

## **Director's Note – THE FLICK**

Ostensibly, Annie Baker's play, *THE FLICK*, is about the conversations, games, intrigues, and squabbles that occur as three employees of an indie cinema clean the aisles, maintain the old projector, and sell the concessions day after day. If there's a plot, *per se*, it's also about how they attempt to preserve the character of the theater as it's purchased by a larger chain and makes the transition from film to digital.

But the theater's transformation is really a metaphor for the change that's occurring in each of the employees. And the play is not so much plot-driven as it is a character study of folks who both desire to connect with one another authentically, and also fear being entirely known. What makes for good drama in *THE FLICK* is watching how they each navigate both the joys and pains of becoming oneself.

In our digital age, where communication is increasingly mediated through screens, video chats and tweets, we may have forgotten – or never learned – how to relate to one another face-to-face. There are too many convenient ways for us to hide from one another, and too many ways for us to reduce who we are, as complex human beings, to 140 characters. Sam, Avery and Rose – and their struggles – highlight for us the importance of living fully into our identities and striving to understand others.

This is a daily process that requires moment-to-moment reminders. And that's how *THE FLICK* plays out. In real time. In the middle of the mundane. Annie Baker's writing is very specific. Long silences are intentional. Pauses are purposeful. She is as interested in what *is not* being said as what *is* being said, in what characters are grappling with in the awkward moments before they act decisively.

And so, we invite you to give yourself over to a theatrical experience that might be somewhat different than what you're accustomed to. Release yourself from expectations of inciting incidents, a climax, and an easy resolution. Lean into the silences, and take in all that you can during them. Most of all, remove the "audience-performer" or "us-them" dynamic that usually takes place when you see something on a stage, and look for yourself in the characters up in front of you. You may be surprised by what you find.

But most of all, enjoy *THE FLICK*.