

## STAGE PRODUCTIONS ON RAMANUJAN - A COMPARISON

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The mathematical work and the life story of the Indian genius Srinivasa Ramanujan (1887-1920) are so fascinating, that he has evoked awe and admiration the world over among mathematicians and lay persons alike. Working in isolation in rural India, Ramanujan discovered spectacular results that revealed surprising connections between different parts of number theory and analysis. There is the legend that the Hindu Goddess Namagiri used to come in his dreams and give him these formulae. When Ramanujan communicated his findings in 1913 in two letters to G. H. Hardy of Cambridge University, Hardy realized that Ramanujan was a genius on par with Euler and Jacobi for sheer manipulative ability, and arranged for Ramanujan to come to England and work with him. There Ramanujan wrote several fundamental papers by himself and with Hardy. The asymptotic series for the partition function is a crowning achievement of their collaboration. Owing to his own peculiar personal habits, and due to the difficult times in England during WW I, Ramanujan fell ill and returned to India in 1919 only to die a year later. But what he did in his brief life of 32 years, place him among the greatest mathematicians in history. Robert Kanigel's book *The Man Who Knew Infinity* that appeared in 1991, is a faithful and compelling description of Ramanujan's life story. Following the Ramanujan Centennial in 1987, there have been several stage productions on Ramanujan, the latest being the marvelous movie *The Man Who Knew Infinity* (INFINITY) based on Kanigel's book. In most of these stage productions, the Hardy-Ramanujan formula for partitions is the focus of the mathematical discussion. I shall provide a comparison of some of these stage productions but emphasize the movie INFINITY, point out where dramatizations have been introduced, and discuss some aspects of Ramanujan's work that are featured in these stage productions, focussing on the Hardy-Ramanujan formula for partitions which has universal appeal.