

Analysis Of 10 Out Of 12 By Anne Washburn

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Anne Washburn's 10 Out of 12 and the Theatre of Rehearsal

The modern theatrical landscape is widely characterized by plays about playwrights and actors. The plays usually take on a conceited, self-glorifying quality. Unlike most of such plays, *10 out of 12* by Anne Washburn takes the markedly unspectacular form of a comprehensive technical rehearsal (Battcock and Robert 23). The title of the play refers to the twelve-hour workdays put in by theatre-makers during tech week. As required by Actor's Equity, two hours have to be devoted to breaks. Washburn's play is consistently and nearly unsettlingly real.

She presents a highly inventive and scrupulously researched piece of art that uncannily captures the chatter and cadence of the theater in tech. The play is filled with endless cues of stream of lighting, a reasonable amount of obstinate flirtation, as well as a compulsive discussion of the morbid food (Hellsing 44). It is evident that Washburn has a rich knowledge of the technical lingo and nerdy mockery. The play devotedly reveals the boredom, wonder, and whimsy present in the mystic hours in the darkness with regard to the process of teaching a play. It also reveals an immersive experience, which changes the dull process of creating an illusion into a moment of beauty, strangeness, and humor. Overall, *10 out of 12* is a play that celebrates the collective effort of people at work to attain beauty amidst the mundane.

Washburn manages to make her audience attentive by using a play within a play. The play's costume drama appears to hinge on nineteenth-century maritime life as well as the sadomasochistic desire that characterized that period (Sheridan, Nick, and Alice 112). Filled with careless homosexual undertones, the play presents a glow-in-the-dark monster. The whole experience of Jake appearing younger and richer triggers a classic midlife crisis for Paul, even though it appears that this has been long in the making. However, this epic crisis presented in the play appears to be a blessing as it is the major aspect that keeps the play from being a colossal snooze-fest. By presenting Ryan as intense as Paul, the playwright gives a standout performance of the play (Battcock and Robert 29). Ryan's movements are as unpredictable, erratic, and unreliable, just like they would be in real life. Consequently, he makes the audience want to run and take refuge in the bathroom.

Artistic Labour, Self-Involvement, and the

Performance of Sacrifice

Regardless of the fact that *10 out of 12* lacks glamour, it is totally self-involved. It strongly depicts the air of martyrdom, with two characters essentially bleeding for their craft towards the end of the play. In this ironic and engaging inside view of the play's making, the playwright presents a world that is unfamiliar to the public though extremely familiar to all theatre practitioners (Zurbrugg 54). This world is that of a technical rehearsal. Washburn, through her play, seeks to communicate how a technical rehearsal is often largely boring and, at the same time, immensely weird and somewhat interesting. The process is not only emotionally but also physically damaging, as one loses a bit of oneself in tech.

Anne Washburn's *10 out of 12* is a hilarious and odd new comedy that presents the awkward challenge of making theatre from a section of theatrical life that is hated by almost everyone, that is, the soul-crushing and intense boredom that is experienced during tech rehearsals. Through the play, Washburn highlights that there are various run-throughs that usually occur in the period immediately before a show starts (Zurbrugg 57). During this period, every cue has to be rehearsed and theoretically perfected. For instance, the sound, lights, sets, costumes, and crews responsible for their operation have to be effectively coordinated at the right time to produce a smooth performance from distinct actions for the audience to see. However, the play acknowledges that this process requires a lot of time, arguing that four days are hardly insufficient, even for a mere off-Broadway production. According to Kaye and James, to protect stage managers and actors who often run the rehearsals from exhaustion, Actors Equity has enforced a law that limits the time of tech to ten hours out of a twelve-hour day (65). However, even with the rule, everyone's sanity can still not be preserved. The erratic eating, the fear that nothing will ever work, the days without daylight, coupled with the distressing repetition, will always be enough to damage an aborning show and traumatize a cast. Therefore, in her play *10 out of 12*, Washburn sets out to dramatize this condition of art in limbo, largely using the tools that will most likely be available.

Washburn also delves into the melodrama and suppressed human conflict in her modern horror tale. These follow the period of tech rehearsal that is often stressful. For instance, the actors, to start with, are often seen as mere props to dress and position properly (Simonsen 33). The anticipated emotions that are often supposed to be derived from humans are often shifted onto processes and objects. Similarly, audience members are usually given headsets to put on throughout the show so they can listen to the conversations between the stage managers and the crew. What is more, the unaided human voice and the loudspeaker system are often in play, providing the sound of individuals temporizing, bloviating, or conversing about issues that are of no inherent interest (Zurbrugg 59). The playwright gets fun in arranging the various channels in counterpoint, while the rest of the team often suffers from the pressure of having things done. For instance, the stage manager is given approximately two minutes to be set before the rehearsal starts, yet publicly announces ten minutes. Also at the counterpoint are the visuals. Sounds and lights frequently flare up in seemingly random eruptions, after which they recede in a manner likely to suggest that they seem embarrassed

(Battcock and Robert 25). As a result, actors have to fiddle with their various props in an attempt to perfect experiments that often become demented. The playwright presents such tribulations in an exceptionally moving and funny manner, demonstrating her mastery of how various reactions are produced. Arguably, this is due to her patience in adhering to her perversity.

