

# Making Connections Through Theater

## Benchmarks

- **Students extend their understanding of theater by connecting it to learning in other disciplines.**
- **Students explore how other art forms are incorporated into theater.**

## Connecting Theater to the Arts and Other Disciplines

Students will be able to:

- Connect learning from other arts and disciplines, such as math, science, language arts, social studies, technology, music, visual arts and dance, to extend their understanding of theater.
- Through attendance at and/or participation in theater performances, students recognize how associated art forms enhance theater production. These art forms include:
  - written and spoken text
  - music and song
  - visual arts
  - dance and movement
  - film and video

## Suggested Activities

### Dance and Movement

- Create a dance or movements to link a series of dramatic tableaux.
- Use observations and re-creations of various animal movements in a dance or movement exercise.
- Create a simple dance in response to a dramatic script or story.

### Language Arts

- Use a work of children's literature to animate improvisation, role-playing, storytelling or group sharings.
- Sequence a story or script by creating beginning, middle and end tableaux.
- Write "how to" essays about theater activities, including attending performances, participating in theater games, etc.

### Math

- Create word problems related to ticket and concession sales.
- Estimate the length of a play, taking into account scene changes and intermissions. Using a clock, determine the ending and starting times.
- Measure the stage and performance spaces for area and perimeter. Mark off the downstage edge of the playing area in one-foot increments from either side of center stage.

### Music

- Use a variety of musical selections or rhythms to inspire and/or underscore theater games and improvisations.
- Add found music to a story or play to heighten mood and atmosphere.

### Science

- Improve movement based on life cycles, such as seed-to-plant, egg-to-tadpole-to-frog, etc.
- Use an exploration of the five senses in improvisation activities.
- Using light and shadow, explore stage lighting and the use of lights with shadow puppets.

### Social Studies

- Identify and report on character types or roles in the neighborhood, such as lunchroom attendant, firefighter, store clerk, etc.
- Explore the neighborhood setting in a work of dramatic literature, such as a script version of the *Chicken Little* or *The Pied Piper*. Compare this with the students' community.
- Dramatize and explore similar stories from different cultures such as animal myths and hero stories.

### Technology

- Use a simple computer program to create a cartoon storyboard with a plot sequence, captions and dialogue.

- Using a digital camera, photograph student tableaux showing character responses and setting. Create a PowerPoint slide show using the tableaux photographs.

### Visual Arts

- Draw a scene or costume rendering.
- Create puppets to be used in storytelling or in a group share.
- Prior to seeing a performance, make predictions about the possible scenic and costume designs and colors.

### Theater and Component Art Form Activities:

Prior to a performance, students are instructed to observe the production in the following areas

- spoken work and voice
- music and song
- visual arts
- dance and movement
- film, video and projections

Following the performance, engage in a teacher guided group discussion presenting evidence from the production to support their observations. Use the Suggested Guided Questions and Inquiry/Grade 2 on page 14 to frame the discussion.

