



the community newsletter

Catch Up on This Semester's Best in TV, Film and Theatre with Joe Ruggiero

by Kerry Sullivan

If you know the Communication Department's Producer/Director Joe Ruggiero, you know he's always caught up with the latest television shows, movies and Broadway performances. Well, he has plenty of opinions on this semester's latest, and what he loved versus what he didn't like as much.

Joe, like most people, has just finished watching HBO Max's "House of the Dragon," the spinoff show of the hit series "Game of Thrones."

"It was awesome! Literally I thought the show was absolutely amazing," he said. "There weren't really a lot of bad things about it."

The community of people who watched the show made it fun to watch every week, he said. One of the things that he loved the most about "House of the Dragon" was that every episode was great, and that it made him want to go back and watch "Game of Thrones."

Currently, he is making his way through the new "Star Wars" shows that have recently been released on Disney+: "Andor," "The Bad Batch" and "Tales of the Jedi."

He had high praise for "Andor," saying it is "The best Star Wars show since 'The Mandalorian' ... from top to bottom this one has been absolutely amazing."

When it comes to week-to-week reality television, Joe is an avid fan of "Hell's Kitchen," which a new season just dropped, as well as weekly sports games.

Topping his movie list is "Barbarian," written and directed by Zach Cregger, currently on HBO Max.

"This movie needs to be watched by everybody, it is one of my favorite horror movies of the year," he said. "It was just bonkers from the start ... I really enjoyed it, and I'm not a horror movie person."

In theaters this semester, Joe saw "Amsterdam," which he was really disappointed about, because even though the acting was great, the story fell flat. He said "See How They Run," a murder-mystery spoof, was better. Joe also saw "Jaws," which was re-released into theaters in September.

"It was awesome," Joe said. "This was my first time seeing it in theaters and it makes you feel like you've never seen it before!"

On Broadway, Joe has had the opportunity to see so many different shows this past semester. He's an avid fan of using the site [LuckySeat.com](https://www.luckyseat.com) to enter lotteries for a chance to win cheaper tickets. This semester he's seen "Book of Mormon," "Moulin Rouge," "Into the Woods" and "Funny Girl." Without a doubt, he said that "Book of Mormon" was his favorite.

However, Joe did admit that he loved them all. He had the opportunity to see “Funny Girl” with Julie Benko as Fanny Brice, understudy to Lea Michele.

“Julie Benko was phenomenal,” he said. “She made me believe she could be a Jewish Girl from Brooklyn.”

He loved “Into the Woods” because of how old-school it was, with everything on stage, even the orchestra, and the focus was more on what was happening. “Moulin Rouge” was a completely different feel, but just as exciting with its loud atmosphere and great music.

“It’s almost like a dance party — you really feel like you’re at the club,” he said.

On his “to watch” list is the new “Lord of the Rings” spinoff show, “Rings of Power.” He’s also excited to see the “Santa Clause” television show based off of the early 90’s movies with Tim Allen. He recently watched “Wednesday,” with Jenna Ortega. As someone who grew up watching “The Addams Family” with Christina Ricci in the role, Ruggiero felt Ortega was “phenomenal,” making

*Joe’s tips for getting cheap tickets to Broadway shows:
use the website [LuckySeat.com](https://www.luckyseat.com) to enter lotteries for a chance to win
cheaper tickets, or go to box offices to buy tickets without a fee (also
works for sporting events!)*

the audience laugh while spooking them at the same time.

“Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery,” is another on Joe’s list — in fact, he’s already purchased his ticket to see it in theaters. It will only be in theaters for one week starting on Nov. 23, before it’s moved to Netflix on Dec. 23. A few other movies on Joe has seen are “Wakanda Forever” and “The Menu.” He is eager to see “Devotion,” “All Quiet on the Western Front” and “Blonde.”

“Some Like It Hot,” a musical based on the movie of the same name, is up there on his Broadway “to watch” list. “Some Like It Hot” is Joe’s favorite rom-com movie, so he’s excited to see it come to Broadway and hopefully win some lottery tickets on LuckySeat.

And, as you would all expect, as resident sports communication guy, Joe will also be watching weekly sports: football, wrestling, basketball, you name it. If you see Joe around campus or in the Communication Department’s office, feel free to ask him his opinions on movies, television shows or what’s good on Broadway! ★