GCE

Drama Example Materials

Candidate E

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

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Centre Name	Sample school	Centre No.	12345	Centre Use Only		Edexcel Use Only
Candidate Name	Tom (E) Practice Student	Candidate No.	9872	Performance	/15	/15
Stimulus or script used	Kindertransport by Diane Samuels and the holocaust.	Group Number	2	Development and structure	/15	/15

6DR03 - Unit3 Exploration of Dramatic Performance	Edexcel COURSEWORK RECORD CARD & AUTHENTICATION SHEET ADVANCED GCE DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES JUNE 2010		

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SWED:			
Research and Exploration		/15	/15
Evaluation		/15	/15
TOTAL		/60	/60

TEACHER-EXAMINER COMMENTS

Development and Structure:
Tom was very involved with the D and S of the piece at all times. A careful listener, he was able to consider everyone in the group while making popular and sensible decisions to shape the piece overall. His ideas were always workable while being creative and imaginative e.g. the signs were his idea as was the staging of the piece. He made good use of other theatrical experiences he had to keep the group on track with exciting ideas that were viable.

Performance: Because Tom's main character was 'Government', he was well placed to use his physicality to show power and authority. However, he also wished to show that the government was powerless under a dictator so played his role with a stammer and was very flustered when he wanted to show he was weak. He communicated clearly to the audience conveying numerous intentions to really good effect. At all times, he remained subservient to the 'Dictator'.

SWED: Research and Exploration/ Evaluation
Tom spent a great deal of time researching both the content and the structure of the play they were developing. He made excellent use of 'Kindertransport' as a reference point as well as understanding and effectively using a range of Brechtian techniques. His SWED is slightly stronger on R & E than Evaluation as he tends to justify decisions that were made rather than how they were applied to the performance.

AUTHENTICATION

WORD COUNT
Supporting Written Evidence Document
3,464 words

Signature: Tom Student   Date: April 23rd 2010

Signature: Drama Teacher   Date: April 23rd 2010

SWED
Suggested Route 2

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

Our group was given the stimulus of the Holocaust. In order to help focus our ideas, we were also given the play 'Kindertransport' by Diane Samuels. ✓

Initially, we were taken aback by the sheer size of our task. The Holocaust is so broad a subject and spans such a vast array of different themes that we did not know where to begin. As touched upon in my answer to the first question, our group hoped to avoid creating a historically accurate piece. This was partly due to the vast numbers of successful Holocaust-inspired films, books and plays already out there as we knew we would be measured against them. The group also wanted to create a piece entirely of their own; from scratch and not restricted by historical facts. While we began thinking about the Holocaust, therefore, this soon developed into the idea of genocide as a whole. As a group, we discussed how any case of genocide first begins and, overwhelmingly, the response was that it stems from a dictatorship. Thus, we had the basis for our play; we would create our own dictatorship. ✓

In developing our stimulus and subsequent ideas, I took inspiration from one of my favourite books; 'Nineteen Eighty-four', by George Orwell. Just as the inner party manipulate the outer in the novel, we wanted the Dictator and Government to manipulate the public in our piece. The Holocaust was only allowed to happen because Hitler and his government gained power. Hitler manipulated the German public through a number of different means; chiefly amongst which propaganda campaigns and rhetorical speeches. Once in power, the Nazi party used anti-Semitic propaganda in order to convince the public that they were in the right. For those unwilling to conform, Hitler ruled through fear. We hoped to achieve a similar state of affairs within our own society...

clear
knowledge
↓
aims.

Dictator: "All I need to do is manipulate their simple minds against him and
                      balance will be restored." ✓

As they were only five members within our group, we decided that our society would take the shape of a highly dysfunctional group of house-mates. To begin with, we toyed with the idea of a family situation but felt that this would distract from one of the play's main aims; to provoke thought on a number of universal issues. Subsequently, we did not concern ourselves with how the characters knew one another or how it was that they had ✓ ended up in the given situation. The idea of a broken family, however, stemmed from our reading of 'Kindertransport'. Samuels' play centres around Eva, a nine year old Jewish German of the late Nineteen-Thirties, and her development into adulthood. Sent to Britain by her parents during World War Two, Eva's older self Evelyn is bitterly cold towards her natural mother upon their meeting at the war's end, claiming that her former, German self is dead. Whilst the characters within our piece were not part of a family, therefore, the relationships between them were equally as fractured and as bitter as those

clear
influence.

seen in 'Kindertransport'.

