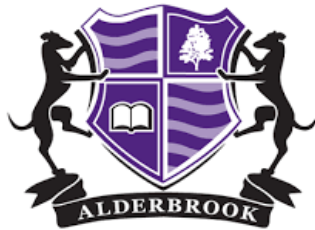


AQA A Level Drama & Theatre Course Handbook & Knowledge Organiser



Harlem Theatre Company- Production of Antigone- 2014.

Name.....

Your Digital Theatre+ Log in:

Username: student_980

Password: discuss@4724

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The course in brief...

Component 1: Drama and Theatre Theory- What's assessed..?

- Knowledge and understanding of drama and theatre
- Study of two set plays, one chosen from List A, one chosen from List B
- Analysis and evaluation of the work of live theatre makers

How it's assessed...

- Written exam: 3 hours • Open book • 80 marks • 40% of A-level. Questions:
- Section A: one question (from a choice) on one of the set plays (25 marks)
- Section B: one three part question on a given extract from one of the set plays (30 marks)
- Section C: one question on a single live theatre production (25 marks)

Component 2: Creating original drama (practical) what's assessed..?

- Process of creating devised drama
- Performance of devised drama (students may contribute as performer, designer or director) Devised piece must be influenced by the work and methodologies of one prescribed practitioner

How it's assessed...

- Working written notebook (40 marks)
- Devised performance (20 marks)
- 60 marks in total
- 30% of A-level. This component is marked by teachers and moderated by AQA

Component 3: Making theatre (practical) what's assessed..?

- Practical exploration and interpretation of three extracts (Extract 1, 2 and 3) each taken from a different play Methodology of a prescribed practitioner must be applied to Extract 3 Extract 3 is to be performed as a final assessed piece (students may contribute as performer, designer or director)
- Reflective report analysing and evaluating theatrical interpretation of all three extracts

How it's assessed...

- Performance of Extract 3 (40 marks) •
- Reflective written report (20 marks)
- 60 marks in total
- 30% of A-level. This component is marked by AQA.

Component 1 in brief... (40% of your A Level)

You will study two set plays:

Antigone by Sophocles

Metamorphosis by Steven Berkoff (Adapted from the novella by Franz Kafka)

Your working knowledge and understanding of these plays will be crucial to your success!

Your teacher will lead you chronologically through each play, using practical workshops and theory lessons to explore the text and its meaning- both for a contemporary production of the play and for the **original performance context**.

For section A- You will be asked a generic question about Antigone- either about your directorial interpretation of the play or your ideas for a contemporary design for production.

For section B- You will be given a selected extract of Metamorphosis and asked three questions;

One from the perspective of a director

One from the perspective of an actor

One from the perspective of a designer

Therefore, for both section A and B, you will need **your own unique directorial vision** for the two set plays- which includes clear ideas about how to stage the plays/direct the actors and how to design setting, lighting, sound and costume for the plays.

For section 3 you will write a critical review of one live piece of theatre seen during the course. We will provide you with ample opportunities to see a variety of live theatre- either LIVE or streamed.

After seeing a show, you will discuss it with your teacher and peers- assessing its merits as well as analysing how it was staged.

Studying live theatre and how it works will also help you create your **directorial vision** for the two set plays.

An introduction to 'Antigone' by Sophocles

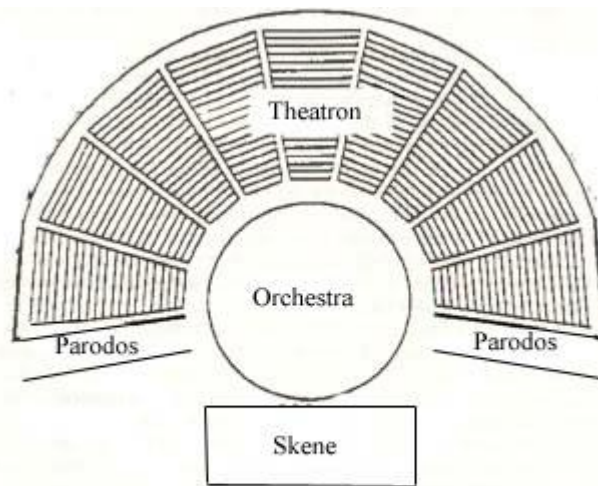
Antigone is an amazing play that is as relevant today as it was when it was written 2,500 years ago. It's about a child rebelling against her family- which is still going on!

However, without a detailed understanding of its original performance context, you will not be able to interpret it for a contemporary audience.

Here's what you need to know:



A picture of the theatre of Dionysus in Athens taken in 1870 by Sebah Pascal.



Parts of a Greek Theater

Greek plays were first performed at **the City Dionysia Festival in Athens** 2,500 years ago.

What would it have been like to have attended the original production? It's difficult to know for sure. There is not enough historical evidence to present a definitive picture and scholars argue over the exact details. There is, however, one thing we can know for sure. The experience of watching a play in the theatre in ancient Greece was very different from watching a play in a theatre today.

Today you can go to the theatre almost any night of the week. In ancient Athens, plays were only performed during late winter and early spring. This may have been because of the hot Greek climate. The theatres were outdoors and the plays were performed in daylight. The actors, known as **hypokrites** wore heavy costumes and masks, and performing in the Greek theatre required strenuous physical and vocal exertion, which would have been impractical in hot weather. Each play was usually only ever performed once.

Greek theatres were huge. The theatre of Dionysus in Athens could hold 15,000 spectators. The audience sat on seats carved out of a hillside. These seats encircled a round playing area called the **orchestra** where the **chorus** performed. At the back of the orchestra was the **skene**. This was a stone building, a hut or tent that acted as a dressing room and was where the actors made their entrances from and their exits to. The actors performed in front of the skene, perhaps on a raised platform. On either side of the orchestra were the **parados**, two stone passage ways through which the chorus made its entrance and exit. There was some form of stage machinery that facilitated special effects – such as the entrance of a god or Medea's escape in Helios' chariot – but we are unsure as to exactly what this machinery was or how it worked.

Plays were performed as part of religious festivals, such as the City Dionysia. Priests sat on the front row of the theatre in throne-like seats. The festival lasted seven days and celebrated the beginning of spring. Alongside the performances of the plays, there were grand processions, animal sacrifices, good citizens were honoured and

slaves were freed. The event may have been a religious one, but the atmosphere was far from solemn. Greek audiences were talkative and unruly. If they disliked a play, they would drum their heels on their benches, jeer loudly and throw fruit.

At the City Dionysia Festival, the plays were presented in competition with each other. There were prizes for the best comedy and the best tragedy. In the tragedy competition, three playwrights would each present a trilogy of plays. When Euripides presented *Medea* in 431BC he came last in the competition, beaten into third place by the playwrights Euphorion and Sophocles.

The plays were funded by a wealthy citizen, who gave his financial support in return for being let off paying his taxes. The plays were directed by the playwright. Some of the earlier playwrights performed in their plays as well. Aeschylus frequently played leading roles in his productions.

The chorus plays a very important role in Greek tragedy. The play does not officially begin until they enter and ends when they leave. The chorus entered through the *parados* at the beginning of the play and exited at the end in the same way. The chorus acts as characters within the drama, it provides the audience with vital information and it locates the story of the play within the context of wider Greek mythology. The chorus sang and danced during the performance. Their movements were elaborately choreographed. The chorus acts as a bridge between the action and the audience. The chorus physically stood on the orchestra between the actors and the audience. It could talk to the actors on one side and the audience on the other. The chorus also performed other important functions:

They were great fun! Ancient Greek audience's talk of their excitement about when the chorus will arrive on stage. Just like in a modern day musical there is a big chorus song. They often foregrounded/contextualised the action or told the 'previously' details of the story. They often foregrounded thematic elements for the audience. They sometimes advise the protagonist or question their behaviour- acting as a kind of brake- trying to prevent tragedy occurring. In this respect, the chorus sometimes say what the audience is thinking.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIXi8LfKv-0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=quLkooLxsO4>

The chorus was made up of members of the Athenian community, just like the audience. The chorus for each play was selected from the citizens of Athens, who took on this responsibility unpaid as part of their civic duty.

The actors in Greek theatre were semi-professionals. They were paid for their performances, but acting was not their full time occupation. There were no actresses on the Greek stage. All the female roles were played by men. The maximum number of actors required for any Greek tragedy is three. If you look at the plays, you will see that there are never more than three speaking characters onstage at any one time. Each actor could quickly and easily change characters by simply changing his mask and costume.

Little is known about acting styles in Greek theatre. There was no fourth wall in the Greek theatre. Like the chorus, the actors could see the audience, and would have acknowledged their presence and spoken directly to them. Visibility and audibility was probably an issue in the huge Greek theatres. The actors' masks acted like an acoustic megaphone, amplifying their voices. In the dialogue of Greek plays, the characters often describe what they are feeling and doing in detail. For example, they might tell us that they are crying or that another character is scowling at them. Through the language of the play they are able to convey the action of the scene to even the most distant spectator.

Although the word scenery is derived from the word skene, there were no sets as such on the Greek stage. The back wall of the skene may have been painted, but its decoration would have been unchanging. Again, the language of the dialogue had to paint the scene for the audience and they filled in the rest with their imagination. The actors' costumes helped the audience to identify their characters, indicating their gender and social status through their decoration. You could say that the elaborate costumes and masks were the characters and that the actor simply spoke through them.

There were many Greek playwrights, but sadly only the work of three of them has survived: Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. All three wrote plays for the City Dionysia, but they were very different from each other.

The plays of Aeschylus explore the dangers of arrogance, the misuse of power and the bloody consequences of revenge. His trilogy, the Oresteia, explores the chain of revenge set into motion by king Agamemnon's decision to sacrifice his daughter in return for a fair wind to take his ships to Troy.