*Continued on following page*

## Making Connections Through Theater *continued*

### Suggested Activities *continued*

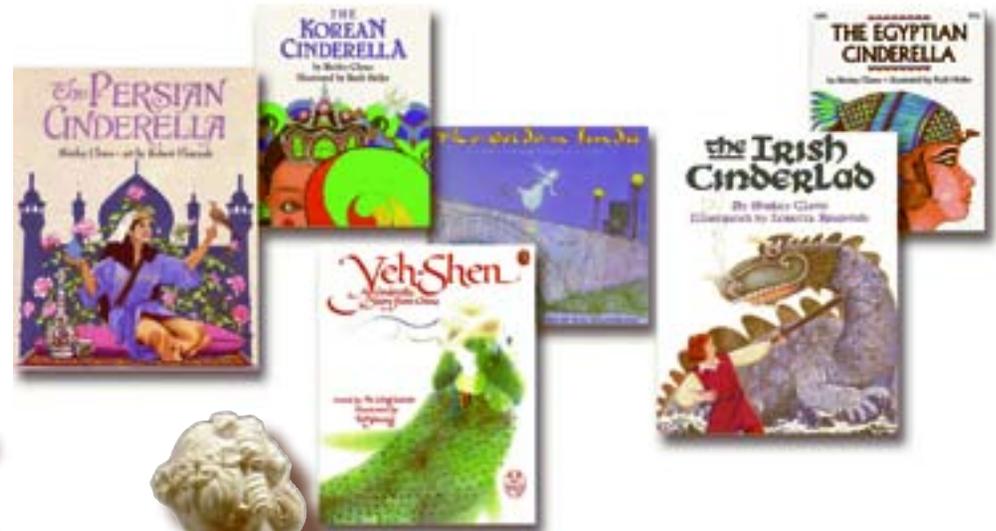
#### Suggested Performance Repertoire

Many theater, opera or musical theater companies produce versions of *Cinderella* in a variety of forms and from various cultures and perspectives. Attend a performance of *Cinderella* and encourage the students to decode the performance using the discussion tools on page 14. Additionally, students can compare the live performance with film/video, and storytelling or readings in which they have participated.

#### Suggested Organizations for Children's Theater

See current listing on the Project Arts Web/Arts and Cultural Education Services Guide.

[www.nycenet.edu/projectarts](http://www.nycenet.edu/projectarts)



# Making Connections Through Theater *continued*

## Benchmark

## Connecting Theater to Personal Experience, Community and Society Through an Exploration of Themes, Culture and History

- **Through an exploration of theme and context, students connect personal experience to an understanding of theater.**

Students will be able to:

- Respond to theater through a variety of approaches and with multiple perspectives.
- Recognize that theater, regardless of place or culture, tells us about ourselves and our lives.

### Suggested Activities

- Explore live theater through a teacher-guided process of inquiry to identify connections to their own lives and the lessons of the story. Guided discussion can include:
  - What did you learn from this play?
  - What did we learn from one of the characters?
  - Describe what one character was feeling.
  - Select an important moment in the performance and create a pose to reveal what the character was feeling.
  - Have you ever felt that way? Give an example of a time you felt the same way as the character.
  - Have you ever behaved like one of the characters? Give an example.
  - Why do you think that character behaved that way?
  - Is there anything in the story that reminded you or your own life? Why or why not?

### Suggested Repertoire

*Cinderella* can also be used for connecting the student's performance response to understanding the lessons of the story (i.e. what do we learn from *Cinderella*?).

More advanced students can also discuss the time and place embedded in the work and how these provide context. Additionally, students can examine how different cultures are represented in various performances of the same story.

### Suggested Organizations for Children's Theater

See current listing on the Project Arts Web/Arts and Cultural Education Services Guide.

[www.nycenet.edu/projectarts](http://www.nycenet.edu/projectarts)

# Making Connections Through Theater

## Benchmark

## Connecting Theater to the Arts and Other Disciplines

### ■ Students explore elements of theater shared with other art forms.

Students will be able to:

- Apply learning from other disciplines and art forms, such as math, science, language arts, social studies, technology, music, visual arts, dance, and film/video, to extend their understanding of theater.
- Recognize how associated art forms can enhance theater production. These art forms include:
  - written and spoken text
  - music and song
  - visual arts
  - dance and movement
  - film and video

## Suggested Activities

### ■ Dance and Movement

Participate in and create stage combat and fight choreography for a scene.

### ■ Film and Video

Videotape and edit the tapes of school performances and classroom theater activities.

Compare film versions of a work with a stage performance

### ■ Language Arts

Use literature as the basis to create student performed scenes and monologues.

Write and lay out a program for as school performance using a professional playbill as a model.

Create first-person character biographies for fictional characters in dramatic literature or original student work.

### ■ Math

Create a lay-out grid for the placement of stage scenery and furniture using graph paper and "x" and "y" coordinates.

Measure and draw a mini-ground plan to scale.

Create story problems using box office and technical theater situations such as ticket sales, profits, or the amount of wood needed to construct platforms.

### ■ Music

Create original music or use found music in a student performance for entrance music, underscoring or interludes.

Use three different types of music, such as classical, world music and contemporary, in same movement and vocal improvisation to note impact of music on interpretation.

