Contemporary Performance Practice Brainstorm Worksheet

In what ways could you adapt these performances using contemporary performance practices? Analyze how these performances should give new perspective and interpretation to the original plays.

Keep these things in mind as you brainstorm:

-Time period -Use of media -Setting

-Documentary theatre -Race/Gender -Dance/Choreography

-Separation of 4th wall -Interpretation of themes

**Neil Simon** (The Star-Spangled Girl):

-Perhaps Norman is always on his phone and addicted to media. Perhaps he has difficulty communicating to Sophie because he doesn’t know how to speak to people in person due to his reliance on media consumption

-Make Norman and Andy women and Sophie a man- see how dynamics of the play changes when gender is reversed. What are the differences between men fighting over women, and women fighting over men? Are they the same?

-Documentary theatre piece interviewing dozens of people about break-ups, lost love, or crushes that weren’t reciprocated. Make a piece that takes the idea/themes of *The Star-Spangled Girl* but makes it much more real and personal.

**August Wilson** (Fences):

-How would this change if instead of discrimination against race it was discrimination against gender, or even discrimination against something absurd like hair color. Perhaps that would emphasize how dehumanizing hatred/discrimination can be (especially racism). It would emphasize how senseless it is.

-Documentary theatre about all the ways people are discriminated against? Or perhaps instead of The Laramie Project something like The Trayvon Martin Project? Both crimes ended in death, but the latter is still under debate over whether or not he was killed because of his race.

**Moliere** (Tartuffe):

-What if instead of Tartuffe being a priest he’s a politician. And whenever he’s being hypocritical or lying with that perfect mask of piety that he wears perhaps you could roll footage of different politician’s shmoozing or acting a certain way to win popularity. Both Bill Clinton and Richard Nixon would have some particularly great clips to show of their hypocrisy

-A cool idea would be to see Tartuffe but with Tartuffe more at the center and maybe more as a narrator. Maybe he’s showing the audience like a seminar on how to trick people or get away with things, and we get to see more of his inner monologue behind all that he does. You could involve media by maybe adding cheesy music or showing his face on big screens while he “gives the inside scoop” to mirror training videos or something

**Frederico Garcia Lorca** (House of Bernarda Alba):

-An easy adaptation to make would be to change the genders from an all female cast to an all male cast. How would this change the dynamics of the show?

-I keep thinking how this is an iconic show that famously features only women. What if you devised a show based on a town with only women. What would that look like? What would that feel like?

-Something else really cool and fascinating would be to do Bernarda Alba through the ages. Like this play is set in Spain during around the Spanish Civil War. What if we see portions of this play reenacted during several different time periods- like 1800’s, early 1900’s, 50’s, 80’s, 90’s, now, etc. How would it change the show and dynamics? I think it would show the universal themes and relatability of the show. It may change the characters marginally from time period to time period, but I think honor, truth, pain, jealousy, and sibling rivalry would still ring true.

-Documentary theatre about sibling relationships. Or about sisters and mothers.

**Samuel Beckett** (Waiting for Godot):

- I would love to do something with media or technology about miscommunication. Maybe Godot doesn’t come because they forgot to hit ‘send’ on the text. Or maybe since they didn’t communicate in person they got the times mixed up

-I’ve tried to think of ways to involve that stupid video “What does the fox say?” It seems to be about nothing, and you keep waiting to figure out what’s going on or what the fox does say and you get nothing. Waiting for Godot feels like this. I feel confused about what’s happening and what they’re saying sometimes, and I’m just waiting (along with them). But I’m not sure how to make this idea work.