Sophocles is interested in the redemptive power of suffering. A good example of this is the character of Oedipus in Oedipus Rex. Sophocles portrays Oedipus as a good-hearted but headstrong young man who kills his own father without knowing that he is his father, and marries his mother without realising that she is his mother. When he discovers what he has done, he blinds himself in remorse.

Euripides, the last of the three, belongs to a somewhat later generation of Greek thought, and is a far more troubled, questioning and unsatisfied spirit. Euripides is the most direct of the three in his questioning of Athenian society and its established beliefs.

There were three genres or styles of Ancient Greek theatre and they are the blue print structures for nearly all modern Drama.

1. **Tragedy**- considered to be the highest status form- rewarded by prizes at festivals. In all tragedies a high status protagonist is slowly destroyed by their own hubris and fatal flaws.
2. **Comedy**- considered to be a lower status form, where often high status characters like gods and kings are made fun of and humiliated.

3. **Satyr Plays**- considered to be a lower status form In which very crudely dressed man (fauns with huge leather phalluses) perform silly dances or comic sketches making fun of tragic heroes between the acts of a tragedy.



Oedipus Rex- The most celebrated and performed Greek tragedy



The Frogs- One of Aristophanes most celebrated comedies

The Three Types of Greek Drama

- ▶ Satyr Plays – These short plays were performed between the acts of tragedies and made fun of the plight of the tragedy's characters.
- ▶ The satyrs were mythical half human, half-goat figures and actors in these plays wore large phalluses for comic effect. Few examples of these plays survive. They are classified by some authors as tragicomic, or comedy dramas.



A Satyr and Dionysus

A Satyr and a Nymph



Structure

Ancient Greek tragedies have a predictable and stable structure with little variation. After the Parados- or the first choral ode which acts as an introduction, there would be episode 1- a scene between two or three main characters. This would be followed by the second choral ode (or Stasimon), followed by episode 2 and so on... like this structure for Antigone:

Antigone Structure

1. **Prologue:** Antigone asks for her sister Ismene's help in burying their brother Polyneices. Ismene refuses and Antigone rejects her sister.
2. **Parodos:** The chorus enters, rejoicing and thanking the gods that the attack of Polyneices has been defeated and Thebes is safe.
3. **First Episode:** Creon enters, and reveals his plan to bury Eteocles but leave Polyneices unburied. A sentry enters, and reports that someone has tried to bury Polyneices. Creon is angered, and threatens the sentry.
4. **First Stasimon:** The chorus dances and sings its Ode to Man ("Many are the wonders, none is more wonderful than what is man.")
5. **Second Episode:** Antigone is brought before Creon, and confesses that she buried her brother. She and Creon argue, and Creon decrees she will die. Ismene is led in, and claims she helped her sister. Antigone rejects her help.
6. **Second Stasimon:** The chorus reflects on the destiny of Antigone's house, fate, and the nature of a divine curse.
7. **Third Episode:** Haemon argues with his father Creon, and leaves. Creon decrees that Antigone be entombed alive in a cave.
8. **Third Stasimon:** The chorus sings a song about the power of the god Eros.
9. **Fourth Episode:** Antigone, lamenting her fate to the chorus, is led to the cave.
10. **Fourth Stasimon:** The chorus compares Antigone's fate and imprisonment to that of three others: Danae, Lycurgus, and Cleopatra.
11. **Fifth Episode:** Teiresias enters, and tells Creon he has made a grave mistake. Creon realizes his mistake, and rushes to bury Polyneices and release Antigone.
12. **Fifth Stasimon:** The chorus invokes Dionysus, the god who protects Thebes.
13. **Exodus:** A messenger reports the deaths of Antigone and Haemon. Euridyce, Creon's wife, commits suicide. Creon laments his losses.

The Gods and Prophets

The ancient Greeks were polytheists- they believed there was a god for all important human elements like love, war, wine or the sea.

In *Antigone* and all Greek tragedies, the gods are expected to make judgements on the actions of humans and are often invited to help prevent tragedy. However, humans are always left to commit their tragic actions and then the gods judge and punish them for their deeds. This can sometimes result in nature being perverted-like raining snakes or a plague.

In many plays, like *Antigone*, the gods have a messenger on earth- called a prophet. Prophets are religious men who live in a temple. They have the power of foresight and sometimes perform ritual ceremonies or sacrifices. Many prophets, like Tiresias in *Antigone*, are blind, but are also seers- those who see more than normal mortals.

Prophets lived in temple shrines- the most famous of which was at Delphi, in the mountains of Greece. Powerful people would offer gifts to the prophets of Delphi to influence their future for the better. Going to a shrine was a religious experience.

Tiresias appears in many Greek Tragedies. His backstory paints a picture of an ambiguous character with elements of both gender.

The Sexuality of Tiresias

On Mount Cyllene in the Peloponnese, as Tiresias came upon a pair of copulating snakes, he hit the pair with his stick. Hera was displeased, and she punished Tiresias by transforming him into a woman. As a woman, Tiresias became a priestess of Hera, married and had children, including Manto, who also possessed the gift of prophecy. According to some versions of the tale, Lady Tiresias was a prostitute of great renown. After seven years as a woman, Tiresias again found mating snakes; depending on the myth, either she made sure to leave the snakes alone this time, or, according to Hyginus, trampled on them. As a result, Tiresias was released from his sentence and permitted to regain his masculinity. This ancient story is recorded in lost lines of Hesiod.

Greek tragedies like *Antigone* were written by philosophers and often the plays explore moral, political or ethical dilemmas. Like modern day theatre, Ancient Greek plays used the safety of a story/myth to explore themes that link to their own political contexts.

Antigone explores the idea of law breaking and considers what should happen to traitors when a state is at war. Athens at the time was at war with many of the surrounding city states, so these themes would have been highly relevant at the times.

The Play Through Time & Conclusions

Since its inception, *Antigone* has been performed and reinterpreted over and over again. Like all great plays, new companies approach it through the political prism of their own time. It's universal themes and forever relevance makes it irresistible for theatre directors. Your job is to create your own original vision for this classic!

An introduction to Metamorphosis by Steven Berkoff.

Based on the novella 'Metamorphosis' by Franz Kafka

As we study Metamorphosis, we must be thinking about two different contexts:

- ***The original story and its writer Franz Kafka.***
- ***Berkoff's adaptation of the story into a play.***

Berkoff's play is a very faithful adaptation of Kafka's original, so the first thing to do is read and understand Kafka's story.

Franz Kafka and his original story

Written in 1917, Metamorphosis tells the story of Gregor Samsa, who woke up one morning to discover he had been turned into a gigantic beetle. From that surreal and nightmarish start, we see Gregor's slow and painful demise at the hands of his own family.

Kafka was born in 1883 in Prague (modern day Czech republic) into a wealthy and prosperous Jewish family.

At the time, Prague was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, so Kafka and his family would have spoken German and Czech. Kafka was educated and wrote in German.

His father was a well-respected and successful business man. Franz himself was a very troubled individual who suffered greatly during his life. His anxiety, lack of self-esteem and physical weakness were in part caused by an overbearing and aggressive father who didn't disguise his disappointment at having a weak and bookish son. For example, Kafka recalls as a child calling out in the night because he couldn't sleep and his father leaving him on a cold balcony outside for waking him up. Kafka said he was deeply traumatised by this and other incidents- and with a mother too weak to defend him, he fell prey to his father's whims and anger many times.

As a consequence, his stories are often populated by overbearing authority figures or administrative officials who seem hell bent on confusing and bewildering the individual. Kafka's protagonists are always trapped, whether in their own body like Gregor, or trapped within a broader system of order, bureaucracy and authority which controls and stifles the individual- Like Joseph K who wakes up one morning to find that he has been arrested without charge for no apparent reason and spends the rest of the novel trying to clear his name.

Kafka was also Jewish, and though he was sheltered by the relative prosperity and respectability of his family, he was still living in a time when anti-Semitism was widespread so he may well have experienced prejudice and discrimination at the hands

of authority. More generally, Kafka felt he never fitted in and was an outsider. This is apparent in all his central characters.

Kafka worked as an insurance clerk in a soulless and mechanical role that never seemed to end. This repetition and bureaucratic environment is also seen in exaggerated form in many of his stories. In *Metamorphosis*, Gregor is a travelling salesman in a soulless job, constantly stressed and exhausted, harassed and abused by his boss, seemingly unable to support his family.

The nightmarish and oppressive mood and qualities of his stories are now legendary. So much so, the word **Kafkaesque** has become synonymous with nightmarish feelings of exclusion and entrapment.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wkPR4Rcf4ww>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4LyzhkDNBM>

Style

In the early part of the twentieth century, Kafka was writing at a time of great artistic experimentation and change.

Surrealism

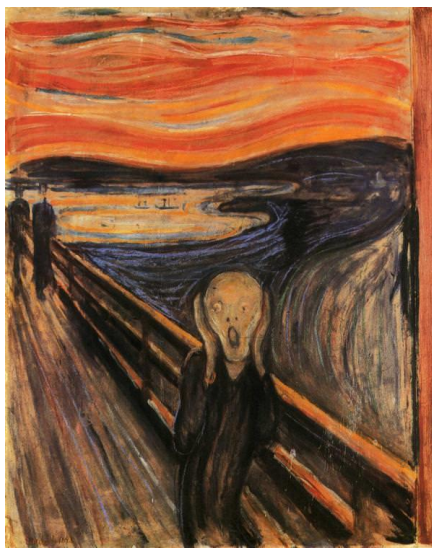
The surrealist movement had started- in which artists, film-makers and writers explored the sub-conscious, often representing surreal images and visions that couldn't be found in the real world- just like Gregor transforming into a beetle. Look at the painting below. It possesses all the hallmarks of surrealism. It's called 'Son of Man' by Rene Magritte. It depicts a typical man- any man. Everyman. Maybe someone like Gregor Samsa. But it's also a somewhat disturbing image, blending realism with strangeness. What could the Apple symbolise? Like the apple that Gregor's father throws in his back. It's not just an apple...



