

Theatre History II Mini-Assignments

- MA# 1** – English Restoration – The Restoration is, above all, noted for what is called “Comedy of Manners.” The elements that are typical of this type of theatre are: characters drawn from the upper class, a pre-occupation with seduction, arranged marriages, the latest fashions, and witty repartee. What is a contemporary of “Comedy of Manners” today. This could be a film or TV show. Make sure to explain your reasons behind choosing said film or show.
- MA#2** - 18th Century Europe – 18th Century Europe is a study in contrasts: the drive for revolution vs. the power of monarchies; the conviction of reason and sensibility to create a new social order vs. the irreverence and emotionality of the aristocracy. It is through these diametrically opposed thoughts that art was created. Think of a modern play (mid 20th century to now) where cool reason and unbridled emotionality crash into each other with disastrous, yet dramatic results.
- MA#3** – Romanticism – Imagination was key to the Romantics way of thinking. For the Romantics’ imagination invested the world with significance and meaning. Many 20^{th/21st} century musicals are Romantic with their love of nature, unabashed expression of emotion, and hero’s or heroine’s that are at odds with their societies. Think of and choose a modern Romantic musical and then choose the most imaginative lines or lyrics (around a verse length) from that piece to share with the class. You can sing...or recite the section...imbuing it with all the meaning that it deserves.
- MA#4** – The 19th Century – Vaudeville was a new form of entertainment to arise in the United States during the 19th century. It encompassed many different genres within it, such as song and dance, comedians, ventriloquists, juggling, animal acts etc. For this assignment discover and research a Vaudevillian entertainer or group. By this I mean determine the person’s name, specific dates in which they entertained, and a little bit of information about their style of entertainment or favorite songs etc. After doing this I want you to determine who their modern day equivalent might be and tell me why you believe the two are connected.
- MA#5** – The New Theatre 1880-1920 – This is the time period of the “isms”. First decide what your most favorite play in the whole world is. Then look at all of the isms: realism, naturalism, impressionism, cubism, symbolism, expressionism, futurism, or dadaism and determine which ism best captures the essence of your favorite play. Next, find an image/painting from a painter of that “ism” that best represents your play.
- MA#6** – In Search of a Future - I thought it best to hear from all of you about the people creating theatre now...in your time...that inspire you. Please choose an actor, director, designer, or playwright who is living and breathing at this very moment. Research them a little and be prepared to share a mini-history of their accomplishments in theatre. Please include what it is about them, that inspires you and what you would want to ask or say to this person if you met them.

]Exercise Contributed by Sharon Paquette

Sharon Paquette is a theatre director, actor and professor. Sharon, who has extensive experience working on plays and theatre related activities with prison inmates, has a BA, from Westminster College; a Med from Plymouth State College; and a MFA from Goddard College.