

GCE  
Drama Example Materials

Candidate A

Edexcel  
GCE Drama 6DR03  
Unit 3: Exploration of Dramatic Performance  
2009

Centre Name	Sample school	Centre No.	12345	Centre Use Only		Edexcel Use Only
Candidate Name	<b>JAKE (A)</b> Practice Student	Candidate No.	9876	Performance	/15	/15
Stimulus or script used	<b>A Midsummer Night's Dream</b>	Group Number	<b>1</b>	Development and structure	/15	/15
<b>6DR03 - Unit3 Exploration of Dramatic Performance</b>		<b>Edexcel</b>  <b>COURSEWORK RECORD CARD &amp; AUTHENTICATION SHEET</b>  <b>ADVANCED GCE DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES JUNE 2010</b>		SWED:		
				Research and Exploration	/15	/15
				Evaluation	/15	/15
				<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>/60</b>	<b>/60</b>

**TEACHER-EXAMINER COMMENTS**

**Development and Structure:**

Jake was instrumental in planning and structuring the entire piece. He patiently, skilfully and intelligently lead the other forward in developing the initial idea of the artist's studio right through to the direction of the performance. His vision, commitment and involvement was outstanding and never wavered in supporting the others in realising their potential. He couldn't have contributed any more in terms of creativity and energy.

**Performance:**

A well crafted and focussed performance, Jake was a convincing and engaging Lysander. He commanded audience attention while supporting others. His 'still' moments were superbly controlled while his movements were detailed and well judged gestures and many small details that communicated much in terms of character and understanding of the role.

**SWED: Research and Exploration/ Evaluation**

Stronger on Evaluation than Research and Exploration, Jake has present a well written SWED. It is a pity he didn't include more about the Research and Exploration I know he did, this lack of evidence regarding the research he did, keeps this area in Band 2. However, evaluation is implicit and evident throughout all sections with reflective balanced observations that show an excellent understanding of the devising process.

**AUTHENTICATION**

**Candidate's declaration:**

I declare that I have produced the work involved without external assistance apart from any which is acceptable under the scheme of assessment and is recorded. I declare that I have accurately entered the correct word count in the above "Word Count" box.

WORD COUNT
Supporting Written Evidence Document
3.004 words

Signature: **A Student**

Date: 1.04.10

**Teacher-Examiner's declaration:**

I declare that the student's activities have been kept under regular supervision and that, to the best of my knowledge, no assistance has been given apart from any which is acceptable under the scheme of assessment and has been identified and recorded, and that the final submission has been produced under controlled conditions.

Signature: **A Teacher**

Date: 3.04.10

# A.

## SWED- Painted Blind- Jake Waring (Lysander)

### 1) How is the material being researched and developed at significant stages during the process of creating drama?

When we first read *Midsummer Night's Dream*, we looked at different ways of exploring the text through practical improvisations. For example, initially we looked at the 'Workmen' scenes, focusing on various ways in which we could communicate with our audience, specifically through humour, as this is a factor inherent in these scenes. As expected, we soon discovered that achieving comic effect is very hard to do. Added to this was a desire to focus on one particular thread of the plot, in order to keep our piece simple and clear. On deciding that we wouldn't use the 'Workmen' scenes, we were left with the 'Lovers' and the 'Fairies'. Through our reading of the play we wanted to utilize the poetic language of the Fairy scenes, much of which involves beautiful descriptions of nature. (*'Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead'*) Our epiphany came when we realised that much of what the fairies speak draws parallels and metaphors with the story of the lovers. For instance, Puck's line *'Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind, and therefore is winged cupid painted blind'*, reads as a narrative to the story of the lovers. We then researched ways in which we could cut the script in order to use lines spoken by the fairies to narrate the sub-plot of the lovers, which we had by now taken to be the main focus of our piece. We then discovered that much of the most appropriate lines we found were spoken by Puck. This seemed perfect considering our group of five, as we had now decided upon the four lovers plus Puck as a narrator. We did feel however that we needed to find a more suitable context for which Puck would be commentating on the action. In group discussion we considered the fact that, as a fairy, Puck has magic qualities, as he is able to control and manipulate those around him who are not fairies. This acknowledgement, when coupled to our appreciation of the colourful, descriptive language used by Puck, led us to the conclusion that we would should Puck as an 'Artist'. This also sat perfectly for the line we had chosen as the key about which our play would revolve; *'Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind, and therefore is winged cupid painted blind'*. This gave us a fresh sense of direction, as we scoured the text for ways in which we could involve Puck as an artist, 'painted' out the lovers' scenes. We certainly felt that this meant Puck would have to be a bridge between the action and the audience, and we all agreed this would involve direct address, where it might not normally have been. In performance, this proved to have the desired effect, as we managed to convey that Puck was an artist, sculpting and moulding the play for the audience, without adding any lines that differed from the original text. We did this by creating a set which was made to look like an artist's studio, with the lover's appearing as models ready for sculpting. We then used a thrust stage which meant that Puck could 'paint' the story directly in front of the audience. In performance, I felt this was communicated effectively, as we were able to create an intimate atmosphere with the audience. This meant that the story of the lovers was communicated to the audience in close proximity, but crucially Puck was