Expressionism

Expressionist writing and art was also prevalent at the same time. Here are the key features of expressionist work:

- The experience of the individual is always at the centre of the work- Like Gregor.
- Feelings and emotions are expressed forcefully- sometimes to their extreme.
- Subjectivity- not objective reality.
- A reaction to the increasingly industrial and mechanical world which ignores human feeling.



Edward Munch's 'The Scream'. A great example of expressionism.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08KXaHZK33M>

Berkoff's play version of the story

Berkoff's *Metamorphosis* is a very faithful rendition of the original story- both in terms of the narrative content and the style and themes. Berkoff's version is very Kafkaesque- placing Gregor's life as beetle at the centre of the play and using many expressionistic techniques. In the play version, Gregor's family (Mr. Samsa, Mrs. Samsa and Greta) are as unsympathetic and callous as in Kafka's story- and poor Gregor meets the same fate at the hands of his family. So, the original novella is an excellent starting point for your studies.

Steven Berkoff

Berkoff is an actor and writer- born in East London but from Russian Jewish heritage. He studied mime at École Internationale De Théâtre Jacques Lecoq. This early training had a profound effect on him and all of his plays place mime and physical theatre at the centre of his work. His early plays were all adaptations of Kafka's stories- *Metamorphosis* (1969) *The Penal Colony* (1969) and *The Trial* (1971).

Berkoff was also deeply influenced by the early twentieth century mime artist Jean Louis Berrault whose highly expressive and economical mime work fits perfectly in Berkoff's dramatic aesthetic.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAUuBEzOtxA>

Berkoff's wrote useful introductions to his adaptations of Kafka in which he explains key features of his style and his interpretation of the stories. These are key texts, all of which have useful quotations that you can take into your exam.

Here are the key features of Berkoff's style:

- Actors as "animated marionettes" or human puppets
- A mechanistic robotic style of performance
- Using the grotesque and distortion through movement, voice and design
- "The geometric shape of the insect governed by movements."
- "To engage the sense on all levels totally." Total theatre
- "The animal is the mis en scene" "Skeletal framework"
- Expressionism- exaggerated of feelings
- Contra-punctual speaking- overlapping speech with two or more different rhythms
- Constantly shifting scenes/rhythms, often moving back and forward in time

The design of the play should reflect the expressionist/surrealist and exaggerated style of the play. Costumes should be equally stylised, with clear reference to the original setting in Prague 1910. The skeletal framework of the setting should remain a key visual feature of the design, but you could be creative with the materials, 'look' and positioning of the framework in relation to performer and audience. Lighting and sound should also be used creatively to distort and re-shape the action.

Kafka's original story 'Metamorphosis' is now considered to be a classic of twentieth century literature, along with many other of his short stories/novels. We highly recommend you know Kafka's original story very well, but we also highly recommend that you read at least one other Kafka story. 'The Hunger Artist' would be a good start.

Our Practitioners

Constanin Stanislavski (1863-1938)



Stanislavski created the first 'system' for actors. He was reacting to the exaggerated and romantic style of melodrama which was the popular form of theatre in the late 19th century.

Stanislavski was an actor. He created The Moscow Arts Theatre where he collaborated closely with the playwright Anton Chekhov- whose plays were highly detailed and naturalistic.

Stanislavski was interested in creating truth on stage. Everything on stage should be as realistic as possible. Actors were encouraged to use their own experiences to build a character.

Key features include:

Units and objectives

Breath and relaxation

The magic if

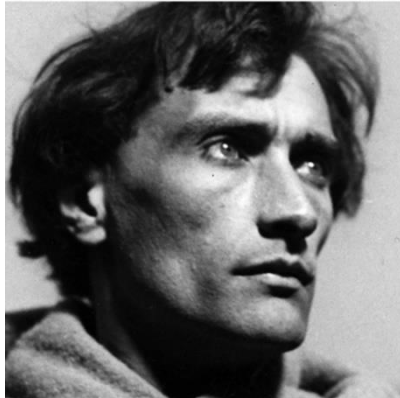
Subtext

Emotion memory

Objectives and super objectives

Many of Stanislavski's ideas were picked up and reshaped by Lee Strasberg in New York in the 1960s and 70s, but today they have more influence over actors in film and TV than theatre actors.

Antonin Artaud (1896-1948)



Artaud was a radical theatre visionary, whose ideas about performance were not popular at the time, but have had a profound influence on contemporary theatre.

Artaud was interested in the theatre as a sensory experience. He wanted theatre to “open hearts and minds.” Artaud rejected naturalism in favour of a much more sensational approach. Artaud was deeply influenced by the surrealist movement of the 1920s, of which he was a member. The surrealist often created dreamlike and nightmarish images that tapped into people’s deepest fears and desires. He was also influenced by older forms of indigenous theatre like Japanese Noh theatre and Balinese Dance, where the spectacle is more focused on image and movement than words and storytelling.

Artaud wrote a series of essays about theatre called ‘The Theatre and It’s Double’ which include a detailed manifesto, describing what he proposes for the theatre.

Key features include:

Not acting, but authenticity. Real things happening on stage

A fragmented and non-linear form of presentation

Sensory approaches- stunts, strong smells, dazzling lights, darkness, layered sounds

A less formal staging in which the audience is more immersed

Non-semantic language (through voice and movement)

Theatre as ritual

Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956)



Brecht was a German playwright and theatre practitioner. He set up 'The Berliner Ensemble' with his wife and actress Helene Weigel in the 1930s. They created a distinctive style of theatre they called 'Epic', which rejected naturalism.

Brecht believed the theatre should be an agent for social and political revolution. He hated the idea that things are the way they are because it's natural. He wanted to create a dynamic and changeable world. So, his plays champion the rights and stories of the poor and socially excluded. He wanted his audiences to be objective in the theatre and able to form their own judgment. His theatre was anti-illusionary- always reminding the audience that they are in the theatre, so that they don't get lost in the magic and illusion of the story.

Under the Nazis, Brecht was forced to flee Germany and live in the USA. He was No.2 of Hitler's hit list!

Key features include:

Verfremdungseffekt- Making strange.

Gestus- the outward demonstration of character.

Anti-illusionary techniques- multi-rolling, projections, banners, narration, singing.

Heros of ordinary people- Grusha (kitchen maid) Shen Te (prostitute)

Famous Brecht plays include;

The Caucasian Chalk Circle

Mother Courage

Galileo

The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui

Alecky Blyth (1968-)



Blyth is a Verbatim theatre practitioner. She came to prominence in 2009, writing 'The Girlfriend Experience' for The Royal Court and followed it with the award winning 'London Road' for The National Theatre- The world's first ever verbatim musical.

Verbatim Theatre practitioners are interested in the authenticity of ordinary human voices. The text of a verbatim piece is made entirely of words that real human beings have said. In this respect, Verbatim Theatre has been compared to documentary film/TV.

Prior to the finished verbatim text, practitioners in the style spend months recording interviews with ordinary people and then transcribing what they say. From the whole body of the transcriptions, the Verbatim playwright must then cut and edit texts to shape it into a usable structure.

So, this is commonly the verbatim process:

- 1) Decide on the subject
- 2) Interview relevant people
- 3) Transcribe all of the recorded interviews
- 4) Read all the transcriptions, cut most and shape the remaining texts into a coherent structure.

The text of a verbatim piece could be spoken in the same way as its original speaker- as in London Road. Or, the text could be performed in a more interpretive way- Like 'Monkey Bars' by Chris Goode.

Regardless of the style of performance, all verbatim playwrights are interested in giving a voice to ordinary people and experimenting with the idea of authorship. In this respect, Verbatim Theatre can be seen as a highly democratic art form. Verbatim practitioners are also interested in the sound and rhythm of the human voice. Verbatim texts often contain the natural features of human conversation which is usually removed from a conventional play text. The features include:

Regional dialects, overlapping speech, 'fillers' and natural imperfections like 'umms' and 'errs', repetition, natural non-sequiturs.

Scott Graham and Frantic Assembly (1971-)



Scott Graham is the Artistic Director of 'Frantic Assembly' Theatre Company.

Like many contemporary small scale touring companies, Frantic Assembly are known for merging the best of contemporary playwriting with their own style of Physical Theatre.

Physical Theatre has movement and dance at its heart, often merged with dialogue.

Usually, A 'Frantic' Performance will have the story and characters of a naturalistic play, but there will be selected moments where the action becomes more heightened and actors begin to physicalise the emotions of the characters through abstract movement, innovative lifts and beautifully choreographed dance-like duets.

Frantic Assembly are interested in telling compelling story through a mix of movement and dialogue. They usually employ a playwright who writes their text and they use this as a framework for their work. They work in an ensemble style, with all actors equally comfortable with conventional dialogue and abstract movement.

The settings for 'Frantic' pieces are usually composite, using minimalist ideas to suggest place and time. They are also known for their imaginative use of stage space and lighting to maximise their simple settings. Often, elements of the setting will have multiple uses so that it can create different locations seamlessly in keeping with the fluid style of the company. Plays include- The Unreturning, Lovelong, The Believers.

