



STAR POWER

PxP and the NYC theatre scene are full of stage and screen stars this season. Your students won't want to miss Daniel Radcliffe (aka Harry Potter) in *Equus*. They might also want to know that Jonathan Groff (*Spring Awakening*, *Hair*) stars in *Prayer for My Enemy* at Playwrights Horizons.

Read up on both productions in this issue of PxP!

Small beginnings, big stars. The winter issue of PxP features big time productions that had humble beginnings. Samm-Art Williams' Tony-nominated *Home*, now being revived at Signature Theatre, was first produced by the Negro Ensemble Company, a company dreamed up at a restaurant where its founders scribbled their ideas on a tablecloth. Lin-Manuel Miranda started writing *In the Heights* during his sophomore year of college—and now it's a Broadway hit. We hope you'll find ideas and info inside this issue of PxP and the *Teacher Guide* to help inspire your students to their own new "heights"!

PxP: In This Issue

Special Feature: How to get cheap tix!

Our PxP ploggers have the scoop on rush tickets, student prices, and the half-price TKTS ticket booths.

Prayer for My Enemy

Pulitzer Prize finalist Craig Lucas challenges our assumptions of who is right, who is wrong, and what it takes to find forgiveness and common ground.

Also: Interview with Lin-Manuel Miranda

The creator and star of *In the Heights* talks with PxP plogger Hans Nielsen about Broadway, adolescence, and growing up in New York.

Spring Awakening

The long-running teen-angst Broadway musical closes on Jan. 18—don't miss it!

Equus

Daniel Radcliffe stars in Peter Shaffer's drama about a troubled teen incarcerated for blinding a team of horses.

Home

Signature Theatre revives Samm-Art Williams' 1980 Broadway play about an African American man's search for where he belongs in 1950's America.

In This Teacher Guide

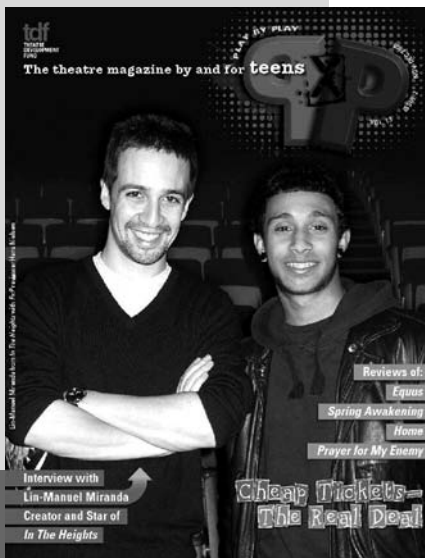
The Times, They Are A' Changin'...

Use this in-class "do now" writing exercise inspired by *Home*

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!



Contest

Students and teachers:
Answer 5 questions
and get a chance to
win a TKTS gift card!
More info @
www.tdf.org/pxp

TDF needs YOU...to spread the word!

Many of you already enjoy TDF member discounts (up to 70% off full-price) on Broadway, Off Broadway, theatre and dance. **Help TDF spread the word to your colleagues**—teachers, school staff and students who might not know they're eligible to join. It's easy! Direct them to TDF online, www.tdf.org, or write us at press@tdf.org if you'd like a flyer to distribute at your school.

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.

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, tickets can be purchased for the following shows by calling Telecharge at **(212) 239-6200**.

Literature:

■ **Catch-22** Aquila Theatre imaginatively stages Joseph Heller's anti-war classic. Through Dec. 20. Lucille Lortel Theatre, 121 Christopher St. (212) 279-4200. www.aquilatheatre.com

■ **Gimpel Tam** A musical adaptation of Isaac Bashevis Singer's short story, about the victimization of a gullible orphan. In Yiddish, with English subtitles. JCC Theatre, 334 Amsterdam Ave. (800) 595-4849.

Current Events/Ethics:

■ **Prayer for My Enemy** (in this issue)

■ **Cranked** Explores the epidemic of crystal meth use among teens. Jan. 9-Jan. 25. The Duke on 42 St, 229 W. 42 St. (646) 223-3010. www.newvictory.org

■ **Back Back Back** Itamar Moses' new drama about professional baseball players doing steroids. Through Jan. 25. Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. (212) 581-1212. www.mtc-nyc.org

Ethnicity/Multicultural:

■ **Home** (in this issue)

■ **In the Heights** (in this issue)

■ **Taking Over** Danny Hoch's one-man show about the gentrification of Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Through Dec. 21. Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (212) 967-7555. www.publictheater.org

History:

■ **Streamers** Four young soldiers fresh from boot camp wait anxiously in 1965 Virginia, watching the Vietnam conflict escalate. Through Jan. 11. Roundabout Theatre, 111 W. 46 St. (212) 719-1300. www.roundabouttheatre.org

■ **Road Show** The story of two brothers' quest for the American dream, spanning 40 years from the Alaskan gold rush to the Florida real estate boom. Through Dec. 28. Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (212) 967-7555. www.publictheater.org

Shakespeare and the Classics:

■ **Shogun Macbeth**, adapted from William Shakespeare. The Scottish Play is transported to 12th century Japan in this Pan Asian Repertory production. Julia Miles Theatre, 424 W. 55th St.