excellent knowledge + understanding of original text.

clear structure

Reference to title

Framing device

Really clear rationale and context as to how the piece developed.

able to break the fourth wall and take the audience on a journey, through the descriptive language we had cut from fairy scenes to be used in the tale of the four lovers. ✓

## 2) How effectively are you personally exploring and developing your role(s) ?

Although I like the speed and fluidity afforded by multi-roling, in this production, I only play the role of Lysander. At the start of the play, Lysander is in the enviable (or unenviable position) of being chased by both the young women, Helena & Hermia. Early on, I decided that he needed to be quite confident and buoyed up by this so from almost the first rehearsal, I gave him a real spring in his step. I wanted to portray him as an athletic Adonis but also very likeable, there was to be no trace of arrogance about him as although, no fool, he does need to look a bit daft, rather naive, on occasion. In order to communicate these things I wore comfortable clothing and either jazz shoes or white plimsolls. The white plimsolls were used in the actual performance as we made a conscience decision to colour match the eventual pairs. ✓ Lysander and Hermia in white, Demetrius and Helena in Black. I found the small studio space really restricting as I wanted to show how Lysander leapt about the palace and the forest. We chose to move into a small hall use<sup>d</sup> for dining and assemblies as practically this gave us lots of space and we were also able to get lots of art work up to create the sense of an artist's studio. ✓ By running round the space and playing energetic warm up games, I found that Lysander gained energy, status and a youthful air that gave him great confidence. ✓ Because we were keen to engage with the audience, one thing that I did rely on in developing the role was to look directly at the audience to either share my frustrations with them e.g. when Hermia bids my lie further away when I had hoped to sleep with her, I look at the audience as if to say 'Damn it, it was worth a go !' but this is only communicated with gesture and ✓ expression. I need to practice this before the actual exam so we regularly invited ✓ lower school classes in to watch our piece, they commented that sometimes I moved too quickly around the large set/space and so I sought to strike a balance between this confident energy while a slightly calmer, more mature role. ✓

yes.

tense ?

detailed examples.

## 3) How did you and your group explore the possibilities of form, structure and performance style?

Our piece has taken a stylized, non-naturalistic structure as a result of our exploration of ways to communicate the ideas in the play. In design, we are using an artist's 'studio space' to bridge the gap between the audience and the plot. We do however use certain naturalistic moments in communicating the narrative, for example, for much of the time that the lovers are engaged in dialogue. However, this is often broken by stylized movements or moments, such as after Lysander

and Hermia have said their romantic farewell, we slip as one into slow motion and circle each other. The audience hopefully will appreciate this not only as a theatrical device, but more as an embodiment of Puck the artists thoughts being played out before them. This is a perfect analogy for the style of our performance, as essentially, the majority of what is seen by the audience is through the eyes or thoughts of Puck. So essentially, we are able to switch instantly from naturalistic and truthful acting to stylized moments of drama which suspend disbelief and allow the audience to see directly into the mind of Puck, as he plays creatively with the story and the characters he paints in it. An effective moment we have developed is the scene we call the 'square scene'. This involves the four lovers forming four corners of a square which rotates as the balance of power, aggression and love sways throughout the dialogue. For example, as Lysander shouts abuse at Hermia- '*Get you gone you dwarf!*',- the square rotates one step around from the direction of Lysander towards Hermia, to symbolise that he is on the front foot as he says this. We explored the possibility of forming tableaux downstage in the thrust area of the stage throughout to show the current situation in the piece in a single image. However, this has proved to be more effective, when formed upstage in Puck's studio, as the lovers take the form of manikins which are waiting to be used in the play. However, the introduction of heart shaped cushions for each lover to use when in still image in the studio has meant that we can show symbolically the emotions of that character following the scene they have just been involved in, or the scene that is about to take place. I feel that this bold style and structure our piece has taken has proved to be effective in communicating the narrative to an audience, and specifically the idea that Puck is an artist controlling and manipulating the lovers merely as subjects throughout. This is only questioned at the very end, when as Puck exits having delivered the famous '*If we shadows have offended..*' speech, and the manikins/lovers, who he thought to have left lifeless, suddenly burst back into life and run off as free willing lovers.

