emotional powerhouse" of a musical directed by Michael Greif (director of *Rent*) about a seemingly normal suburban family. But Mom's bipolar disorder triggers a series of events, reflections and recriminations that strike at the heart of one family's struggle to get by.

- **DEBATE TOPIC:** Medication should be mandatory for anyone with mental illness.

Stunning by David Adjmi tells the story of Lily, a 16-year-old from a tight-knit Syrian-Jewish community in Brooklyn. She has recently married a much older man who gives her every luxury money can buy...but at what price? A meditation on culture and tradition in modern society, Adjmi's play forces us to examine our values and what we hold most dear.

- **DEBATE TOPIC:** Women should not be forced into arranged marriages.
- Write a letter to your parents, or to a friend's parents, encouraging them to let go of tradition and embrace progress on a particular issue.

Summer Opportunities for Students

SUMMER SHAKE UP is a one-day-only event for students age 12 and up. Experience the backstage workings of The Public Theater, and learn more about Shakespeare with the help of The Public's teaching artists. Friday, July 10, at Central Park's Delacorte Theatre. Registration begins at 9:30. <http://www.publictheater.org/content/view/144/246/>

In **SHAKESPEARE LAB JR.**, the Public Theater offers two free week-long sessions exploring theatre, performance, poetry and the arts. Open to any teen (ages 13-19) enrolled in a NYC Public School. <http://www.publictheater.org/content/view/131/226/>
For more information, email jzweiman@publictheater.org.

Summer Theatre Festival Fun Guide

No more homework, no more books... Use these starter ideas to have fun with your students, and to encourage them to take advantage of the great theatre happening all over the city this summer.

- **Nearest and Dearest.** Offer a prize to the first student to identify which festival takes place nearest your school or neighborhood.
- **Zoom!** Choose a festival that sounds interesting to you or your students. Offer a prize to the first student who can map out the quickest way there via public transportation.
- **Pin the Tail on Manhattan.** Draw a basic map of Manhattan (or your borough, or both) on the blackboard with basic landmarks; use tape to make a 'marker.' Blindfold students one at a time and have them pin the marker on the board. Each time a new mark is hit, offer a prize to the student who identifies the nearest Summer Festival listed in The Plog.
- **Review the Festival Guide together.** Which festivals look most interesting to your students, and why?

Using the Back Page: PxP A to Z

The worksheet provided on the back page of this guide is designed to help students navigate through the issue and discover the opportunities it contains. Reproduce the worksheet and assign it as homework or put students into groups and encourage them to complete it together in class. Try setting a time limit and see which group can find the most correct answers.

Answers: Amy Leon, Baruch Performing Arts Center, Clubbed Thumb Summerworks, Diana, Ethel Barrymore Theatre, *Fantasticks*, Gallery Players, *Happiness*, Imperial Theatre, Jayne Houdyshell, Sabrina Khan, Lucy Thurber, Midwood, Natalie, *Our House*, Palace Theatre, (Avenue) Q, Red Hook Fest, "Siento Hermosa," Torch Music Fest, Upright Citizens Brigade, Vietnam, *Wicked*, Xerox, Young, FuerZabruta

Play by Play/TDF
528 Eighth Avenue, Suite 801
New York, NY 10018-6507
(212) 912-9770, ext.332
playbyplay@tdf.org

www.tdf.org/pxp
www.tdf.org

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A to Z

Use this issue to find answers which start (and end) with the following letters.

A

She's the PxP plogger who reviewed *West Side Story*

B

You'll find the Latino International Festival here this summer

C

Catch this summer's new play festival at the Ohio Theatre in June



D

Pictured left, she's the struggling mom in *Next to Normal*

E

\$26.50 student rush tix are available to *Exit the King*, playing on Broadway at this theatre

F

Get \$31 student rush tix for this Off Broadway show at te Snapple Theatre Center

G

Their Annual Black Box Festival runs June 11-21 this summer

H

You can see this Off Broadway show at Lincoln Center with \$20 student rush tix

I

Billy Elliot, playing on Broadway at this theatre, offers \$41.50 student rush tix



J

She's the star of *Coraline* pictured left

K

She's a PxP Senior Plogger (last name)

L

She wrote *Monstrosity*

M

Stunning is set in this Brooklyn neighborhood

N

She's the daughter in *Next to Normal*

O

\$15 student rush tix will get you in to this Off Broadway play at Playwrights Horizons

P

It's where *West Side Story* is performing on Broadway

Q

Pictured right, it was voted "Best Musical On Broadway" by PxP readers on The Plog!



R

It's the Summer Festival you'll find at Louis J. Valentine Jr. Park

S

It's one of the new multilingual songs you'll hear in *West Side Story*

T

This summer talent competition for NYC high school students takes place June 5 at the Bayard Rustin Educational Complex

U

Sketchfest NYC happens here this summer

V

It's the war they're protesting in the picture, right



W

This Broadway play at the Gershwin Theatre offers \$26.50 lottery rush tickets

X

One of the generous supporters of PxP

Y

You'll find new plays _____ audiences this summer at Pless Hall, June 6-21

Z

\$25 rush tix are available for this Off Broadway show at the Daryl Roth Theatre

Think about it/Talk about it:

Which of the shows featured in the issue most interests you, and why?