Starting with a monologue use the text as lyrics. Add original music.

### ■ Science

Identify and examine simple backstage machinery (levers, pulleys, ramps, wheels, etc.) and describe how it is used.

Examine friction as related to moving stage scenery and lighting booms.

### ■ Social Studies

Use history to generate improvisations and/or original student scenes. Themes and eras may include the construction of the Erie Canal, the civil rights movement, or the immigrant experience.

Use original source documents, journals, letters and speeches to create theater pieces.

Create a talk show with interviews of characters in history or contemporary life exploring motivations and characterizations.

### ■ Technology

Use Internet resources to research playwrights, actors and theater history.

Use basic computer software such as MS Word to create a lay-out schematic for a stage space and the scenery in that space.

Create projected backdrops and slide shows for a performance, using PowerPoint.

### ■ Visual Arts

Design costumes or sets, using research, rendering and construction.

Analyze the design of theater posters, including period and contemporary designs.

Research the work of graphic designers, such as Milton Glaser and Rafal Olbinski.

Create and use puppets from eastern Asian cultures, including Japan, Indonesia and Vietnam.

### Theater and Component Art Form Activities:

■ Through a teacher-guided discussion, students will explore live theater or film to examine its parts and the integration of other art forms. Students may demonstrate learning through imitation, re-creation, image making or music making activities, such as staging scenes, drawing designs or creating sound tracks. After viewing and examining film or live performances of *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare and *West Side Story* by Arthur Laurents, Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim, students compare the two works and their incorporation of other art forms. Frame the discussion, using the suggested Guided Discussion Questions/Grade 5 on page 31.

■ Students examine three versions of *Carmen* on video, engaging in guided discussion as listed in the activity above.

### Suggested Video Resources

Opera - *Carmen* by Georges Bizet (Maazel, Migenes, Domingo -1984), Columbia/Tristar Studios

Musical Theater - *Carmen Jones* by Georges Bizet and Oscar Hammerstein (Dandrich, Belefonte-1954), Fox Home Video.

*Carmen: A Hip Hopera* (Knowles, Phifer-2001), New Line Home Video.

# Making Connections Through Theater *continued*

## Theater and Component Art Form Guided Discussion Questions

### Suggested Guided Discussion Questions for *Romeo and Juliet*-*West Side Story*:

#### Character and Choice

What did the main characters in these plays—Tony and Maria, Romeo and Juliet—want? What obstacles confronted them?

How were the conflicts and relationships similar in these two plays? How were they different? Give an example. How was the resolution of the action, the denouement, similar or different?

What is the main theme of these works? Is the message of *Romeo and Juliet* different than the message of *West Side Story*? Why?

#### Describing

Describe the music that you heard in both works.

How did the music add to the mood, atmosphere or feeling of the piece? How did the music or songs tell you about individual

characters? Give an example. How were the productions similar or different in their use of music? How did the songs affect the storytelling? How were the songs used differently than the spoken words?

In *West Side Story*, how was the instrumental music used? How were the overture and dance music different from the songs?

How was Shakespeare's use of language different from Laurents' and Sondheim's? What were the similarities?

How did the writers use rhyme and rhythm?

What were the visual elements that you saw onstage today? Did you see elements that you would describe as visual art?

How was the visual art different than what you would

see in a museum or gallery? What was the purpose of the design onstage?

Describe the costumes. What did the costumes tell us about the characters? What did it tell us about the time and place in which they lived? Give an example.

How did the two productions use dance? How were they similar in their use of dance? How were they different?

The two works both have pivotal moments when the characters connect through dance. Describe these moments.

#### Extended Inquiry

From the topics we have discussed, what area would you like to know more about? What resources could you use to learn more about these topics?

## Making Connections Through Theater *continued*

### Benchmark

### Connecting Theater to Personal Experience, Community and Society Through an Exploration of Themes, Culture and History

- Students refine their personal responses to theater by comparing various interpretations of a work and the context that informs the production of that work.

