

Session 2: Our World and Shakespeare's: What We See, Feel, Hear, and Experience

Re-entering

1. "What is a moment from a play, film, or work of art stayed with you?" Participants reflect on and share these moments. Make connections between responses. Was it a powerful, visceral image? A moment where the story seemed to be speaking directly to our times? A moment where the story seemed to be speaking directly to us or someone we know? Touch on the process of how ArtsEmerson chooses plays.
2. "How did *Measure for Measure* show up this week?" Participants share any new connections they have made between this *Measure for Measure* and our world this week.

Reading

3. Participants briefly review the main plot points of the narrative.
4. A world of images. Focusing on a passage that stood out to us last week, Claudio's "Ay, but to die" in ACT III, Scene 1, participants look for words that carry the strongest images. Participants then listen to a recording of an actor performing this monologue and hear to how he creates this images in his voice. Highlight that though we don't speak Russian, we will be able to hear how they voice the words, and of course, see them embody them.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmpN13HERkg>, beginning at 4:18
5. Reading. Participants read through Act III Scene 2, Act IV, and Act V, pausing if needed for clarification and at the following times:

Pause after Act IV, Scene 1 to discuss our views on Isabella, Mariana, and the Duke's plan?

Pause between scenes to evaluate the Duke's choices: Is he trustworthy? What is he up to?

Pause before Act V to discuss what we think is going to happen.

Break – 10 minutes

6. Read Act V.

Discussion

7. Participants discuss the following questions:

- What do we think about the marriage proposal at the end?
- Is this a happy ending? For whom?
- What is this play saying about Shakespeare's culture, our culture, human culture?

Entering the World of This Show

8. Looking at this production. Point out that just as we can peel apart the layers of thought in this play, we can build an analysis about the choices the Pushkin Theatre and Cheek by Jowl are making in this production.

Participants watch and discuss two videos:

Measure for Measure trailer (from the ArtsEmerson site)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=o4KWl8zRdY0

How would you describe this show? Why do you think the company chose to tell the story in such an explosive, visually stunning, and movement-based (along with other words participants use to describe this show)?

Measure for Measure opening scene (from live performance on Youtube)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zqeaesGCJD8>

How would you describe this opening scene? What images and sounds rest in our minds? What do we think director Declan Donnellin and the Pushkin company are trying to get across? What do they want audiences to experience? Highlight themes of surveillance and privacy, of the relationship between the collective and the individual.

What do we think this story, this play, and this staging will communicate to Boston audiences?