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Putting together a review

Caroline McGinn:

A good way to evaluate what you think of a production when you're judging it is to make notes while you're in the theatre, which in practice can be a bit difficult because it's pitch-black dark. You'll end up with lots of scribbles in your notebook. Then, when you get home, read them through and think about them. I find this really helpful to make a judgement afterwards. If you want to achieve an outcome like getting published or writing review, then it's really important to set goals. It's great to make a list of what you think are the most important things you want to achieve. Try to achieve them and then check after you've done it to see if you've achieved them and how well you've achieved them. My top tip for giving feedback is always explain yourself. Whether you are writing a rave review or absolutely slating a production, it's always important to be able to say why you think what you think. A top tip for receiving evaluation from others is to just try not to get too upset about it. I think that if you can learn to take criticism without taking it too personally, then that is just a great life skill to have. But it's also great for becoming better at whatever it is you're trying to do. A useful tip for assessing your own work is, really, to look at other people's. Compare yourself to them, compare your work to theirs and see how you can make it better.