Key features of the Frantic Assembly Style:

Minimal settings with flexibility

Abstract movement to heighten emotion

Imaginative lifts and movement duets

Cutting edge playwriting

An ensemble cast that often multi-role

Seamless transitions between dialogue and movement sequences

Other well-known small scale touring theatre 'physical theatre' companies include:

Kneehigh, Gecko, Shared Experience, DV8 Dance Theatre, Propellor Theatre.

Component 1- What do good essays look like?

Questions, exam formats and model answers.

In the written examination, there are three distinct sections:

1. Section A: Drama through the ages

Answer one question from this section. For the purposes of this examination, a 'section' is defined as a continuous unit of action, interaction, monologue or dialogue extending beyond a single page of text.

2. Section B: 20th and 21st century drama

Answer one question from this section. Answer all three parts of the question. You are reminded of the requirement to make reference in your answer to the social, cultural and/or historical context of your selected play text.

3. Section C: Live theatre production

Answer one of the following questions with reference to one live theatre production that you have seen. At the beginning of your answer you must state the name of the piece; the name of the company and/or director; the date that you saw the production; and the venue you attended. You should also state the medium of the production: • live theatre or • live theatre streamed.

Every exam question will contain one or more familiar command words. The exam board have usefully defined for you what they are looking for under the following command words. **It's absolutely crucial the you do the following:**

- **Discuss** – present key points
- **Explain** – set out purposes or reasons
- **Justify** – support a case with evidence
- **Outline** – set out main characteristics
- **Analyse** – separate information into components and identify their characteristics
Evaluate – judge from available evidence

In Section A and B, for every question asked, you are cast in role as **EITHER a DIRECTOR, OR an ACTOR OR a THEATRE DESIGNER**. An actor can be male female or gender neutral. Another synonym for actor is simply **PERFORMER**. A designer could be a **SET DESIGNER, A COSTUME DESIGNER, A LIGHTING DESIGNER OR A SOUND DESIGNER**, but the type of designer you are cast in will always be specified. A design focus question might combine design skills- the most likely combinations will be **LIGHTING AND SOUND, COSTUME, HAIR AND MAKE-UP, SETTING AND LIGHTING**.

All essay questions are written in prescribed formats and use identical phrasing, so although the focus of the question will be different each year, the phrasing doesn't change.

Section A

In section A you will be asked to show your knowledge of the whole play ANTIGONE by SOPHOCLES and COMPARE your approach as DIRECTOR, ACTOR or DESIGNER across contrasting scenes or episodes of the play.

Here is the format and phrasing.

Remember- you answer ONE from the TWO questions offered.

Here is the typical exam paper phrasing and layout:

Sophocles: Antigone

EITHER

01 As a director, explain how you would stage the first Choral ode and Creon's first address to the Chorus in order to create your preferred effects. [The section ends with the entrance of the Sentry, who, in some editions is known as the Guard.] You must make specific reference to the social, cultural **and/or** historical context of Antigone in your answer.

OR

02 Explain how you would perform the role of Haemon during his interaction with Creon, in order to reveal his changing attitude(s) towards his father. You must make specific reference to the social, cultural **and/or** historical context of Antigone in your answer.

Note that each question casts you in a different role, but they both ask you to analyse your approach to different sections. Obviously, CAREFULLY choosing two CONTRASTING episodes will make it easier for you to demonstrate a broader RANGE OF SKILLS.

Here is an example of a Antigone Essays:

01 As a director or designer, discuss the production methods you would employ in order to create tension in at least two sections of the play. You must make specific reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of Antigone in your answer.

Example response

I am answering this question from the perspective of a director. When this play was first performed, the audience knew the outcome of the tragedy as Sophocles was re-working a well-known Greek fable.

Nevertheless, for the fifth century BC audience, tension was created by Sophocles' dramatic methods as he re-told the story. For my twenty-first century audience, I aim to create tension through my staging ideas and my direction of my cast; these are the production methods that I would employ.

The first section I will be writing about is the opening of the play and then I will consider the section near the end, where Eurydice enters the stage for her first and only appearance. In the Prologue, Antigone asks Ismene to come outside the palace gates to tell her she has decided to bury their brother, Polynices, who Creon saw as a traitor to the city, having led an army against Thebes. Antigone is incensed by the fact that Creon has decreed Polynices' body should lie unburied, and 'unwept'.

Creon's edict offends the expectations of the gods in relation to decent burial. As Antigone and Ismene talk about the dilemma – to obey the laws of the gods or to obey the new ruler, their uncle, Creon – their contrasting views on the burial create tension on stage.

I would direct Ismene to appear timid by speaking more quietly than Antigone. Ismene represents a conventional Greek woman.

Antigone is defiant and dominating; she speaks impetuously. As it was the tradition for woman in the family to perform the burial rites of dead family members, Antigone is defiant as she feels it is her duty to bury Polynices, in spite of Creon's decree. She is following her heart rather than her head. Ismene is horrified by Antigone's plan and by the idea of going against Creon; she understands and accepts her position as a Greek woman who would be seen as less important than the men. She knows that there will be severe punishment for rebelling; her reluctance causes Antigone to flare up, creating tension for the audience.

As the two sisters enter, I would direct Antigone and Ismene to cross from CSL to DCS with the palace gates behind them. The stage would be dark initially and, as both sisters wear hooded cloaks over their chitons, the shadowy figures would create tension for the audience immediately.

Antigone would be in the lead walking with a straight posture, confidently pulling at Ismene's hand, while Ismene lingers behind, looking over her shoulder; she is clearly nervous and this anxiety should spread to the audience. Ismene would have wide eyes in fear, looking around her nervously, with hesitant steps as she knows they don't want to be heard as Antigone is taking her outside in secret. She will have a nervous expression.

On 'I've heard nothing since our two brothers killed each other' I would have Ismene pause before 'killed each other' as her voice catches in sadness. She would deliver the line with a shaky voice, stuttering on 'nothing' and glance away on 'killed each other' to show her anguish; the mention of killing creates tension for the audience.

She would then take Antigone's hand to show the close relationship between them, as her sister is all that is left of her family. When Antigone explains she has called her outside to speak to her alone I would direct Ismene to be more concerned and timid. On 'What is it? You frighten me, Antigone' she would whisper it and glance around in panic, standing close to Antigone and would then take her hand again. She would have a worried tone and a concerned expression; the audience would feel the tension that accompanies her fear.

On Antigone's explanation, spoken with clear contempt for Creon, 'But he has forbidden anyone to bury or weep for Polynices' I would have her deliver the line with disbelief and a disgusted tone. Ismene would react with a more emotional approach by clasping her chest in disbelief with a facial expression of anguish; her eyes wide and mouth slightly open. She would look around confused and shake her head to show her shock at Creon's decree, helping to raise the tension.

On Antigone's line, 'Are you prepared to join me?' I would have Antigone turn directly to Ismene, looking her straight in the eyes and take both her hands. She would say the line with passion, showing her determination to bury Polynices.

Ismene, by contrast, looks nervous, and bites her lip. She would look down, showing that she is reflecting on what Antigone proposes to do. On 'You frighten me again' she would have a low volume to show her objection to her sister's decision. On, 'You are out of your mind, Antigone; Creon is law' when Antigone confirms she will bury her brother and go against the edict, I would have Ismene perform this line with a sudden louder volume as she stares, staggering in disbelief. She would deliver the line with a panicked tone, at a fast pace in her shock and disapproval. This more over-exaggerated approach to the news creates tension for the audience.

On 'We shall die if we go against the decision of the ruler. We are helpless women', I would have Antigone begin to walk away to stage left with a sigh as she realises Ismene is not going to agree with her decision but she is still defiant. On 'We are ... women' I would have Ismene quickly run and grasp her arm to stop her with an expression of fear looking helpless and frantic, building the tension for the audience.

Antigone would raise one eyebrow as if scornful of Ismene's weakness. Ismene's tone is pleading as she tries to convince Antigone what they risk if they dare to disobey Creon. Near the end of the prologue, Antigone is quite ruthless with her sister, spitting out the line 'If that's all you have to say then you are my enemy'. I would have Antigone glare at Ismene, pointing accusingly and speaking in a venomous tone. I want the audience to be full of anticipation – will Ismene finally agree to the task?

Ismene takes a step back as if physically slapped in the face by Antigone's harsh tone. Antigone then strides off-stage, her head back and arms swinging. I would direct Ismene to reach out towards the exit with her arm outstretched as she first calls, then drops her voice to a whisper, as she assures her sister, 'you are truly dear to the ones who love you', letting her arm drop, hopelessly before rushing out after Antigone with a quick glance behind her as she exits. The audience still desperate to know if she will change her mind. In my second section, the entrance of Eurydice, the audience have already been on a fraught journey following Antigone's arrest and condemnation to death. Eurydice will be middle-aged, slim with dark hair and dark skin; she will have a regal bearing. I will have her wearing a white chiton with jewelled clasps to show her status. I want Eurydice's entrance to be very dramatic; the audience had just heard from the Messenger that Haemon is dead and so the appearance of the Queen, Haemon's mother, at the top of a flight of steps leading to the palace doors brings a wave of anticipation and tension about what her reaction will be to the news.

To heighten the tension, I will have Eurydice speak urgently, 'I caught the sound of your words/as I was leaving' will be spoken at a fast pace, but out of breath to show her nervousness. This will make the audience empathise with her as they know what she is about to hear and the tension is almost unbearable. I would direct her to deliver 'Tell me the news again ... I can bear the worst' standing upright and firm with determination but with a pleading tone to show she is desperate for news.