Stage Management, Restraint, and the Invisible Work of Theatre

The restraint in Washburn's play is represented by the backstage people, particularly the stage manager, who is played with a feeling of professional warmth and steel, yet provoking a hint of a different thing behind it. In the play, a delicious irony is evident when Quincy Tyler and her staff avoid drama when, accidentally, an electric crewmember slices his arm using an X-Acto knife (Washburn 47). For the crew not to delay tech, they poultice the wound using duct tape and Neosporin. The creative, particularly the pretentious director of the inner show, represents the frenzy. The director pronounces wrongly the word jaguar and proves useless by triple-guessing the lame decisions he made. The playwright lets the reader hate the character in a beautifully calibrated presentation while also helping the audience understand why the character gets hired. Washburn positions Paul, who is a blowhard methodic actor, to speak up for the art side (Battcock and Robert 28). When a ridiculous argument emerges over the idiotic interpretation of Paul's role, the reader realizes that the play has shifted from a fully abstract to a humiliating actual. The reader develops a bad feeling for both characters and feels like hiding the Neosporin. Essentially, the characters are dead-on, and it is great to learn that the playwright pulls the rabbit of actual theater from the visibly trick hat.

The play *10 out of 12* also covers the theme of how money and modern technology have altered theater. In customary art, it was widely believed that actors or characters were heroes of art (Battcock and Robert 26). Through her play, Washburn seeks to communicate that modern technology and money have affected theater. While readers may feel that cutting some of the play's conventional conflict towards the end of the play may help keep the focus on what is stunningly unusual about the play, it is worth noting that the play employed the use of such conventional conflict purposefully, to communicate that the play required more rehearsal (Zurbrugg 54). Besides, it is apparent that the play proceedings majorly consist of an anticipated parade of unsteady scene transitions, costume alterations, and lighting adjustments.

Time, Repetition, and the Pursuit of Artistic Quality

Another critical theme covered in *10 out of 12* is the theme of time. The playwright acknowledges and seeks to communicate the idea that time is what most often stands in the way of quality and excellence in theatre. While others may tend to think that creativity and talent are the major barriers to excellence in theatre, the reality is that good actors are running out of time (Zurbrugg 60). Therefore, time is one of the central focuses of Washburn's play, which explores the aspect of

theatrical rehearsal, referred to as techs. According to the playwright, the rehearsals often start about one week before the show is presented to the audience. During the rehearsals, sound, lights, and some other technical aspects are brought into the picture. As such, the period can be an occasion for panic or beautiful coming together (Battcock and Robert 33). Washburn portrays through her play that technical rehearsals are agonizingly boring for concerned parties. The rehearsals can consist of long hours of gazing at the ceiling or standing around as some trivial and possibly unimportant adjustments are made. Besides, there is a possibility of production having a cold. However, what it lacks, in view of Washburn, are the apprehensions and tensions that nonetheless fortify that ostensible monotony, the feeling of the clock ticking down, the prospects for change fading with each second, the booting out that often arises.

Anne Washburn's 10 out of 12 places a comical twist on the genre of backstage drama by concentrating on theater's most boring aspect, tech rehearsal. The rehearsals integrate a show into the intricacies of theater (transition, lighting, and sound, blocking, set) to assess whether all aspects work and fit as expected (Zurbrugg 54). Characters fret that it might go on endlessly as emotions rise and things inescapably slip up, precipitating unforeseen, protracted, and undefined interruptions deep into the evening. The actors are downgraded to meat marionettes, haphazardly pushed around the set. The play being teched, in these situations, often looks awful since it is carried out only in bits, and the characters are not trained not to act to husband their assets (Zurbrugg 56). Washburn's play, inspired by tech rehearsals of her shows and advice from other people, offers a realistic replica of this horrible task. All the dialogues and actions that are meant to appear random and instantaneous are well delineated in the playwright's 142-page book. Her ingenious idea is to get the audience listening in through earpieces, tuned to the channel the tech crew is utilizing in their communication with each other as the task progresses (Zurbrugg 57). The crew's dialogue is most often hackneyed, just time-wasting as they wait for various actors to come on set or for lighting to be readjusted; a lot about coffee and snacking accompanied by arbitrary, immaterial subjects.

For any person who believes that watching a play is tedious, they should endeavor to stage one. Anne Washburn offers such persons unlimited access to the staging in her skillfully humorous and thought-provoking new play, 10 out of 12. In Washburn's engaging and wry inside look into the productions of plays, the curtain is drawn back on a universe the public is unfamiliar with yet very recognizable to every theater practitioner – a tech rehearsal (Sheridan, Nick, and Alice 113). The book adoringly unveils the oddity, wonder, and monotony found in those mystic moments in the dark linked with the procedure of 'teaching' a drama. Overall, *10 out of 12* offers an immersive experience, which transforms the dreary procedure of creating illusion into moments of oddity, magnificence, and humor.

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