Students will be able to:

- Recognize that theater may come from a different time, place and culture, and can teach us lessons about ourselves and our lives.
- Respond to the play through the interplay of observation and viewer imagination.

### Suggested Activities

Through teacher-guided discussion, students will explore live theater, examining the connections to their own lives and the lessons of the story.

#### Example: *Romeo and Juliet*/*West Side Story*

Based on video viewings or seeing live performances of *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story*, students will be guided through reflection and examination. Guided discussion and activities can include:

What is the relationship between parents and children in these plays?

How are the parent/child relationships similar to or different from ones you see today, in your life or in other peoples' lives?

Write a letter in the voice of a character in the play, describing a particular emotion the character experiences or a situation the character is engaged in.

How might you have handled things differently if you were Romeo's parents? If you were Juliet's parents? Maria's? Tony's?

Why do the young men in both plays group themselves into gangs?

What are the advantages of being with a group of similar people?

What may be the problems in remaining with a gang or group?

If this play was set in today's world what might Juliet do differently? Romeo? Tony? Maria?

How do the plays/films differ because they are set in different time periods?

What was it like to live in New York City in the 1950s? How was life different for people from various backgrounds? What was it like to be newly arrived from Puerto Rico and speak mostly Spanish?



# Making Connections Through Theater

## Benchmark

## Connecting Theater to the Arts and Other Disciplines

- **Students broaden their understanding of theater by applying concrete learning from other disciplines.**
- **Students investigate how arts are incorporated in the theater production, and articulate the distinct choices that are made within the art forms to interpret and develop the theater work.**

Students will be able to:

- Apply learning from other arts and disciplines, such as math, science, language arts, social studies, technology, music, visual arts, dance, and film/video, to extend their understanding of theater.
- Respond to theater pieces they have seen and read using other art forms. These art forms include:
  - written and spoken text
  - music and song
  - visual arts
  - dance and movement
  - film and video

## Suggested Activities

### ■ **Dance and Movement**

Create original choreography for a scene in a musical or drama.

Participate in and create stage combat and fight choreography for a scene.

### ■ **Film and Video**

Adapt a scene from a play into a screenplay with proper formatting.

Film a staged scene in performance and on location. Contrast and compare the live version with the film version.

### ■ **Language Arts**

Write original monologues in a personal voice.

Edit a play for a particular audience, paying attention to length, the dramatic integrity of the scene and the audience.

Analyze and critique a piece of dramatic literature or live performance.

### ■ **Math**

Create and monitor a working budget for a school production or fictional theater production.

Build scenery pieces from scaled working drawings.

Use geometry in examining stage construction, such as angle braces, supports, trusses.

### ■ **Music**

Create original music or use found music in a student performance for entrance music, underscoring or interludes.

Write a review a school musical, demonstrating an understanding of the integration of instrumental and vocal music.

### ■ **Science**

Examine the anatomical mechanisms of vocal production and how the body produces vocal sound.

Explore electricity and electrical circuits in stage lighting.

Use the science of acoustics in examining stage and sound design.

Use the spectrum of light to examine lighting design and the mixing of light.

### ■ **Social Studies**

Read and examine an American musical, (e.g., *Fiorello* by Harnick and Bock, *1776* by Sherman Edwards or *South Pacific* by Rodgers and Hammerstein), with attention to the cultural, social and historical accuracy in the script.

Create a mock trial/theater presentation of a pivotal moment in American history, such as the Salem witch trials or the Scopes trial.

Using oral histories or interviews of veterans, suffragists, or civil rights activists, create an original theater piece.

### ■ **Technology**

Generate lighting plots and ground plans using computer software.

Use playwriting software such as Script Wizard to format original scripts in standard format.

Use lighting boards in designing and running lights for a production.

### ■ **Visual Arts**

Create scaled set models.

Research and render costume designs for a play with attention to budget and fabric choices.

Design and create character masks with attention to how color and design communicate emotion.

Explore trompe l'oeil techniques in scenic painting, such as paneled doors and marble columns.

