PERFORMANCE, AUDIENCE, & CRITIC

Chapter 2
THEATRE’S GOAL

Arouse The Desired Audience Response
• The ephemerality of performance means a missed line or action is forever lost to the spectator.
• The audience is offered one interpretation, chosen by the director.
• Different director=different interpretation
THEATRE VS. THEATER (FILM)

• Fewer performance times to choose from
• Tickets in advance
• Reserved seating
• Programs
• Mood music in advance
• Intermission(s)

• More performance times to choose from
• Tickets available at door
• Open seating
• No programs
• Commercials in advance
• No intermissions
HOW DOES ONE WATCH A PERFORMANCE?

• There are NO rules about how to experience a theatrical performance.
• Helps if one is willing to devote attention and concentration to the performance.
• Spectators must be willing to use imagination, to be open to suggestion.
• Seating area, stage design, facility size, may affect audience concentration.
WHO IS THE AUDIENCE?

- Broadway: upper middle class to upper class
- Community: tends to be white, middle class, middle age, and better educated.

Can any theatre serve all the interests in a community?
Should funding for minority specific productions go to mainstream theaters to encourage such productions? OR Should such funding go ONLY to minority specific theaters?
THE CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

• “Everyone’s a critic!”
• Is typically a three stage process:
  – First the experience
  – Then the analysis
  – Finally, the communication of the analysis.
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL CRITIC

• A recognized critic should have theatre-going experience

• Need to understand what is required for a production in order to evaluate each of the contributing arts

• Need to be aware of the audience for whom they are writing/communicating
Critic must be concerned with 3 Basic Problems

• UNDERSTANDING – What were the playwright, director, etc. trying to accomplish? Might the critic read the play first? Why?

• EFFECTIVENESS - How well did they accomplish what they set out to do?

• ULTIMATE WORTH – How valuable was the experience? Is there a standard to measure against?
QUALITIES NEEDED BY A CRITIC

• Sensitivity to feelings emotions, ideas
• Acquaintance [as much as possible] with all the different periods and types of theatre
• Willingness to explore plays and production processes
• Tolerance of innovation
Qualities cont.

- Awareness of his/her own prejudices/biases and values
- Ability to articulate clearly in expressing judgments and the bases for those
- Courteous demeanor
- Avoidance of dogmatism