■ **All My Sons** by Arthur Miller. John Lithgow and Katie Holmes star in the 1947 play about a businessman's shady dealings during World War II. Schoenfeld Theatre, 236 W. 45 St. www.allmysonsbroadway.com

■ **The Seagull** Kristen Scott Thomas and Peter Saarsgard star in Chekhov's classic story of art, love and ambition. Through Dec. 21. Walter Kerr Theatre, 219 W. 48 St. www.seagulltheplay.com

The Times, They Are A' Changin'...

Home @ Signature Theatre

Samm-Art Williams' Tony-nominated *Home* is enjoying a revival as part of Signature Theatre's 2008-2009 season celebrating the artists of the Negro Ensemble Company (NEC).

Set in the 1950's, *Home* tells the story of Cephus Miles, who loses his family's farm in North Carolina and, at his wit's end, heads north to seek a better life. When life in the city turns troublesome, Cephus returns home to retrieve the farm. He confronts the changes, good and bad, that have occurred in his absence—including the overturning of Jim Crow segregation laws.

Exercise: Draw a timeline capturing the important Civil Rights events that took place in the 1950's, and write a journal entry from Cephus Miles' point of view.

Note for teachers: Visit www.jimcrowhistory.org for resources and information on the history of Jim Crow laws in this country.

- 1. Read the *PxP* review of *Home*.** Discuss the important details you learn about the play—where does it take place? Where is Cephus Miles' original 'home'? What would life have been like there in the 1950's, before desegregation laws?
 - 2. List** on the board the events you can name that inspired the Civil Rights movement: Rosa Parks, *Brown VS Board of Education*, desegregation, etc.
 - 3. Discuss** the changes that Cephus would have experienced when he returned home to North Carolina. How would the elimination of Jim Crow segregation rules in the country change his daily life? His bus travels?
 - 4.** In groups or individually, **draw a Civil Rights timeline** highlighting the important events of the 1950's and 1960's. If available, use the internet to help you research.
 - 5. Write a journal entry** from Cephus' point of view when he returns to North Carolina. How might he feel returning to his southern home and community that is now desegregated?
- Take it further...**
- 6. Discuss** the state of race relations and Civil Rights in this country today. Have you experienced discrimination? Segregation? Racism? How? When?
 - 7. Imagine** that Cephus Miles travels forward in time to 2008, and learns that Barack Obama has been named the next President of the United States. Write a journal entry capturing his thoughts and (likely) his surprise.

About the Negro Ensemble Company (NEC)

The NEC began in 1964 when its founders Robert Hooks and Douglas Turner Ward met at the Cherry Lane Theatre. Sharing a desire to give theatrical voice to the African American experience, they produced Ward's play *Happy Ending* together.

Happy Ending earned them critical acclaim, an Obie Award, and the serious attention of potential sponsors. One night at a restaurant in the Lower East Side, the men dreamed up plans for "an ideal black theatre company." They scrawled their ideas on the tablecloth then set them down on paper for the Ford Foundation, who provided money to start a company and training program.

The NEC paved the way for black theatre artists to develop their voice and vision. The company has mentored, among others, Denzel Washington, Phylicia Rashad, and Charles Fuller.

For more information on NEC productions, internships, and training opportunities, visit www.negroensemblecompany.org

Teacher Toolbox

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

Home, like many literary (and Hollywood) adventures—from *The Odyssey* and *Huckleberry Finn* to *The Lord of the Rings*—follows the format of a “Hero’s Journey,” where a protagonist is lured from a safe and comfortable path to a difficult adventure, encountering difficulties and learning lessons along the way.

- What books/movies are you familiar with that fall into this genre? What similar adventures, trials, and rewards do the protagonists face?

- Read Robert Frost’s poem “The Road Not Taken” (it’s easily found online). Reflect on the poem in light of the experiences of the heroes/protagonists you listed above, and/or in light of your own experiences.

Spring Awakening is the hit Broadway musical based on Frank Wedekind’s incendiary 1891 play about teen frustration and curiosity—and the dangerous adult attempts to suppress it. Featuring music by Duncan Sheik, it’s no wonder that the production—first performed Off Broadway in 2006—has enjoyed a successful Broadway run.

- Read the PxP review of *Spring Awakening*. What troubles do Melchior, Wendla and Moritz face? Do teenagers face the same problems today? How are your problems similar? Different?

