



KS4 Bill Elliot – Live Theatre Review

Students study the play Billy Elliot the Musical and learn to write a Live Theatre Review

Evaluation

- I found this emotive
- I felt moved
- I was convinced by this moment
- I was mesmerised
- I was shocked by ...
- I was amazed ...
- I was engrossed with ...
- Compelling
- Enthralling
- Captivating
- Gripping
- Spellbinding
- Fascinating
- Thrilling

Context

The community, in which the vast majority of adult males work in the coal industry, is suffering through a major work stoppage (strike) to protest Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's attempts to break the then powerful coal miners. Billy Elliot's family (consisting of father Jackie, older brother Tony and Grandma) are severely affected by the strike as both Jackie and Tony are miners who are on strike. One storyline is about the strike and the tensions within the community between the miners and the authorities (represented by the police, who have been brought in from London to keep order.

Storyline

The storyline is about 11-year-old Billy himself. His dad (and indeed the society in which he lives) basically maintains that boys should be macho. So being tough and being able to defend oneself is basic. Billy, like his father and brother before him, is therefore enrolled in boxing classes at the Miners Welfare Hall – a community meeting place that also houses the dance classes of Mrs. Wilkinson. Billy really doesn't like the boxing classes. Mrs. W, seeing the potential that Billy has as a dancer, works it out with Billy that she'll secretly give him lessons, with the goal that he'll eventually try out for the Royal Ballet School (RBS). Later, after being accepted to the school, the story becomes very emotional as Billy leaves the community that has become very supportive of him to attend the RBS. The RBS will provide him with a way to break out of the depressing mode of trying to earn a living in a community supported by an industry on the decline

1. Billy Elliot



Eleven-year-old Billy is an aspiring ballet dancer who comes from a tough mining community in the North East of England. Billy is understanding, sensitive, and imaginative, even though he is surrounded by violence and difficulty. Sometimes the anger and violence that surrounds Billy bubbles up in him, and he can become enraged and destructive.

2. Jackie Elliot



Jackie is the archetypal Northern English working class man, a miner and a widow. He has explosive emotions that come out at inopportune moments, especially as he struggles to raise two boys and look after his aging mother.

3. Mrs Wilkinson



Mrs Wilkinson teaches a ballet class at the gymnasium. She recognises talent in Billy immediately and encourages him to pursue dance seriously. While she believes in Billy, she never coddles him and is a tough critic, pushing him to be the best dancer he can be.

4. Tony Elliot



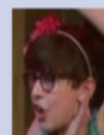
The older of the Elliot boys, Tony is a bully in every area of his life. He bullies his little brother, and bullies people at work, passionate and violent in his philosophies about the strikes taking place. While he is initially horrified to learn that Billy likes ballet, he eventually comes around and supports his brother's talent, recognising that Billy has something special.

12. Grandma



Billy's grandmother lives with the Elliots. When we meet her, she is suffering with senility and loneliness, but in her youth she had dreams of becoming a dancer, just like Billy. She gives an insight into her 'miserable' marriage, saying upon reflection her life was 'over when she put on the ring.' She had to conform to a gender stereotype of the time and be subservient to her husband

13. Michael



Michael lives in Billy's neighbourhood and is his best friend. Early in the play, Billy sees him dressing up in women's clothing. Billy accepts him, and it does not hurt their friendship. In fact, Billy takes Michael to the ballet studio, gives him a tutu and shows him how to dance. He is one of Billy's champions and his closest friend.

REMEMBER

Describe the moment as if the person reading it has never seen the play before
Ignite their imagination!



Introduction - Key pieces of information

- ✓ Name of production
- ✓ Where you watched it
- ✓ Name and date
- ✓ One sentence that states the plot
- ✓ One sentence that gives your overall evaluation – focusing on one performer

(Learnt off by heart – with the last sentence using the words from the question!)

Each paragraph

- ✓ State where in the play the scene took place.
- ✓ Context of the moment – what is happening and who is involved?
- ✓ Name the particular actor that you are focusing on
- ✓ **Describe** – the acting skills they used to portray the emotion/ context of that moment (physical and vocal)
- ✓ **Analyse** – why was this acting skill the right acting skill
- ✓ **Evaluate** – why did you find this moment memorable – USE the words from the question in this sentence
- ✓ ZOOM in on one the way one particular acting skill was used and say why this was so effective/ successful

General points

- ✓ Use adverbs to explain how they used that skill
- ✓ Use key vocabulary accurately
- ✓ Use a quotations to make it specific
- ✓ Use the **rule of 3 acting skills** – hit the range criteria

• Sentence Starters:

- A specific successful moment was when ...
- The actor delivered the line ...
- The actor showed (intention) they did this when ...
- The actor did this by ...
- The use of ...
- This allowed the audience to see/ interpret think/ feel/ understand ...
- This meant that the actor successfully conveyed/ showed the ...