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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Level 1 Drama 2024

91943 Respond to a drama performance

EXEMPLAR

Merit

TOTAL 06

Respond to a drama performance	AS 91943
Candidate's NSN	<input type="text"/>
Title of performance	Hamilton: An American Musical
Playwright (may be self-devised)	Lin-Manuel Miranda
Theatre company / performers	The West End
Performance type (may be 'live performance', 'recorded performance', or 'selfdevised')	Live performance

How the key messages of *Hamilton* affected the audience:

Hamilton: An American Musical is an explosion of American history told in a modern light. The key messages of *Hamilton* are revolution, fighting for one's rights, freedom, democracy, love and loss. These themes are each presented throughout the musical. I believe that these key ideas affect the audience emotionally and connect with them in different ways.

Revolution and fighting for one's rights affects the audience's emotional side; these types of ideas often resonate with humans. Logic as a construct has only existed for a few hundred years, instinct and emotion have existed for far longer, meaning that revolution and similar ideas connect with audiences on a deeper level.

The celebration of freedom and democracy is something that connects to every person in the audience. *Hamilton* is a musical which is built on facts from American history. What makes *Hamilton* so powerful is that much of it is true, audiences watching the show will feel a connection between themselves and the past. The show creates a bridge between then, and now. This is powerful as the past affects everyone in the audience differently. The past has continued to change the world up until the present day, meaning that everyone is affected by history, this makes *Hamilton* impactful as much of it is genuine.

Love is a central theme in *Hamilton*, the main figures in the show deal with this topic a lot. Love is a source of strength and comfort in difficult times for many in the show and will be as well for those in the audience. Key messages like love link actors with the audience which tugs on viewers heartstrings and affects people in different ways. Other themes used throughout the musical that are similar to love are friendship, family and loss.

Loss shapes the central characters outlooks on the world, Burr is an orphan, as is Hamilton. Both characters loss shapes them differently, Hamilton realises he is alone early on in life and knows he must fight for himself. Burr is quite the opposite and becomes more of a hesitant person. Members of the audience will feel increased empathy for those on stage as they begin to learn more about the characters identities. This affects the audiences' emotional side.

The key messages in *Hamilton* are extremely important as they build the connection with the audience into something deeper than a normal TV show or movie could do. Without even talking about drama components or wairua we can already see that *Hamilton* uses its powerful themes to relate and connect to its audience. This in turn inspires the audience and leaves them with a feeling of attachment to the show. In conclusion, the key messages of *Hamilton* each effect the audience in a different and important way.

How a range of drama components were used to create an effect on the audience:

A range of drama components were used to create an effect on the audience. Elements were used to create a connection and effect on the audience. One important element that was used throughout the musical were props as symbols. A major symbol in the play was Alexander Hamilton's quill and paper. A key moment the quill and paper were used was in the song "The Reynolds Pamphlet". Alexander Hamilton is seen writing and distributing pamphlets which ends up exposing his affair and the resulting scandal with Maria Reynolds. The quill and paper symbolise Hamilton's ambitions and intellect and his relentless drive to shape the nation and himself. The quill and paper allow Hamilton to control his own narrative. This symbol is seen throughout the musical which is something the audience can focus on. This in turn effects the audience as symbols provide clues to understanding experiences by conveying recognizable meanings. The effect on the audience from symbols in *Hamilton* is that they add layer of depth and context to the musical as they show complex themes subtly yet powerfully to those watching.

Techniques were also used to create an effect on the audience. Two examples of characters that use the techniques of voice, body, movement and space well are Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr. Alexander's voice is rapid-fire, repetitive with a strong rhythm and diction. His body is dynamic and purposeful with an assertive presence. The way he moves around the stage illustrates his influence and his relentless drive of ambition. The larger amount of space he takes up showcase his confidence. The juxtaposition of this is Aaron Burr. Aaron's voice is smooth and controlled with a measured and cautious delivery. He is calculated and cautious which reflect on his reserved personality. His body is deliberate, restrained and measured. Aaron makes a point to emphasise his tendency to wait and think rather than acting impulsively like Hamilton. These uses of techniques in character affect the audience as it makes the characters seem more believable and lifelike which fosters the audiences understanding and compassion for them. Personally, I felt deeply connected to the characters as a person in the audience. I was sad when they were sad and joyful when they were joyful, this shows that I was affected as an audience member as I am sure others were around me.

Conventions were used and affected the audience. The convention of a flash back was used in the song “Satisfied”. It was used during the song when Angelica Schuyler was expressing how she wishes she was the one who was with Hamilton and not her sister Eliza Schuyler. The use of the flash back helps to communicate to the audience a different point of view. We find out a different story line, what could have happened in the musical. This affects the audience as it provides people with a deeper understanding of characters, in this example, Angelica. We only knew the surface level about her, we then find out she is a more complex character. This helps the audience have a deeper connection with her.

Technologies are used in the musical and have an effect on the audience. The use of lighting was very important and effective. Lighting in Hamilton powerfully enhances the themes of the play. In moments like the song “My Shot” and “The Room Where It Happens” dynamic lighting is used and reflects the intensity of the songs. The opposite of this is intimate lighting used in songs “Burn” and “It’s Quiet Uptown”. This type of lighting helps to show personal grief and reflection. By visually heightening key moments with lighting, it amplifies the audience's experience of the musical and reinforces the emotional depth and themes of the musical.

In conclusion, these components were all used to enhance the musical's effect on the audience. They brought the show up from a base level to something brilliant that connected with members of the audience.

How the wairua of the performance had an impact on me

Hamilton effectively employs ihi, wehi and wana to shape the audience's perception of the musical *Hamilton*. Personally, this show had a major impact on me. The magnetism of the actor's passion projected a powerful presence that commanded respect and engagement (ihi). The awe in which I was held whilst watching the performance further amplified the impact of the musical and captivated myself and the audience's attention with charismatic and innovative displays (wehi). The dynamic performance I watched was enhanced by the use of drama components and created a sense of enthusiasm and engagement from the whole audience. Together, the ihi, wehi and wana of *Hamilton* not only met, but exceeded my expectations of the show in both technical proficiencies and artistic flair. This musical was a compelling and memorable experience that impacted me through wairua and other techniques.

I could tell throughout the show that the audience was always on the edge of their seat, itching for more. The relationship between the performers and the audience created an amazing effect where I, and those around me, felt a deep and emotional connection to what was happening on stage. In conclusion, *Hamilton*, created a strong relationship between the actors and the audience through the use of wairua and drama components.

Merit

Subject: Drama

Standard: 91943

Total score: 06

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
One	M6	This candidate has explained, in detail, the key message(s) of the performance and the use of drama components, and makes a connection to the effect of wairua in the performance. They have justified their response with detailed examples from the performance. For Excellence, a stronger connection needed to be made between the effect of the wairua and the performance. This also needed to be examined rather than explained.