- **DEBATE TOPIC:** Strict rules and discipline encourage teens to be more focused and well-behaved.

- **DEBATE TOPIC:** Abstinence is the only form of birth control that should be taught in schools.

Equus tells the story of psychiatrist Martin Dysart and his latest patient, Alan Strang, a young man who has been institutionalized for blinding six horses. Part detective story, part psychological thriller, *Equus* plumbs the depths of fanaticism as Dysart tries to help Alan while struggling with his own sense of purpose. Daniel Radcliffe and Richard Griffiths (aka Harry Potter and Uncle Vernon) star in the new Broadway production.

Prayer for My Enemy is the latest from playwright Craig Lucas (*Prelude to a Kiss*, *Light in the Piazza*). In *Prayer for My Enemy*, a fractured American family seeks ways to come together despite the secrets that each one of them holds. The gulf of understanding that separates them is mirrored in the fractures that divide our country.

In the Heights explores three days in the life of a vibrant and tight-knit community in Washington Heights. First written by Lin-Manuel Miranda (who also performs in the show) while he was a student at Wesleyan University in Connecticut, *In the Heights* was nominated for 13 Tony Awards this season, and won the Tony for Best Musical.

- Read Lin-Manuel Miranda’s PxP interview about community and identity. What does ‘community’ mean? What communities are you a part of in...your family? Your school? Your neighborhood?

- Someone has written a new hit musical about your neighborhood. Draw the set—which storefronts would represent your ‘hood on stage? Cast the main characters—who from your neighborhood would be the narrator? The love interests? Etc.

Writing Opportunities for Students

PxP ...is always recruiting new writers! All of the PxP reviews are student-written. . .would you like to see your student’s name in print? E-mail PxP editor Julia Rosenfeld at JuliaR@tdf.org!

Urban Word NYC Provides free and uncensored writing and performance opportunities to youth in all five boroughs of New York City. Don’t miss the annual poetry slam in February 2009. www.urbanwordnyc.org

Random House Creative Writing Competition For NYC Public High School Seniors Deadline: Feb. 9, 2009
Guidelines: www.randomhouse.com/creativewriting

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: A.E. Stevenson High School, Bobby Gore, Craig Lucas, Derick Sherrier, *Equus*, *Fuerzabruta*, Gershwin, *Home*, Iraq, Julia, Khartoum, Lottery Tickets, Myrtle, North Carolina, O’Neil Theatre, Puerto Rico, Quarterly, Richard Griffiths, *Shrek the Musical*, Times Square TKTS, Usnavi, Vietnam, Wendla, Xerox, York Theatre, Israel Horowitz

DID YOU KNOW... PxP and the Teacher Guide are always online!

Find last season’s issues of PxP magazine and the accompanying Teacher Guides...with past reviews, puzzles and lesson ideas! www.tdf.org/playbyplayonline

We’d love to hear from you!

Send PxP magazine ideas (and students interested in becoming PxP reviewers!) to *Play by Play* editor Julia Rosenfeld: JuliaR@tdf.org

Send curriculum ideas and thoughts to *Play by Play* Teacher Guide editor Krista Apple: playbyplayteacher@gmail.com

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A to Z

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

A

They won tix to *In the Heights*...and now their picture is in *PxP*

B

He's the TDF liaison to call for more info on cheap theatre tix

C

He wrote *Prayer for My Enemy*



D

The *PxP* writer who reviewed the play pictured here.

E

This play will give you your Harry Potter fix

F

Catch this long-running show for \$25 at the Daryl Roth Theatre

G

You can get \$26.50 lottery tix to the long-running show *Wicked* at this theatre



H

It's the play pictured here

I

In *Prayer for My Enemy*, Billy's about to go serve here

J

Write to her if you'd like to be a *PxP* Plogger

K

\$10 tix are available for *Philip Roth in _____* at the Public Theatre

L

Some theatres offer this creative option for getting last-minute cheap seat deals

M

The new Downtown Brooklyn TKTS booth is on the corner of this street and Jay Street

N

Cephus Miles' *Home* state

O

Catch *Spring Awakening* at this theatre before it closes!

P

Where Lin-Manuel Miranda's parents were born

Q

It's how often *PxP* is published

R

Pictured here, he's the other *Harry Potter* star



S

This new long-running show at the Broadway Theatre has \$26.50 lottery rush tix

T

This cheap-seat destination just opened at Duffy Square on 46th and Broadway

U

Lin-Manuel Miranda's character in *In the Heights*

V

Catch *Streamers*, about this war, at Roundabout Theatre for \$20

W

She's the *Spring Awakening* character pictured here



X

One of the generous supporters of *PxP*

Y

See *My Vaudeville Man* here with a \$20 student ticket

Z

\$10 student tix are available for his play *Line* at 13th Street Repertory Company

Think about it/Talk about it:

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