At first, I would have the Messenger look away from her. As there is a tense silence from the Messenger and Chorus, showing that something bad has happened I will have Eurydice prompt the Messenger by saying the second, 'Tell me', more quietly and with tears in her eyes. As the Messenger delivers the horrid truth about the deaths of Haemon and Antigone, I would direct Eurydice to maintain a rigid posture; she is too self-controlled to allow anybody to see her crumple. But when the Messenger delivers the final blow, referring to Creon's 'lack of judgement' I will have her turn on her heels and swiftly exit into the palace leaving the audience on the edge of their seats unsure of what will happen next.

Section B

In Section B you are asked to respond to A PARTICULAR EXTRACT from the play *Metamorphosis* by Steven Berkoff cast in the role of:

Q1) Director

Q2) Actor

Q3) Designer

You answer ALL THREE questions and have 22 minutes to write each mini essay- about a side of A4 writing. This section is VERY CHALLENGING and requires real discipline and time keeping. Moving on to the next question in the trio is crucial; you will lose marks if you dwell on one of the questions. You do NOT know which extract from the play will be selected, so knowing the play back to front and inside out is essential! In each mini-essay, you have to write about contextual links to either Kafka/Berkoff or both, but of course, you should aim to discuss different contextual elements in each question. The examiner is unlikely to reward you three times for the same contextual knowledge. Contextual knowledge could be focused on:

- The two contextual PERIODS when *Metamorphosis* was written by Kafka and the Berkoff- 1917 & 1978
- Franz Kafka's life
- Steven Berkoff's life
- Other stories by Kafka- including *The Trial*, *The Penal Colony* and *The Hunger Artist*.
- Other plays by Berkoff- including the *The Trial* and *The Penal Colony*
- The introductory note to all 'kafka' plays written by Berkoff
- Quotes by or about Kafka or Berkoff- describing their style or aesthetic.
- Surrealism
- Expressionism
- Physical theatre and Berkoff's influence in its development
- The history of mime and Berkoff's influences from Paris.
- Anti-Semitism and the influence of Judaism on Kafka and Berkoff
- Other previous productions of Berkoff's *Metamorphosis* or other versions by other theatre companies.
- The Kafkaesque- the feelings and atmospheres evoked by Kafka's stories.

Exemplar Essay

Here is an example of a Metamorphosis Set of Essays.

17.1 Explain and justify how you would direct the performers from line 53 to line 108 of the printed extract in order to demonstrate the attitude of the lodgers to the family.

Berkoff's adaptation of Kafka's short story, *Metamorphosis*, has become a classic of modern theatre. It was originally a novella published by Kafka in 1915 in the middle of the First World War and¹ has been described as being the best example of what is meant by 'Kafka-esque'. 'Kafka-esque' describes a situation where an individual who is normally a functioning member of society is suddenly overwhelmed by an external force that makes his existence meaningless or unbearable and that is certainly true of what happens to Gregor Samsa in Kafka's story and Berkoff's play.

I feel that Berkoff's play makes this feeling even more overpowering than the short story since the theatre transforms Kafka's words on the page into a concrete theatrical experience in three dimensions that totally engulfs the audience.

The printed extract occurs towards the end of the play. The Samsa family find themselves short of money since Gregor's metamorphosis into a beetle, as it was his salary that was paying for their comfortable life-style and they are forced to take in lodgers.

Berkoff's own stage directions would guide my direction of this section, the Lodgers are three actors who move in complete synchronicity and all three wear pig masks; I would also make sure that they were all wearing fat suits. I would also have them wear short stilts so that they are slightly taller than Mr and Mrs Samsa and Greta and this will help to emphasise their superior attitude towards the family who they intend to bully and belittle.

This is clear in what they say, for example, they mention that the house 'will do', that they can't 'bear slovenliness' and that they will list all their 'objections'. So they are very negative toward the family; I would make the 3rd lodger particularly harsh and unpleasant as he appears to be the one who says the rudest things and I would give him the habit of snorting at the end of his lines to further emphasise the pigginess of the character. The Lodgers' attitude towards the family is one of intended exploitation, but it is quite clear from the opening sequence of this extract, that the family see the Lodgers purely as a means of getting money and all their promises of looking after them are also based on an intention to exploit. Just as they had exploited Gregor. This time, however they will have to do some work themselves. Surprisingly, at the end of this sequence the Lodgers express no objection to pets and I would direct them to speak in complete harmony when they cry out in chorus, 'Oh no we're fond of pets' and I would have each lodger petting one of the Samsa family and stroking their backs for comic effect and to show their superior attitudes towards them as they are treating them like pet animals.⁹ Kafka's story has been interpreted as an exploration of prejudice and in this sequence the Lodgers appear to look down on the Samsas as if they were an inferior race.

Word Count: 505

Quotations: 4

Commentary

This is a largely theoretical answer although it is focused on the demonstration of the Lodgers' attitudes towards the Samsa family. The student's practical ideas, when they are explained, are generally appropriate to the nominated section, but the practical suggestions are narrow in range. The answer is relatively brief.

AO3 The answer is straightforward and ideas are not inappropriate but narrow in range. Occasionally creative; lacking detail and slightly uneven as an interpretation. A very brief comment relates to context; text is used occasionally to support performance ideas.

Band: Band 3

17.2 As a performer, explain and justify how you would perform the role of Mr Samsa in order to demonstrate your understanding of Berkoff's intended style of acting.

Berkoff's acting style is very physical and is often described as being expressionist. He believes in the actor as the most important element of any performance and although he does use costume, make-up, light and sound (mainly made by the actors themselves) the actor is at the centre of all his work.¹ Berkoff has actually played the role of Mr Samsa himself in a 1986 production having originally played the role of Gregor in an earlier production. I would want to be as faithful to Berkoff's physical style as possible but I have to confess that the sheer stamina necessary to perform in the heightened physical style is extraordinary. Mr Samsa is a repulsive character, he is greedy and lazy and has few paternal qualities. Gregor's transformation only affects Mr Samsa in so far as he can no longer afford beer and cigars; he shows no regard for Gregor and is the one who gives Gregor his death blow when he throws the apple at him.

At the beginning of this sequence, I am hanging in Gregor's cage while 'Gregor walks to work'. I will have my legs hooked over one of the bars at the top of the cage and use my arms to help me swing back and forth in time with Gregor's walking on the spot. Then I will gently lower myself onto the base of the cage and begin to roughly push Gregor around the stage telling him 'don't be lazy'. I will twist my body round in a contorted way as I say this and look Gregor directly in the face, then stretch my legs out in front of me before placing them on the ground just in front of him.

When I throw the apple at Gregor I will do an exaggerated mime, pulling my right arm back over my head as far as it will go like a fast bowler and I will run up before releasing the 'apple' and then bend over with my hands on my knees as if watching the parabola of the apple. As Gregor reacts to the missile, I will walk over to him with exaggerated high knee steps and then with the others, stand over him muttering and I will shake my head in an exaggerated way.

When the Lodgers arrive, the audience will see a new Mr Samsa. I will plaster a false smile across my face and speak in a sickly sweet tone as I assure the Lodgers that we are 'very friendly' and that we will 'do our best'. The audience have only ever heard Mr Samsa goading Gregor, so this will be effective.

Berkoff's acting style relies on exaggeration and a stretching of the muscles behind every movement. All actions need to be precise and the delivery of the lines also has to be muscular and sinewy.

Word Count: 474

Quotations: 4

Commentary

This is also quite a theoretical answer; the student shows understanding of Berkoff's intended style of acting but offers insufficient detailed description of how the role of Mr Samsa might be performed to exemplify that style. The offered practical ideas are generally appropriate to Mr Samsa's role in this extract, but the ideas are underdeveloped. The answer is relatively brief. A 3 The answer is straightforward and pertinent. Occasionally creative ideas, but lacking detail and slightly uneven as an interpretation. There is secure theoretical understanding of Berkoff's style which helps to support a few specific performance ideas.

Band: High Band 3

17.3 As a designer, outline your ideas for lighting or sound for this extract. Explain and justify how these would help to create your preferred effects at this point in the play.

As a sound designer for this extract I would want to create the effect of an increasingly surreal experience for the audience and also support the frantic pace of the action. I would want to shock them during the extract by the suddenness and intensity of some of the effects; but also make some of the action amusing through the use of sound. I would start the extract with the sound of a series of different 'alarm' clocks going off, first a digital beep, then a traditional ringing, finally a crazy cuckoo clock sound. I would use surround sound speakers in the auditorium, so that the audience would be surrounded by the insane noise of alarm clocks for about 30 seconds before Mr Samsa booms out, 'Work, Gregor, time to get up'.

When Greta says 'four o'clock' I would fade in the chimes of church bell ringing four. Then when Mrs Samsa says 'Hurry, Hurry, Hurry' I will have the sound of whip-cracking faded up and then down to be replaced by Gregor's accelerated heart beats as he begins running on the spot. This would then continue through the mime sequence of Gregor running frantically for the train.

I would then have Gregor's scream, when he is hit by the apple amplified and on reverb as it echoes through the auditorium, shocking the audience by its intensity and by the length of the agonised scream.

Then I would have absolute silence for the next 20 seconds before the mime continues. Mrs Samsa takes Gregor back to his room and the dream sequence

ends. I would want the mime of Mrs Samsa comforting Gregor to last for about a minute, then as the lights fade down and then suddenly snap up to dazzling brightness I would have the knocks of the Lodgers – three sharp raps with a door knocker – ring through the auditorium to, hopefully, shock the audience once more and make them jump.

I would have a signature sound for the Lodgers when they appear like the snuffling of pigs in a trough which would be recorded and played softly through the entire section when they are on stage. This would help the audience to identify the Lodgers with pigs – to match their masks – and help define the 3rd Lodger's snort as being distinctly porcine.

