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ROLE:

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“Our subscription helps student satisfaction by letting our students see the work of companies like Frantic Assembly and opening their eyes to this work”

HOW HAVE YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES IMPLEMENTED DIGITAL THEATRE+ INTO YOUR COURSES?

I use Digital Theatre+ as part of our module ‘Performance Lab’, which is an introduction to Devising and Experimental Theatre for first years. Every week we get them to watch a set performance online, then they have to write a reflection and talk about it in class. We use Complicité’s *A Disappearing Number* and Frantic Assembly’s *Lovesong*. The whole purpose is to improve [the students’] thinking around how to create a performance, expanding their understanding and exposing them to what a performance can be.

We’ve also used the productions of *A Doll’s House* and *Pipeline*. We were looking for a piece which was relatively naturalistic and something contemporary. We also have a lot of students of colour so we wanted to use something which reflected that, and they responded really well to it.

WHICH RESOURCES DO YOU AND/OR YOUR STUDENTS FIND THE MOST VALUABLE?

We find the productions most valuable as they introduce students to examples of major companies in terms of non-naturalistic performance and help them think about how to structure a whole piece of theatre. That’s part of the appeal of Digital Theatre+, together with the high quality definition of the pieces; it helps them expand their thinking and awareness of different styles.

We have also used the interviews. I recently got my acting students to watch the interview with Hattie Morahan about her process on *A Doll’s House*. For students to hear the approach to performance from an actor of calibre and the process they went through to get there is really important. Next week we’ll be watching the interviews with sound and lighting designers to help students think about how technical elements can be used to create meaning in a piece. The interviews are particularly useful as a way to deepen [students’] awareness of how artists think and how those people contribute to a production.

HOW HAS DIGITAL THEATRE+ HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON YOUR COURSE?

With my module ‘Performance Lab’, there is an emphasis on performance analysis and the overall aim is widening the sense of what performance can be. [The students] can watch a performance every week, then read short extracts of texts about performance analysis and apply this to what they’ve watched, and the Digital Theatre+ productions have been part of that. [Our subscription] helps student satisfaction by letting our students see the work of companies like Frantic Assembly and opening their eyes to this work.

WHAT MAKES DIGITAL THEATRE+ PARTICULARLY VALUABLE FOR COURSES AT HIGHER EDUCATION?

The biggest thing is access to excellent work that students might not be able to afford to go and see, which is important to a lot of our students. Also, the possibility of watching great performances from the past. To have work that’s well filmed and high definition is really valuable. [Plus] the access to interviews in combination with the performance is really useful: seeing the journey the artist went on, hearing about their process, and seeing the results. It’s not just seeing the performance, but hearing how it was made directly from the artist, for students to make those connections is really valuable and persuasive.