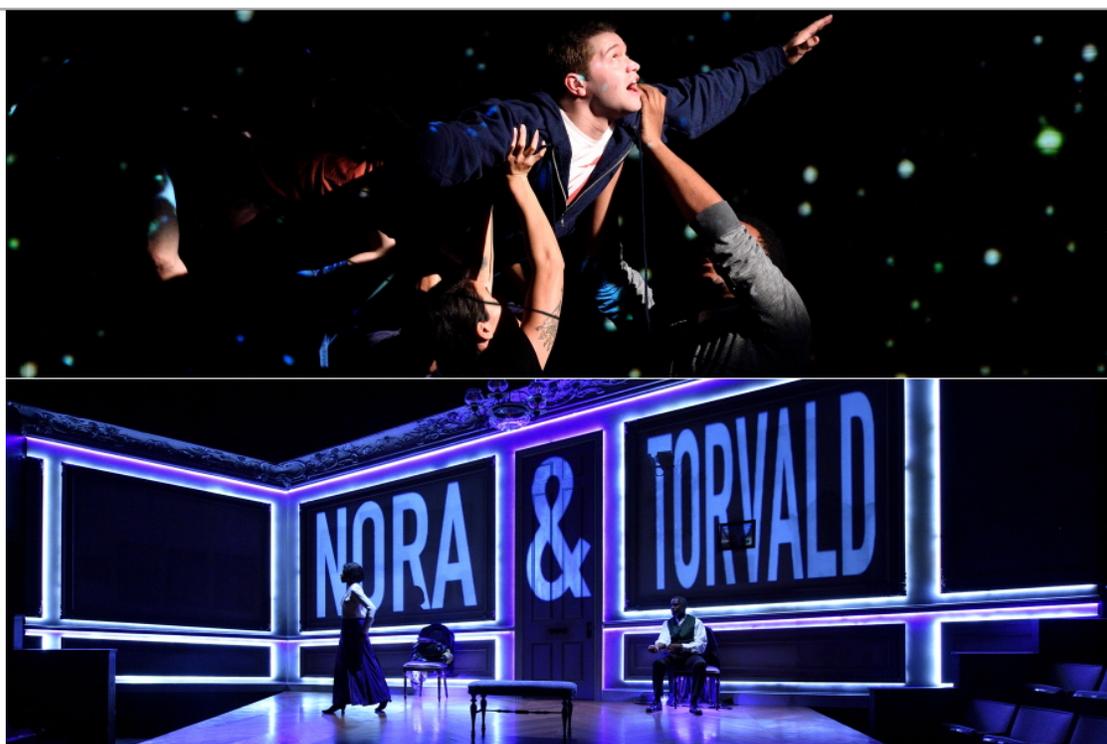


# AMERICAN THEATRE

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Two top plays, one theatre. Above; "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time." Below: Zuleyma Guevara and Kim Sullivan in "A Doll's House, Part 2." Both at Actors Theatre of Louisville. (Photos by Jonathan Roberts)

**NEWS** | SEPTEMBER 18, 2019 | 0 COMMENTS

## The Top 10\* Most-Produced Plays of the 2019-20 Season

What's the number one play in America? It's a tie between 'A Doll's House, Part 2' and 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.'

**BY DIEP TRAN**

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**This year, in a rarity**, you may notice that we have two plays tied for the number one slot on our top 10 most-produced play list: *A Doll's House, Part 2* by Lucas Hnath and *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Simon Stephens. (For a list of this season's Top 20 Most-Produced Playwrights, go [here](#).)

Why those two plays? I can venture a few guesses. Both have made our Top 10 lists before and it is probably a variety of factors. Both plays had well-received runs on Broadway (a Broadway run is usually a good guarantee of a future life for a play). One, *A Doll's House*, is a riff on a classic play by Ibsen, which makes it particularly popular for classical theatre companies looking to zhooosh up their season. The other, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, is a more surprising choice since it's a large-cast play with numerous set changes that features a hero on the autism spectrum. But it is a play that both parents and their kids can enjoy (its based on the young adult book of the same name), and in the American theatre, anything that is family friendly is almost guaranteed to sell well.

