

Digital Theatre Plus; the best of British theatre in your classroom

Fiona Lindsay, Creative Producer, writes about how you can bring the thrill of live theatre to your classroom.

I'd like to keep this article simple. I'd like to tell you who we are and why I hope you may want to get to know us better. I'd like you to feel you'd be in very safe hands if you joined our audience.

We're a small team of people made up of a mix of theatre makers, digital experts and film editors who've been working together for the past three years to develop the online theatre education resource Digital Theatre Plus (www.digitaltheatreplus.com). Our resource offers teachers and students high quality films of the best of recent British theatre – including Shakespeare, Ibsen and Miller.

As the creative producer for Digital Theatre Plus, I am always looking at what content we can bring to our resource to make it a better tool for teachers, and I'm proud to be part of our team. We all share an ambition to lead the way in providing access to great theatre to all young people and we're thrilled that this is beginning to be realised.

Theatre and educating people in theatre has been my life. As a founder member of the RSC's education team I spent years on the road taking Shakespeare into the nooks and crannies of the UK and almost every school in the land. Workshopping great plays and working with actors, day in day out, ingrained the value of story in me and how theatre can be one of the most powerful educational resources there is. I became passionate about access to great productions for young people. I found all sorts of ways of ensuring that the thousands of students I brought to Stratford upon Avon would always take their place in the best seats in the house. I was

obsessed about sharing the riches of the creative process and the art and craft of theatre makers. I still am.

However I was aware then and even more so now that getting young people to experience live theatre is easier said than done for all the obvious reasons. As a dyed-in-the-wool theatre practitioner I was all about the 'live' experience but with the rapid development of digital technology I'm now 100% committed to the exploration of alternative ways of experiencing culture.

Getting young people to experience live theatre is easier said than done

Digital Theatre Plus is one such way. Over the past few years we've been working at finding the best way of blending the live experience of watching a play on stage with cutting edge technology. We think about our audience constantly and how we can replicate the thrill and excitement of entering a theatre foyer,





taking your seat and being drawn into a play. We're determined that by bringing high quality original productions directly to the teaching space that everyone gets a front row experience that stimulates, motivates and engages.

The key thing is that we film productions without tampering with them. The play remains intact. This in turn allows the resource to be applied by users confident in the knowledge that the source material is un-adapted and that the play is presented as the writer intended.

With Digital Theatre Plus we can also access all areas of the creative process too. How things are made arouses curiosity and there is much to be enjoyed and learnt from the people who make plays come to life on stage. It's often so much easier to take in a difficult concept if you see a person in action or hear them talk about it and we hope that students will make connections with people that feature on the website.

We're very proud of our growing library of backstage interviews (named our *Making Theatre* library). We now have hours and hours of insight from theatre practitioners and creative artists who reveal what goes on behind the scenes, as well as what happens in the months and weeks before rehearsals begin. We pay attention to the craft and talent required that makes great theatre and all of those that we speak with offer huge detail and illuminate their practice in a down to earth fashion that we hope educates and inspires.

We're thrilled to be in partnership with AQA as we share a desire to support teachers in their delivery of classic text, as well as enabling students to have a truly immersive experience in the wonder of literature.

Experience the **thrill** of live theatre brought directly to your teaching space

- + **Watch** high quality films of leading theatre productions
- + **Discover** how plays are brought to the stage in interviews with the creative teams
- + **Learn** about interpretive choice through detailed analysis of play texts
- + **Teach** key plays with stimulating and relevant support

Teachers interested in **Digital Theatre Plus** can sign up for a free 14-day trial of the resource on www.digitaltheatreplus.com.

Discounts apply to AQA schools and colleges.

For more information contact: enquiries@digitaltheatreplus.com.