When Mr Samsa is warning the Lodgers that they 'keep a pet in the back room' I would fade in, in quick succession' the sounds of a cat meowing, then a dog barking, then a horse whinnying, then a monkey screeching, then a bear growling, then a lion roaring while the Lodgers stand with open mouths before saying in canon, 'Oh Yes?' and this would be a comical if surreal moment for the audience.

When they go on to say 'we're fond of pets' I would bring up the scratchy amplified sound of cockroaches scampering for about five seconds and then cut to silence before Mrs Samsa's line, 'I'll show you to your quarters, then'.

I believe these sound effects would really support the action in this extract and continue the effect of the audience being engulfed by Gregor's experience that would have been part of the production from the start.

Word Count: 536

Quotations: 7 Commentary

The student's ideas are well focused on the question and they are creative. The student sets out appropriate intentions and ideas are unified and workable.

AO3 The answer is assured and perceptive and includes some very creative ideas that are consonant with the play as a whole. No explicit reference to context but ideas are appropriate to Berkoff's style. Text is used well to locate the sound effects and support the answer.

Band: Band 5/4 cusp

Section C

Live Theatre

For your live theatre essay, you will be asked to describe and evaluate a live piece of theatre that you have seen. This can be LIVE in an actual theatre or a LIVE STREAMING of a piece of theatre. It's really important to choose a piece of theatre **that you enjoyed** and that you can EASILY ACCESS online- even if you saw it live in a theatre.

Use your subscription to Digital Theatre Plus and Youtube and Vevo as your key sources of STREAMED live theatre. (See this Handbook p.1 for log-in details).

We strongly recommend that you structure your essay in six paragraphs- like this:

P1= General introduction to the show- ZOOMED OUT

P2= General introduction to your focus (actor or designer)- ZOOMED OUT

P3= Selected moment 1- ZOOMED IN

P4= Selected moment 2- ZOOMED IN

P5= Selected moment 3- ZOOMED IN

P6= Conclusions- ZOOMED OUT

Live Theatre Essay Structure. AO3- Describe (12) AO4- Evaluate/Analyse (20)

Paragraph 1- General Introduction. Refer to focus of question. ZOOMED OUT.

Model writing:

*I went to see...at...performed by...The story focused on...The production was generally presented naturalistically with some elements of physical theatre, on a thrust stage with actors playing multiple roles. The cast very effectively created different moods and atmospheres through skillful but simple vocal/physical techniques. The cast used their skills in combination with very flexible settings, props and costumes in order to quickly **alter the mood and atmosphere**. Visible transitions were smooth and seamless, often accompanied by upbeat music which also aided swift changes of **mood**. Actors quickly changed their style of presentation too, moving from intimate scenes between two characters to ensemble scenes with a lighter **tone**.*

Para 2- Identify focus and give examples for the whole performance. ZOOMED OUT.

Model writing:

*I will be focusing on the actor Joan Smith who played multiple roles throughout the show. These included the central protagonist Laura as well as various minor comic roles. **For example**, as Laura, Smith always used a wide, open posture with palms facing up to portray her ability to relate to others and feel empathy. Her voice was Received Pronunciation and was delivered in a consistently calm and reassuring tone. This gave her character great dignity and it was clear that the audience respected her.*

Paragraph 3- Selected moment one. ZOOMED IN**Model writing:**

*Smith also played a waitress in the restaurant scene, where the focus was on the characters of Peter and Emma who were arguing. In this scene, Smith completely transformed herself into an unsympathetic and lazy character. **For example**, whilst watching the central characters stage left, she was biting her nails and leaning against a wall. Her facial expression portrayed boredom. This communicated her lazy and insolent attitude to her job and helped create humour for the audience in an otherwise tense scene.*

Paragraph 4- Selected moment two. ZOOMED IN.**Model writing:**

*In another scene Smith played a ticket collector. Although this was a functional character in only one scene, she still used her physicality and voice to create another distinct person. **For example**, the broad Yorkshire accent and smiley face immediately communicated friendliness to the audience. This was aided by her upright posture which showed she was attentive to her customers.*

Paragraph 5- Selected moment three. ZOOMED IN.

Model writing- *In role as Hermione, Smith also used effective physical skills, especially in her movements on stage. She used a scooter to travel around stage, saying 'yay' when doing so. Scooters are often seen as quite childlike, so...*

Paragraph 6- Conclusions. Return to your FOCUS. ZOOMED OUT.

Model writing: *In conclusion, Smith and her fellow performers created an excellent show which moved swiftly and seamlessly between complex settings in multiple locations whilst consistently communicating a clear mood and tone for the audience. As these moods were so contrasting, the audience were on an emotional rollercoaster and the intensity of the piece never let up from start to finish. The level of skill was exemplary throughout.*

Exemplar!**Here's a really good example of what that might look like:**

Briefly explain the ways in which one or more performer(s) used their performance skills in order to convey emotions at particular moments. Analyse and evaluate how this contributed to the total dramatic effectiveness of the production.

P1) Our Country's Good, Bolton Octagon Our Country's Good is a play set in 1787 written by Timberlake Wertenbaker about convicts going from England to Australia. It has naturalistic acting with epic theatre conventions such as costume changes on stage. The convicts rehearse for a play, The Recruiting Officer in this play and the redemptive power of art changes them into better people and brings the convicts together.

P2) I am going to write about one of the performers, Cairan Owens, who played Major Robbie Ross, a sadistic officer, hostile to the convicts as well as to the Governor's aims to rehabilitate them into society.

P3) In Act 1 Scene 6, the Authorities discuss the merits of the theatre. All the officers are arguing about The Recruiting Officer going ahead, proposed by Ralph. Major Robbie Ross (Cairan Owens) replies to this suggestion with 'And you say you want these contumelious convicts to act in this play. The convicts!' he delivered this line in disbelief and horror to show he despises the idea. He leant forward on his chair to really address Ralph and be nearer and more threatening, shown through proxemics and an aggressive facial expression. He growled 'The convicts' to himself in a disgusted tone with a lower volume when repeated and had a tone of loathing just thinking about the convicts; facially his brows were furrowed and he shook his head in disbelief. Owens was fully convincing in conveying his emotion of disgust for the convicts as well as his complete contempt towards Ralph. Owens' main eye contact was with Ralph to threaten him and make him say 'no' to the play. He clearly loathed the second lieutenant and looked down upon him both as a 'junior' and as a champion for the play. Owens' performance skills were superb and his creation of an aggressive opponent to Ralph contributed to the total effectiveness of the play, since he exuded his feelings of contempt for Ralph whenever they came into contact with one another throughout the play.

P4) In Act 1 Scene 11, in the 'First Rehearsal' Robbie Ross ignores Ralph's authority over the convicts and he spoke to him dismissively; when Ralph objects to the presence of Ross and Campbell telling them that they are interrupting him when he is rehearsing, Owens mimicked Ralph's slightly effeminate tone, exaggerated it and added a lisp when he echoed 'Rehearsing! Rehearsing' then he made a mock curtsy before wheeling round to confront him about the escaped convicts. Ross insults each of the would-be actors one by one. Owens said 'Liz Morden, you will be tried for stealing from the stores. You know the punishment? (pause) Death by hanging' which he said by delivering the line with a low volume, with an almost gleeful tone to suggest his sadistic nature. He emphasised 'Know' to show he enjoys knowing her fate, which I personally felt made me hate him more as he enjoys this. His emotion of self-satisfaction was reflected in a sly smile to himself. He walked straight up to Liz slowly, creating tension and showed that he was pleased to be able to taunt her; he wants a reaction from her by taking long definite strides to make her aware of his presence. He looked at her directly in the eyes, boring into her with an unpleasant hint of a smile. These made the words sound more threatening and personal during the confrontation and I felt horror and shock at his attitude to tormenting the convicts. The tension that Owens created as he savoured his mental torture of Liz added to the terror of the situation and the fact he enjoys it makes the audience sympathise with Liz. This was really effective in making the audience see things from the perspective of the convicts and this was clearly the writer's aim, so this was really important in contributing to the total effectiveness of the production. Owens uses acting skills to get a response of disgust from the audience at his behavior and his callous emotions towards the convicts. In the same scene he humiliates Mary Brenham, straight after, with 'where's your tattoo Brenham? Show us, I can't see it.

Show us; if you can't manage, I'll help you'. As he knows this tattoo is on her thigh he is purposefully making Mary feel weak by physically exposing herself. This was particularly emotional and memorable. There was suspense as she lifts up her skirt higher. Ross stood close to Mary, with a lecherous expression on his face, making her (and the audience) feel uncomfortable as he sexually degraded her. This made the audience feel sympathetic to the women of the colony who were just seen as whores and for sex. The close proxemics showed how much he enjoyed intimidating a helpless woman as he trapped her. Owens paused on each line, making the audience feel uncomfortable with Mary tense and rigid. He delivered the line quietly with a low and comforting tone. He kept direct eye contact with a serious and cold glare, further making the audience feel tense, horrified and feel sympathy for Brenham being made to show her tattoo against her will; this was very effective as Owens brought across an atmosphere of terror and intimidation, combined with a sense of sexual pleasure, making the moment intense and horrible to watch. Owens was successful here as elsewhere in creating a memorable character that the audience loved to hate!