Do you have any theories as to why these two plays are on the top of this list? Let us know. Below is our annual list of the most-produced plays of the new season across the U.S.

## The Top 10\* Most-Produced Plays of the 2019-20 Season

- *A Doll's House, Part 2* by Lucas Hnath: **12 (TIE)**
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Simon Stephens, based on the book by Mark Haddon: **12 (TIE)**
- *Every Brilliant Thing* by Duncan Macmillan with Jonny Donahoe: **10**
- *Bright Star* with music by Steve Martin (also book) and Edie Brickell (also lyrics) **9 (TIE)**
- *Pipeline* by Dominique Morisseau: **9 (TIE)**
- *Tiny Beautiful Things* adapted by Nia Vardalos from the book by Cheryl Strayed: **8 (TIE)**
- *Admissions* by Joshua Harmon: **8 (TIE)**
- *Cambodian Rock Band* by Lauren Yee: **8 (TIE)**
- *The Children* by Lucy Kirkwood: **8 (TIE)**
- *The Great Leap* by Lauren Yee: **8 (TIE)**
- *Murder on the Orient Express* adapted by Ken Ludwig from the book by Agatha Christie: **8 (TIE)**
- *School Girls or, The African Mean Girls Play* by Jocelyn Bioh: **8 (TIE)**
- *The Thanksgiving Play* by Larissa FastHorse: **8 (TIE)**

- ***The Wolves*** by Sarah DeLappe: **8 (TIE)**

\*Actually 14 because of ties.

## Methodology

Each year we collect season programming information from Theatre Communications Group's member theatres; from those listings, which totaled 2,229 entries at 385 theatres playing Sept 1, 2019, to Aug. 31, 2020, we set aside all Shakespeare productions and *Christmas Carols*. We also removed any productions with fewer than two weeks of performances.

## The Understudies

- Split decision! It seems the American theatre can't decide if it loves Lucas Hnath or Simon Stephens more: Both have made Top 10 lists before, and this year they're tied for the top spot. The last time U.S. theatres made such a split decision was in 2011-12, when *Red* by John Logan tied with *God of Carnage* by Yasmina Reza.
- *A Christmas Carol* continues to be a holiday favorite, with 39 productions.
- It's rare to write a play so popular it's on the Top 10 list for two years in a row. But Hnath did just that; this is the second year in a row that *A Doll's House, Part 2* has made it to the top (even if he shares this year with Stephens). The last time a play was that popular for two years running was *Doubt* by John Patrick Shanley, which was the most popular play in 2007 and 2008; before that, Yasmina Reza's *Art* topped in both 2000 and 2001.
- It's also rare that the top spot is a tie. It's only happened 3 times before: *God of Carnage* by Yasmina Reza and *Red* by John Logan tied in 2012; *Doubt* by John Patrick Shanley and *The Santaland Diaries* by Joe Mantello, adapted from David Sedaris, in 2008; and in 2001, when *Art* by Yasmina Reza tied with *Dinner With Friends* by Donald Margulies.
- Lauren Yee makes her debut not only on our Top 20 but on our Top 10 list with not one but two titles. Getting multiple most-produced plays is a rarity. The last (and only other) time that happened was in the [1999-2000 season](#), when Martin McDonagh had two on the list. Says Yee: "The fact that *Cambodian Rock Band* and *The Great Leap* are two of the most produced plays in the country this season demonstrates the hunger audiences have for thrilling new narratives that cast actors of color as unlikely heroes in their own stories. It also speaks to the incredible depth and breadth of the Asian American community. They are rock stars, they are sports legends, and they will break your heart and dazzle you with their virtuosic performances. It's an incredible honor."