clear explanation of difficult ideas.

Excellent grasp of how + why the play was structured.

#### 4) How did the work of established and recognised theatre practitioners, and/or the work of live theatre, influence the way in which your devised response developed?

We drew influences from Kneehigh Theatre Company, having seen many of their shows as a group over the past few years. Personally I have seen Tristan & Yseult, Nights at the Circus, Rapunzel, & Brief Encounter and it fair to say that there are things in our piece that connect directly back to these shows. We found an appreciation for the way in which they are able to communicate stories with an audience. Essentially, this love of story telling gives the company an incredible relationship with their audience. We were keen to look at techniques they used in order to go some way ourselves to achieving a dynamic method of telling a story, much like Kneehigh. We decided that we would employ this from the very beginning of the piece, with the four lovers bringing the audience into the performance space themselves. This is a device often used by Kneehigh, which potentially enables the company to develop an instant pathos with the audience.

great intention.

Kneehigh also have a belief that if something enables the company to communicate the story in an exciting and interesting way then it is valid. For this reason devices are often employed which would normally be seen as falling out of the context of the piece, for example the use of music from a different time period. Keeping the ideas of Kneehigh about how theatre should simply tell a story, we aimed to make our piece timeless. This enabled us to draw influences from different eras, genres and practitioners in order to create a piece of story telling. For example, the lovers wore either all white or all black costumes. This instantly gave the piece a timeless feel, allowing the audience to be immersed in the story without unnecessary distraction. It also gave a very clear representation that the colours should ultimately match. (i.e. Lysander and Hermia both wearing white, Demetrius and Helena both wearing black) This way of giving away clues and pointers as to how the story will or should unfold was an influence taken from research of the work of Bertolt Brecht. This technique can, for example, create instant tension, as the audience know from the start what should happen, though whether it will or not adds interest to the piece. In performance, we also used music as a means of communicating with the audience, specifically towards the end of the piece when the lovers performed a form of dance ritual, in which all the events of the play were shown through the medium of movement. The music we decided to use was 'Painted Black' by The Rolling Stones. Obviously, this time period did not tally with when the play was written, but drawing inspiration from Kneehigh we blended old with new and in performance this proved effective. Certain audience members clearly knew and enjoyed the song, but crucially we had chosen it primarily for the lyrics. 'Paint it Black' related to our piece in numerous ways. One example of this is that Puck magically makes Demetrius love Helena at the end. We saw this as a very interesting moral question, and as we had Demetrius and Helena both wearing black, we were trying to ask our audience whether they were truly in love, or whether Puck had merely *painted Demetrius black*, and furthermore, as winged cupid, had he 'painted blind'? *great connections made.*

**5) How successfully did your final performance communicate your aims and intentions for the piece to your audience?**

Our main aim, given the context of the play, was to entertain our audience with a love story. Of course, the play itself already contains all the elements for a farcical love story, but we made it our intention to communicate this to our audience in interesting ways which challenged the ideas of the play itself. This meant we had experimented with practice audiences throughout the rehearsal process in order to gain an understanding for what would be effective with an audience in actual performance. A specific example of how we wanted to communicate with the audience was clarity. We aimed to make the piece visually clear, with symbolic images and the use of colour adding to the impact and power of the piece. This was working on two levels, both enhancing the piece's impact visually, but also supporting the idea of Puck as an artist painting the story. I feel that in our final performance the piece certainly held the visual clarity

