

Sewn into History, Dana Hill's Presents "The Triangle Factory Fire Project"
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In just 18 minutes, a fire tragically consumed the top three stories of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, claiming the lives of 146 garment workers in 1910's New York City. Paying tribute to the incident's fundamental place in history, the production follows the many lives -- and headlines -- associated with it as they unfold chronologically amidst themes of remembrance, justice, and compassion.

William Shepherd's (Mason Hett) strong stage presence effortlessly mimicked the poignant emotions of each scene. Bobbing his head, physically ducking away from the falling workers, Hett maintained an uneasy stance, planting his feet firmly on the ground, with a posture curled slightly inwards in fear, exhibiting his full immersion in the scene. Hett also displayed the scene's shift to helpless realization, as his posture lightly relaxed and his fearful gaze drifted steadily upwards with each "thud," showcasing Hett's comprehensive emotional ingenuity.

Alongside an impeccable Russian accent, Juno Massimei's powerful physicality enabled her to illustrate the breadth of emotions associated with the fire. As Ethel Monick, Massimei's incredulous shock towards surviving was shown through a hollow gaze cast outward, mimicking the paralysis of strong disbelief. As May Levantini, Massimei allowed panic to consume her character, physically trembling as her face convulsed in terror, cleverly depicting the fear associated with a painful memory.

With commanding, vivid hues, Lighting by Kenzee Phillips expertly emphasized the production's most profound moments. Bathing the underside of a staircase with a faint crimson light, Phillips cleverly captured the appearance of a small ember, which gradually brightened as the onset cascaded farther across the stage, masterfully emulating fire's growing intensity. Additionally, Phillips' use of a navy spotlight rapidly flashing across cast members prevented confusion about the speaker during a series of swift declarations.

Adorned with bouffant hairdos and berry-rouge blush, Kasey Kamerschen's Hair and Makeup design established the production's timeframe. Following 1900's beauty trends, the seamstresses sported a "freshly bitten" lipstick look alongside blush dappled along the cheek's apples. Their modest, youthful appearance was further enhanced by voluminous braids and Gibson Girl buns, the era's signature style. Kamerschen's work also sculpted the presence of fire, as grey 'soot' was gradually applied across the cast's faces parallel to the fire's constant progression.

A window into the lamentable stories of many, Dana Hill's "The Triangle Factory Fire Project" illuminates the stage, and lingers in our hearts.