### Theater and Component Art Form Activities:

- Write a poem or song lyrics inspired by the themes or moods of a particular play. Discuss the choice of words and images they have used in the poem.
- Prior to attending a performance or film, students are asked to note their observations and impressions in the following areas:
  - spoken work
  - music and song
  - visual arts (sets, costumes and lighting)
  - dance and movement
  - film, video and projections

Following the performance discuss the work, making observations and providing evidence about the integration of the arts, and the themes and characters in the work. Use the Guided Questions/Grade 8 on page 51 to frame the discussion.

Suggested Repertoire: *Medea* by Sophocles, *Othello* by William Shakespeare, and *The House of Bernarda Alba* by Federico Garcia Lorca. For additional repertoire, see Middle School Reading and Repertoire List/Appendix B.

## Making Connections Through Theater *continued*

### Theater and Component Art Form Guided Discussion Questions/Grade 8

What was the playwright's main purpose in writing this work? How did he/she reveal this purpose through the characters and their relationships?

What differing points of view or desires motivated the characters? What conflicts did this create in the drama? Give an example of the conflicts from the script.

Describe the music that you heard. How did the music add to the mood, atmosphere or conflicts in the play? Did the music compliment or add to an understanding of a particular character? Give an example.

How would you compose music to deepen the audiences understanding of the theme or mood expressed in the play? What instruments might you use? Why?

How was song used in the play? How did the songs affect the story telling? What did the songs reveal about the characters that spoken words did not?

What elements of art or design did you see on stage? What was the purpose for the various design elements? What did the designer hope to communicate?

What were the elements of film, video or projections used in the performance? How did they add to your understanding of the theme of the work?

Describe the costumes. What did the costumes tell us about the characters? How did the costumes tell us about the social position of the character? How were they similar or different from clothing you would wear?

Describe how the actors used their bodies.

Was there any movement that you would describe as dance? How did the dance help in telling the story or in understanding the characters?

#### **Extension Activity:**

Using music, dance, design, film/ video or original text, create a short response to the work illuminating the theme or revealing character relationships.

# Making Connections Through Theater *continued*

## Benchmark

## Connecting Theater to Personal Experience, Community and Society Through an Exploration of Themes, Culture and History

■ **Students examine the themes and context of theater works to recognize and connect personal experience to universal themes.**

Students will be able to:

- Reflect on and discuss theater's connection to their own lives through examining the themes and lessons of the play.
- Identify and articulate the cultural and historical components of the work and how these components create a particular world of behaviors.
- Recognize that behaviors and themes particular to the world of the play also connect to our understanding of the larger world.

### Suggested Activities

- Through a teacher-guided discussion, students explore live theater to examine the connections to their own lives and the lessons of the play.

#### Suggested Example: *The Diary of Anne Frank*

- Based on a video viewing or seeing a live performance of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, students discuss the work through a series of reflective questions and activities:
  - How would you describe Anne's story?
  - What did she experience internally?
  - What did she experience externally?
  - How did she grow? Did she change? Provide examples.

Were there times in the play when you would say that Anne felt connected to her family? Give an example.

What other feelings or conflicting emotions accompanied her sense of connection?

Were there times that Anne felt separated from her family? Give an example. Describe the emotions that she felt when she was not connected to her family?

Have you experienced similar feelings? Can you remember and share a situation where you felt connected to or separate from your family or another group?

Describe the relationship between Anne and her mother.

What did Anne do or say that makes you say that?

Imagine looking at Anne through her mother's eyes. How would she describe Anne?

What about Anne's relationship with her sister? Describe that relationship and give evidence from the play.

Have you had similar relationships with people in your family? Compare or contrast your family relationships with Anne's.

Where and when does Anne's story take place? What do you about this period of history?

What was happening in Europe in the late 1930s and early 1940s?

Why would Anne and her family be in danger?

What was happening to the Jewish people in Europe at this time?

If you were a German boy, what might your opinion of Anne be? Why?

Why do you think that it is important that people see this particular play?

What effect might this play have on the audience? How do you imagine that it might affect you?

How would this play affect audiences in different cultures and societies?

Identify plays that might have a similar affect on audiences.

#### Extension Activities:

Journal writing on important personal relationships or experiences with danger or prejudice.