we had hoped for, specifically the use of simple black or white clothes, against red cushion hearts which we held in specific ways designed to further the audiences understanding of the way that character is feeling at any given time. For example, there is a moment where Demetrius is not involved directly in a scene, but is in still image in the 'studio space' upstage of the action, looking at his heart, symbolically showing that he is having to look at himself to try to understand what it is that he wants from love. In performance, I felt this effectively portrayed the emotions of characters to our audience, serving the purpose of a thought track without the use of speech or even, at times, movement. Our use of a thrust stage I felt aided the communication of the piece to our audience. It enabled us to not only interact with them in intimate surroundings, but also for them to interact with each other, as every member of the audience had a clear view of at least one other member of the audience's face at all times, due to our space layout and lighting. This gave the piece an interesting and somewhat exposed feel, as the audience's reactions may have been different than had they not been able to see each other. I feel this was effective for our particular piece, as it felt as though we were being instantly open with our audience, which may have made them feel slightly uncomfortable, but I felt this gave us a platform on which to build a story, a blank canvas, if you like!

This worked well.

#### 6) How effectively did the social, cultural, historical/political context of the piece communicate to the audience?

Socially, our piece aimed to communicate especially the theme of love, a timeless factor in society. As is the nature with Shakespeare, the themes and issues of human emotion become relevant no matter what time period or situation. This is one of the key reasons why Shakespeare's plays have endured. I feel that we effectively communicate the emotion of love, and although we only scraped the surface of its incredible complexity, I think our audience were able to relate to our characters, their situations and crucially their emotions. It was heartening to hear members of the audience, albeit biased, say that they hadn't thought of some of the characters as so immediate and understandable. Though we used many different techniques of communication, as mentioned earlier, by trying to relate the piece socially to a modern day audience, we looked to portray scenes between the lovers drawing on emotional truths within ourselves, much like the principles taught by Stanislavski in '*An Actor Prepares*'.

knowledge

We were careful to ensure any cultural references, specifically in design, were either simple or sat easily within the piece and felt relevant to our communication with the audience. Essentially, our audience was made up of parents, staff and our peers so while they were very supportive of us, we tried to bear them in mind when interpreting the play. For example, we positioned an easel and a lamp in the 'artist's studio' space. These were actual objects taken from our own everyday lives, but we felt they were a significant factor in showing how Puck (the artist) bridged a gap between the real world and the world of stories and fantasy. Our music was played through Puck's iPod, which was also in the studio.

space. This, along with the music played, was probably our boldest modern day reference. The iPod is such an iconic representation of modern times that we felt it would be the perfect device with which to draw constant links back to today's society. For instance, we were able to go from the ritual dance of the lovers, which took place in dreams and embodied a dreamlike state, to suddenly cutting off the music through Puck turning the iPod off. This enabled us to play with the audience to elicit responses from shock to humorous familiarity. Our piece had no political agenda, and only aimed to communicate to the audience on a level of emotional relation, though using social and cultural references as tools and devices in order to do so. We were aware that some of Shakespeare's plays have a political context but that felt a step too far (and possibly contrived) with 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. Overall, I felt that our version was sympathetic and respectful to the original while acknowledging the social, cultural and historical attributes of a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience.

Yes.

3,044 words



## Comments from the Moderator:

### *Candidate A (Jake)*

#### *Development & Structure:*

Looking at the teacher's notes, Jake has clearly been the group leader and the main generator of ideas. The marks awarded for this element should reflect what the teacher has written and would indicate that this is Band 1 work for this component.

#### *Performance:*

Jake commands audience attention and would appear to have the largest part in the group, not always an indicator of a high scoring candidate but in this instance, he is the strongest performer in this group. There are almost moments when the others look to him for the next cue and he moves with confidence and energy. Vocally he is very secure and delivers his lines with confidence. His small gestures and facial expressions communicate a great deal. We would place this in band 2.

#### *SWED:*

Firstly, it is a pity that Jake hasn't written more, the absence of almost 500 words feels like a lost opportunity. He writes well, with moments of real knowledge and understanding. However, there is a sense that this is quite rushed and there isn't sufficient detail about the earlier stages of research and development. There is certainly a sense of ownership in the written work and it is clear that he understands the source material and the interpretation they have developed. This is very good work with excellent features, it is NOT outstanding.