P5) In Act 2 Scene 10 during the questioning of Liz, she is brought into court and Governor Phillips mentions to Robbie how he is anxious about hanging the first woman in the colony so wants the truth about her theft. Owens replies 'Truth! We have 800 thieves, perjurers, forgers, murders, liars, escapers, rapists, whores, coiners in this scrub-ridden dust-driven, thunder-bolted, savage-run, cretinous colony' showing, for the first time, his frustration¹⁴ with the system and actually making the audience feel slightly sympathetic for the strong character finally reaching his limit and breaking down. Owens sat DSR with his shoulders hunched forward closing himself up with physical tension. He was very still and has his legs open with a stick between them on the ground being held. His eyes were locked down on the ground with concentration, as if in deep thought and calculating. He emphasised each word and his volume rises as he gets near to the end of the list until he shouts 'savage colony'. His pitch was high showing frustration and anger. He had an aggressive tone filled with frustration and over pronouncing each word, articulating the consonants to show his disgust. He almost had to stop himself ranting; slowing down his heart rate deliberately and taking a breath, which showed the audience his anger and upset. He had no eye contact with the other characters which is different to his controlled glare, before. He delivered the lines with passion and becomes teary where Campbell standing behind touched his shoulder in reassurance. He delivered the words full of weight, feeling the filth and disgust of the type of convicts here and brows furrowed to show his facial tension and disapproval. Feeling each word makes the audience feel sympathy for Ross as he is having a meltdown of finally realising the kind of people he has to put up with. I felt particularly sympathetic in this moment as I finally understood why he feels such disgust and anger. This made a huge contribution to the effectiveness of the production as a whole as it revealed that it was not only the convicts who were suffering in the colony.

P6) To conclude, Cairan Owens successfully played the character of Robbie Ross to convey, as well as to instil in the audience, a wide range of emotions. This was done by his intimidating interactions both with the convicts and with his fellow officers; he made the audience fear him, but also, finally, to understand him; which was a significant achievement.

Word Count: 1,321

Quotations: 0

Commentary This is an assured and focused response to the demands of the question. The student understands the emotions that Ross was expressing/suppressing and offers several useful examples of where and how these emotions were conveyed. There is some useful context offered for the particular moments selected, which are identified very clearly. The student writes enthusiastically about the skills of the actor, who is referred to by name, throughout.

AO3 Focused knowledge and understanding of the role played by the chosen actor; there is some reference to the style of production but this aspect lacks development. The student has considered the aims of the production team. Focused attention is given to how meaning was created by the performer.

Band: Low Band 5

AO4 The student offers some very precise details about the methods used to convey emotions and has made a good choice of moment to support the assessments. The answer is personal and enthusiastic and offers some perceptive evaluation and analysis of how the actor contributed to the total effectiveness of the production.

Band: Low Band 5

End of Yr12- Summer work and revision essays.

At the end of year 1 you will have a good grounding in the two set play texts and will have practiced several essays for all three sections of the written exam.

However, practice makes perfect!

Your teachers will be setting you two practice essays for the summer, for each of the three sections. You **MUST** complete **ONE** of those before the September return in year 13, but keener students may **CHOOSE** to do both of these essays- for each section.

Here are your practice essay choices:

Antigone: Chose and complete at least ONE of the following TWO essays

01 As a director, explain how you would stage the first Choral ode and Creon's first address to the Chorus in order to create your preferred effects. [The section ends with the entrance of the Sentry, who, in some editions is known as the Guard.] You must make specific reference to the social, cultural **and/or** historical context of Antigone in your answer.

02 Explain how you would perform the role of Haemon during his interaction with Creon, in order to reveal his changing attitude(s) towards his father. You must make specific reference to the social, cultural **and/or** historical context of Antigone in your answer.

Metamorphosis: Chose and complete at least ONE of the following TWO sets of 3 mini-essays.

ONE

The given extract is page 79 and page 80 of the play

1) Explain and justify how you would direct the performers from the opening stage directions of the play to the bottom of page 79 of the printed extract in order to introduce the key differences between the individual family members.

2) As a performer, explain and justify how you would perform the role of Gregor in order to demonstrate the contrast between your normal self and your beetle transformation.

3) As a designer of **LIGHTING AND SOUND**, explain how you would use both elements of your role to establish the abstract and surreal style of the play.

TWO

The given extract is from the stage directions beginning with the words “*They all stare ahead*” at the bottom of page 101 until the last line of the stage directions at the top of page 103 ending in the words “*A reflection of the previous thought.*”

- 1) Explain and justify how you would direct the performers from the beginning of the extract until Mr. Samsa’s line beginning with “The Conservatorium!” halfway down page 102, in order to highlight the upbeat and celebratory mood of the scene.
- 2) As a performer, explain and justify how you would perform the role of Greta in order to demonstrate the contrast between her dream of playing professional music and the reality of life in her family’s flat.
- 3) As a Set designer, explain how you would use the depth of the stage in order to separate Gregor from his family and the past from the present.

Live Theatre: Chose and complete at least ONE of the following TWO essays

01 Explain how **two or more** performers used impressive or surprising movement and/or physical skills at particular moments in **one** live production that you have seen. Analyse and evaluate how this contributed to the total dramatic effectiveness of the production.




02 Explain how the performers used vocal and physical skills to entertain or to thrill the audience in **one** live production at particular moments. Analyse and evaluate how this contributed to the total dramatic effectiveness of the production.

Glossary of Theatre Terms & Useful Information.

Technical Elements:

Stage Locations... always from the actor's perspective!

For end-on staging.

STAGE WINGS	Upstage Right	Upstage Centre	Upstage Left	STAGE WINGS
	Centre Stage Right	Centre Stage	Centre Stage left	
	Downstage Right	Downstage Centre	Downstage Left	
				Location of stage manager
AISLE	PROSCENIUM ARCH			AISLE
	APRON or Forestage			
	AUDIENCE 	AUDIENCE 	AUDIENCE 	

Setting features...

Composite setting: A setting that remains the same throughout the show. Other scenic elements could be added to it, but the basic design is fixed.

Flying: Literally flying in a piece of setting or furniture from above the stage in the fly-tower. Usually this is a simple object like a sign or a candelabra. It's all about getting scenes changed smooth and quick.

Trapdoor: A hole in the stage, usually a square that is introduced and can be taken away. It can be used as a pit, an entrance from under the ground, an exit or a chamber like a prison cell.

Truck: A setting or scenic object that is wheeled into position by stage hands or actors. For example, a kitchen, a prison cell, a platform in which a band can stand.

Banner: Usually with a slogan or scene name on it. Sometimes used in Brechtian style theatre.

Period/non-period: Whether a design conforms accurately to a period in time- for example 1935 in 'The 39 Steps'. This is a period design.

Cyclorama: A white screen upstage, sometimes straight, sometimes curved on which light or images can be projected. For example, it can be used to create the effect of a moonlit sky.

Gauze: A screen which close up looks like a mesh or sieve. It is used to hide or reveal something, usually upstage. It works with the direction of lighting.

Screen: Usually white, sometimes used for shadow shows upstage.

Backdrop: A huge canvas screen on the upstage wall of the stage used to create a scene like a landscape.

Projections: Usually text, still or moving images projected onto actors or the cyclorama.

Tabs: Any stage curtain. Example are- wings tabs, front tabs.

Wings: The area off stage extreme left and right of an end on or thrust stage where actors and technicians prepare for the next scene.

Lighting features ...LX

Gel: A coloured stencil placed on a square gel frame to create a coloured light. For example, blue for the moon.

Gobo- A stencil placed in front of the lens of a light to create a pattern on the stage. For example, prison bars.

Spot-light or Profile: A light with a flexible lens used to focus on a particular part of the stage.

Parcan: A non-focusable light used to create a huge surge of light.

Follow spot: A super large profile used to follow an actor- usually in a solo musical number.

Wash: When the whole stage is lit with the same colour.

Crossfade: When two different lighting stage exchange position- one going out, one coming in.

Snap: An abrupt change of lighting with no timed blending.

Barn door: The frame around a profile used to create sharp edges to a light.

Mover: A light aided with a computer that can move across the stage.

Birdy: Small bird sized lights used to pick out detail or used on the floor to light upwards.

LED: Most modern lights with LED lenses. Brighter and more powerful. Much more efficient.

Sound features...FX

Diegetic: A realistic sound effect that is natural and fits the scene and location. For example, birdsong in a garden.

Non-diegetic: A non-realistic sound effect that does not sound natural or fit the location. For example, white noise in a garden.

Live sound: Sound played live on stage, sometimes amplified, sometimes accompanied by recorded sound.

Recorded: A piece of music or a sound effect pre-recorded and played over the show.

Sound Q: A change of sound instigated or new effect triggered by the lighting operator.

Layered sound: A number of different sound layered over each other and blended.

Other staging devices...

Puppetry: An object representing a character or scene- usually hand held.

Silhouette: Usually performed behind a white screen creating shadows or outlines of characters to tell the story.

Props: Any object held by and actor as part of the action. For example, a bottle.

Costume...

Costume Designer: The person that designs the costume.

Wardrobe: The place where costume is stored.

Period/non-period: Whether a costume is designed to represent a period of time. For example, the 1930s.

Eclectic: A costume blend that uses different periods and styles to create a unique effect.

Realistic: Costume created to look a real/authentic as possible.

Stylistic: Costume created to look larger than life or exaggerated.

Symbolic: Costume created to represent something. For example a red shroud to symbolise death.

Make Up, wigs, jewellery, accessories.

Performance elements:

Acting Skills...

Voice- Pitch / Pace / Pause / Accent / dialect /volume / tone / resonance / articulation / tempo / intonation / emphasis.

Movement – Body language / posture / pose / poise / weight / staccato / legato / Facial Expressions / Proxemics / Eye contact / Gait / Gestures / Relationships / Interaction.

Not doing – stillness, pause, silence, beats, withdrawal of physical/eye contact.

Stage Configurations

In the Round: The audience are seated in a circle facing in.