Research and presentations about Judaism, the Holocaust and World War II in Europe.

# Making Connections Through Theater

## Benchmark

- **Students apply skills and understanding from other disciplines and art forms when analyzing and making theater.**

## Connecting Theater to the Arts and Other Disciplines

Students will be able to:

- Apply learning from other arts and disciplines, such as math, science, language arts, social studies, technology, music, visual arts, dance and film/video, to illuminate their understanding of theater.
- Recognize how associated art forms can enhance theater production. These art forms include:
  - written and spoken text
  - music and song
  - visual arts
  - dance
  - film and video

## Suggested activities

### ■ Dance and Movement

Create original choreography for a scene in a musical or drama  
Participate in and create stage combat and fight choreography for a scene.

### ■ Film and Video

Adapt a scene from a play into a screenplay with proper format.  
Film a staged scene in performance and on location. Contrast and compare the live version with the film version.

### ■ Language Arts

Adapt works of literature in various realistic and abstract forms for stage performance.  
Write an original play or scene using proper play format.  
Write incisive reviews and critiques of theater performances.

### ■ Math

Create and use a spread sheet to monitor box office revenue or a royalty pool for a mock Broadway production, using basic accounting and balance sheet processes.  
Use measurements and geometry to determine audience sight lines in a theater.  
Determine weight loads in counterweight systems and other stage rigging.

### ■ Music

Musicalize a story or add music to a straight play.  
Use music in a piece of theater to heighten mood or create dramatic dissonance.  
Examine the dramatic role of music in film and theater such as foreshadowing, commentary, creating mood, and setting historical period.

### ■ Science

Examine acoustics to understand sound amplification and how acoustics are affected by theater architecture.  
Explore elements of physical engineering as related to stage platforms and weight-bearing loads.  
Use physics and engineering to understand stage machinery, including hydraulic and pneumatic lifts and equipment.  
Explore the chemical components of fireproofing stage draperies and costumes.

### ■ Social Studies:

Explore issues of cultural imperialism and the co-opting of art forms by dominant cultures, such as *Porgy and Bess*, *M Butterfly* and *Pacific Overtures*.  
Create original collage theater works based on historical speeches, such as Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream."  
Examine a piece of historical theater with attention to the culture, society and historical accuracy as reflected in the script such as

*Saint Joan* by George Bernard Shaw, *Richard III* by William Shakespeare, *Evita* by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Weber or *The Kentucky Cycle* by Robert Schenkkan.

### ■ Technology

Integrate various technologies into performance, including, sound editing, lighting design, film and projections.

### ■ Visual Arts

Explore stage and theater design in non-theatrical settings, such as window displays and museum dioramas.  
Explore artists in history who have also worked as theatrical designers, such as Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall and David Hockney.  
Examine a work of theater related to visual arts such as *Sunday in the Park with George* by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine, or *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* by Steve Martin.

# Making Connections Through Theater *continued*

## Suggested Activities *continued*

### Theater and Component Art Form Activity

Students work in teams to create a multi-layered interpretation a play. Choosing a scene from a play involving two or three characters, students participate a group projects demonstrating how different art forms impact the creation of a theater piece. In the project, students demonstrate artistic interpretations and opinions about the original play.

The project may be documented in film or video to facilitate contrast and comparison.

Each student team creates a six-part project:

1. The original scene as written.
2. A silent scene, in which the visual choices of movement, costume, setting, color and light are used to tell the story.
3. The same silent scene and characters with music added as underscoring.
4. A version with original text, but without music. The new text can be a poem, monologues or new dialogue, and should be a reinterpretation of the original scene.
5. A version using dance or movement exploring the same scene, characters and relationships.
6. A presentation of the various versions to the entire class.

Following the completion and presentation of the project, students reflect on the choices each group made using the questions below:

#### **What did each group find important in the various versions?**

Thinking about the progression of the five versions, was there any constant throughout the different versions?

Can you track it through all five versions and describe it?

What were the unique qualities of each version?

Which choices made by the artists surprised you?

What questions do you have for the creators?

