

Title:

The Greatest Parody Ever Seen

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Summary:

I am not always a huge fan of parody as a means of comedy, but when my high school advanced drama class suggested to me that we create a parody of our high school and then perform it for the end of the year production, I had to take their idea seriously and consider it. It took me a few days to get through the details of the idea, but I determined that it would be a great project for our class to create every aspect of our spring play rather than perform one that has already ...

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Article Body:

I am not always a huge fan of parody as a means of comedy, but when my high school advanced drama class suggested to me that we create a parody of our high school and then perform it for the end of the year production, I had to take their idea seriously and consider it. It took me a few days to get through the details of the idea, but I determined that it would be a great project for our class to create every aspect of our spring play rather than perform one that has already been written.

My hesitation about parody is that it can quickly be offensive and misunderstood. That is the very reason why I am always hesitant to teach or perform in such plays. But I figured that highschoolers had no area of real expertise except their own high school, so what an effective way to let them work on writing their first play. I divided our drama class into groups and had each group focused on a different element of the production. One team was in charge of writing the script of the parody. Another team was completely in charge of casting and producing the play and yet another team was in charge of the set design, the costumes and the logistics of making the parody play happen.

I was surprised and delighted by the ideas that my students came up with during brainstorming sessions for the parody. I was shocked by the depth of their understanding of the concept of parody and their desire to really reveal truths about our high school in a comedic way that would be unoffensive and yet

challenging to the audience. And I think this is a key to effective parody: moving people to action without making them offended.

On opening night of the parody play I took my seat in the front row still a little unsure of exactly what I would experience. The next hour and a half were filled with laughter, tears and pleasure as I watched my advanced students perform so well. They did the most amazing job of acting out a well written script. They connected deeply with the audience and made a lasting impression as they revealed some well known yet un-discussed truths about our high school. I was so proud to be a part of this project and I found myself wishing that I had seen the benefits of parody much sooner.