End On: The audience are seated facing the stage area straight on (as above)



Traverse: The audience are either side of the stage area. (Like a catwalk)



Thrust: Audience on 3 sides- stage in the middle. The stage is called 'the thrust.'



Promenade- The audience is standing and moves to different scenes.



Professional Roles in the Theatre:

Director:

The person who decides on the overall artistic aesthetic/content of the show. They create the form, shape and look of the show, support actors in the interpretation of character and language. They collaborate with all designers to create a coherent overall look.

Producer:

The person who organises the finances and logistics of putting the show together.

Theatre Manager:

The person in charge of the theatre building and the health and safety of staff and theatre goers.

Front of House Manager:

In charge of the box office, ticket sales, refunds, bringing people safely in and out of the theatre, the presentation of marketing materials, café, shop and other facilities outside of the theatre.

Stage Manager (SM):

The Head of the Stage Management team comprising the deputy stage manager (DSM) and assistant stage manager (ASM). Depending on the needs of the production, there may be a team of stagehands, usually casual employees. Depending on the size of the company/circumstances, the SM may also act as ASM and DSM.

Deputy Stage Manager (DSM):

In the UK, the DSM is often “on the book” – that is, they are in charge of calling all of the technical and actor cues during the show, usually using a headset communications system and/or a system of cue lights. The DSM is often also in rehearsal working with the director to prepare the prompt book. Known in some places as a Stage Director or Showcaller.

Assistant Stage Manager (ASM):

Usually shortened to ASM, the assistant stage manager is the most junior member of the Stage Management team, and is often in charge of sourcing and running Properties during the run of a show. She or he is also a member of the stage ‘crew’.

Costume Designer

The person who designs and coordinates the costumes for the show. Make up, accessories and wigs are part of the design but would not be ‘put on’ by the costume designer for the show.

Wardrobe Assistant/Manager:

In charge of the storage, repair, and safe return of costumes before, during and after shows.

Sound Designer/Operator

The person who designs and coordinates the sound for the show. This may include microphones, sound effects, amplification. Depending on the size of the company/show, they may also operate and control sound during the show.

Lighting Designer/Operator.

The person who designs and coordinates all forms of lighting the show including the ‘house lights’ for the audience to come in and out. This may include multi-media, projection, electric and ‘authentic’ lighting like candles or lanterns. Depending on the size of the company/show, they may also operate and control lighting during the show.

Performer: Anyone who performs including actor, dancer, singer, musician. Or any combination of these!

Swing: A dancer/actor who performs as a chorus member in a musical theatre show.

Understudy: An actor who is a substitute for an actor

Other important theatre words...

Styles...

Stylised

Naturalistic

Physical Theatre: Using the body/bodies interacting to tell the story or the emotion of the character.

Comedy

Tragedy

Satire: Making fun of someone or a group. Usually satire is aimed at the powerful or corrupt.

Verbatim: Using the voices and language of real people to create the text of a show in an attempt to create authenticity.

Genre...

Naturalism: An attempt to create a drama that is as 'real' as possible. Based on truthful feelings and situations.

Comedy – black comedy/ sit com/ rom com/slapstick/parody/pastiche/spoof

Horror

Documentary

Expressionism: Highlighting emotions

Murder Mystery/Thriller

General Words...

Cues

Rehearsal

Refine / develop / respond to stimulus

Blocking / Space, Atmosphere / mood / action- reaction

Rehearsal Techniques...

Improvisation

Hot Seating

Experimenting

Directing

Audience Response

Forum Theatre: Setting up a scenario and using the audience to respond as performer.

Still Images

Read through, Run through, Dress rehearsal, Tech rehearsal

Role on the Wall.

Key Words with definitions:

Styles, theatrical features and structures...

- Naturalistic: The performance is as close to real life as possible.
- Non-naturalistic: The performance is more theatrical and stylised and tells the story using a variety of techniques such as flashbacks; direct address to the audience; multiple role-play.
- Physical Theatre: This means the performance is literally more physical. To tell the story the performers focus on their bodies. E.g. Mask work, creating a forest using the bodies of the performers, Mime...
- Satire: Making fun of someone or a group. Usually satire is aimed at the powerful or corrupt.
- Verbatim: Using the voices and language of real people to create the text of a show in an attempt to create authenticity.
- Theatre in Education (TIE): A play that is created to teach a particular lesson. Often toured round schools and to young people. Often followed by a workshop or discussion about the topic. Genres of Drama
- Comedy: The story shown is funny and ends happily. There are many types of comedy...
- Slapstick: Physical comedy that centres around accidents, mock fights and humiliation
- Tragedy: The story shown is sad and usually involves the death or downfall of its main character/s.
- Gritty Realism: About real, usually working class, poor people.
- Historical Drama: Set in a particular historical period
- Docudrama: Looking like a documentary with reconstructions (like 'Crimewatch')
- Target Audience: The sort of people the play is aimed at
- Message: What the play intends the audience to have learned or to think about.
- Themes: The general ideas that the play looks at. Ways of Telling the story
- Episodic: A play is episodic when it shows particular events (episodes) that happen in the course of a long period of time, not necessarily in the order that they happen. E.g. Blood Brothers shows the key events that happen to a pair of twins from the moment they are born to the moment they die
- Linear Narrative: A play has a linear narrative when the story is told in the order that events happen. Each scene normally links from the last one and the story is over a relatively short period of time.

- Framing Device: A scene that goes at the beginning and end to help the audience get into the theme of the play.
 - Holding Scene: a scene that literally holds the rest of the play together. It is the most important scene in the play without which the rest would not make sense.
 - Flashback/ forward: The scene shows an event that happens earlier in the story or later in the story.
 - Split Scene: Two connected scenes going on at the same time. Uses a freezing device to shift the focus of attention between them. Can be useful to show two points of view about the same event in the story.
 - Narration: Telling the story directly to the audience either from within a character (narration from within) or in the role of a narrator.
 - Monologue: A character has a fairly long speech that gives the audience a lot more information about him/herself or the story. A monologue can give information that you wouldn't necessarily expect a person to say out loud.
 - Chorus: A character or characters that talk about events that have happened and usually say what they think about it. This is another way of telling part of the story without having to act it out in full.
 - Freeze Frame/Thoughts Out Loud: The performance is frozen and the characters break out of the action to tell the audience directly what they are thinking or to comment on what is happening.
 - Mime: Showing what happens through the use of detailed movement without speaking.
- Structure of The Scene
- Setting the Scene: Introducing the characters, place, time and situation.
 - Exposition: Tells the story up to the point when the play starts. What the audience needs to know.
 - Reportage: When action is told to the audience as story rather than presented as action on stage.
 - Introduce the Dilemma: Something starts to go wrong or a problem occurs.
 - Develop the tension: Tension builds. Things get worse and worse causing the audience to literally get 'tense' wondering what will happen next.
 - Climax: The height of the scene where the problem comes to a head. The emotions are very extreme: extremely funny, extremely sad, extremely shocking etc.
 - Resolution: How the situation ends. Usually the characters have changed as a result. A new beginning.
 - Transitions: The movements between scenes. How these are carried out in a manner that keeps the audience interested and maintains the atmosphere.
 - Anti-climax: this is where tension builds to the point where it looks like something dramatic is about to happen but then it doesn't. It's used a lot in comedy when somebody says something funny to defuse the tension.
- Creating a Character
- Given Circumstances: What we already know about the character from the text.

- Objective: What the character wants in the play. (This will influence how the character acts and reacts to get it)
- Arc: The emotional journey of the character. How the character changes from the beginning of the play to the end.
- Status: How much power and importance the character has. (High or low)
- Emotional Memory: Finding moments in the actors' life where he/she felt the same or similar to the character and trying to remember what it felt like.
- Inner Dramatic Dialogue: The thoughts going through the characters mind. This can be very different from what they are actually saying and will make for a much more interesting performance.
- Empathy: Being able to get inside the character to think and feel as they do.
- Enter: To come onto the stage
- Exit: To leave the stage
- Levels: The height of the character or the positioning compared to others.

Actor/performer Techniques...

- Physicality: How the actor creates meaning with the body
- Gesture: a movement made with the hand/arm/head that means a particular thing. E.g thumbs up.
- Facial Expression: the expression on the face. It needs an adjective such as 'fierce' or 'sad'. Don't just talk about 'good' or 'lots'..
- Vocal Expression: How the actor creates meaning with the voice not just words.
- Pitch (high or low); Pace (Speed); Projection (Volume) and Emphasis (Stressed words)
- Signature Gesture: A mannerism or repeated gesture that gives an indication about the character's personality and creates interest.
- Vocal Mannerism: As above but for the voice.
- Reactions: How the character reacts to others (especially when not speaking).
- Performance Energy: the amount of effort put into the performance.
- Tone: A general description of the voice. E.g. a sarcastic tone of voice.
- Intonation: How certain words and sounds in the voice are stressed.
- Inflection: How the voice moves up or down in pitch through the structure of a sentence.

Key Texts and suggested reading.

Compulsory Texts:

Antigone by Sophocles- (Methuen Drama) Translated by Don Taylor
ISBN 978-0-413-77604-4

The Trial, Metamorphosis, The Penal Colony by Steven Berkoff
ISBN 0-906399-84-X

The Collected Short Stories of Franz Kafka (Vintage)
9780749399467

Key Texts

We strongly recommend to borrow/buy and read the following texts to develop your broader understanding of A Level Drama:

The Theatre and Its Double by Antonin Artaud

Oedipus Rex by Sophocles

Oedipus at Colonus by Sophocles

Theatre Directions by Jonathan Neelands and Warwick Dobson

The Caucasian Chalk Circle by Bertolt Brecht.

The Brecht Sourcebook Edited by Carol Martin and Henry Bial