Did our role as audience change in relation to the different versions? How? Why?

#### **What interpretations of the characters are revealed in the various versions?**

What did we learn about the characters and their relationships in each version?

How did dance or movement add to your understanding of the characters?

What effect did the music have on your understanding? What insights about character and mood did it provide? Give an example.

What changed in the scene when the spoken word was added?

What surprised you most about any of the choices you observed?

If you could ask one character a question, what would it be?

#### **What do the various choices reveal about each of us as artists?**

What was it like creating/collaborating in a group?

Can you highlight any aspects of your process?

Did your group make any radical changes in your artistic vision? What caused the new direction?

If you could present only one of your versions, which one would you choose? Why?

With which version did you as artists feel most comfortable?

After hearing feedback from your peers, is there anything you would change about any of your versions?

Did any choices you observed give you new ideas for your own project?

#### **What do the various choices reveal about each of us as people?**

What parts of us, as audience members, are engaged by the different versions?

Which versions or theatrical elements did you connect to as a creator?

Can you recall any play you have seen that was similar to any of these versions in terms of style and use of theatrical elements?

Did any of these versions remind you of another play or playwright? Give an example.

Can you imagine applying any of the techniques and choices from each version to other material you have read? How would you use these techniques?

What might we learn by exploring these elements (movement, movement and music, related text, etc.) with a scene we are working on as an actor, director, designer or playwright?

### Suggested Repertoire

For repertoire, see High School Reading and Repertoire List/Appendix B.

# Making Connections Through Theater *continued*

## Benchmark

## Connecting Theater to Personal Experience, Community and Society Through an Exploration of Themes, Culture and History

- Students demonstrate a capacity for deep personal connection to theater and a realization of the meaning and messages in theater.

Students will be able to:

- Examine issues of the individual's relationship to self and community.
- Understand that theater fosters self-reflection by examining the world of the play and the moral, intellectual and emotional choices that characters make.
- Examine the emotional, intellectual and moral lessons of the work.

### Suggested Activity

- Through a teacher-guided discussion, students will explore live theater or if necessary video or dramatic literature to examine the connections to their own lives and the lessons of the play.

### Suggested Repertoire:

*Joe Turner's Come and Gone* by August Wilson  
*The House of Bernarda Alba* by Federico Garcia Lorca  
*All My Sons* by Arthur Miller

### Discussion topics include:

- What are the social norms that define the community in the play?  
What are the boundaries for the characters' behavior?  
To what extent do the characters have a defined view of right and wrong?  
How do those norms and behaviors differ from our community?
- Give an example of the emotional consequences of a particular character's action in the play.  
Provide an example from your life when your actions had emotional consequences.
- Give an example of an important intellectual decision that spurs a character's action.  
What similar intellectual decisions have you had to make?
- Give an example of a moral issue that affects a character's behavior in this play.

- Draw a parallel to contemporary society.
- Do you think the writer most desired intellectual, emotional, or moral self-examination in the audience?  
What behavioral shift might the author have hoped for in his/her audience?
- Compare this desired effect with the impact that a playwright in another era might have hopes to elicit from an audience (e.g., Henrik Ibsen, George Bernard Shaw, Bertolt Brecht, Larry Kramer, Wole Soyinka or Anna Deavere Smith).

For additional repertoire, see High School Reading and Repertoire List/Appendix B.

### Suggested activities:

- View a live or video version of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* comparing it with *OT: Our Town*, a video documentary about a student production of *Our Town* in urban Los Angeles. Explore the universality of *Our Town* by examining the play's intended impact and its effect on current urban students.
  1. In groups, students discuss and agree upon a series of social norms that exist within their community, noting how these social norms might one day conflict with their personal values.
  2. Write and perform a short monologue in which he/she considers an action that either validates or conflicts with the established norms.
  3. Write a character reflection, noting the character's intellectual, emotional and moral perspectives.

### Suggested Video Resources:

*Our Town* by Thornton Wilder (Newman, Lacey, Fox-2003), PBS Pictures

*OT: Our Town/A Famous American Play in an Infamous American Town* (Borek- 2005), Film Movement