Given the somewhat depressing stimulus, our group always intended upon creating a 'tragedy' rather than a 'comedy'. By this, I mean to say that we wanted our audience to leave the piece feeling pensive rather than up-beat. Unlike the classic tragedy structure, however, in which a play begins full of hope and ends as all hope is lost, our piece remained void of hope almost the entire time. This was made clear by the positioning of the Dictator's character on stage. For the a large percentage of the play, she was raised higher than each of the other characters on set; either situated upon rostra or stood whilst others were sat. From her position on the rostra, she watched as the plot unfolded. This was meant to represent her omniscient nature and was reminiscent of the Ratcatcher in 'Kindertransport'; an imaginary figure who haunted Samuels' protagonist and knew all about her past.

good links to text

2 & 3. How effectively are you personally exploring and developing your role(s) & How did you and your group explore the possibilities of form, structure and performance style ?

The group intended to create a microcosm of a dictatorship, with each of our characters meant to represent a different part of society. Two fifths of the group would represent the public, another the government, and a fourth the dictator. Finally, we needed an outsider; representative of, for example, the Jewish people in Nazi Germany. The play would focus upon the dictator's attempts to be rid of this character and, consequently, create the perfect society. The outsider, therefore, would begin the play as a third member of the public. Once we had, crudely, decided upon the five key roles in our piece, and alongside our plot, each of the group expressed who they most wanted to be. As the only person who was really interested by the character of 'Government', my role was decided.

My role provided quite a challenge. The opening exchanges in our piece were between the 'Dictator' and 'Government', in which the basic plot would be set out. We felt that the Government's most important relationship, in terms of a social commentary, was that with the Dictator. The duologue between the two was, therefore, also very important in defining his character. We explored a number of different ways of representing that the Government was 'under the Dictator's thumb'. Initially, he was cast as an entirely weak but quite pleasant character...

Dictator:	"We have to eliminate him."
Government:	"Eliminate...?" *(fumbles for dictionary in his back pocket)*
D:	"Yes."
G:	"Surely you don't mean:" *(recites definition of eliminate)*
D:	"Yes; eliminate. That's exactly what I mean."

Good stage directions to indicate character.

The dictionary was meant to represent the intellectual but somewhat 'nerdy' side to the Government's character. I introduced a stammer and spoke relatively quietly in order to further his weak character. After practising a number of other scenes, however, he evolved, and became less pleasant in nature. This was because we, as a group, felt that he

development of role

needed to be behind the Dictator's plan in order for our storyline to work. It was necessary, therefore, that he should have some element of evil within him. In saying this, he still remained firmly under the dictator's control and was, to a great extent, afraid of her.

At no point in the play was there a scene in which the Government featured but the Dictator did not. So as to represent the controlling nature of the Dictator and the Government's relative fear of her, I tried to remain fairly static and subdued in terms of my body language. The Dictator was in control of the scene just as she was the plot. ✓

As well as the role of 'Government', I also played the characters of 'Human' and 'Dreamer'. These characters were from outside of our storyline and were meant solely to provide food for thought for our audience with regards to some of our play's main themes and concerns. We felt that it was important to distinguish between the character of Government and my other two roles so as the audience would understand that they were meant to be completely separate and from outside of the main plot. This was achieved by increasing the sense of movement on stage. For instance, and as explored, in my scenes as Government, I more-or-less stayed upon the same spot the entire time; arms crossed behind my back. When playing 'Human' and 'Dreamer', however, I moved quickly around the stage, with my hands gesturing all of the time.

Simple, but relevant awareness of movement/ body language.

4. (a) 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?

BRECHT
We were deeply influence by the work of Bertolt Brecht. Our play took on the style of 'Epic Theatre'; a form of drama most famously used by Brecht. In a piece of Epic Theatre, the audience are made aware that they are watching exactly that; a piece of theatre. This is done so that they will view the piece in a different light, considering it's themes and messages rather than empathising with the characters within it. We decided that, considering our broad stimulus of the Holocaust, this style could work very well for our group. Within our stimulus, there are several universal themes that can be expanded upon and explored. For instance, and amongst others, those of discrimination, genocide, politics and the human condition. We hoped to produce a thought-provoking piece centred around a number of these themes and, thus, felt that it would work best if our audience were conscious that they were watching a play. They would then be able to better understand and consider some of our ideas with regards to these issues...

Good.

Was this achieved in performance ?

Alienation Techniques Used...
➢ Plain costumes to represent that our characters were representative not of people but of ideas;
➢ Our main storyline punctuated with a number of other scenes from outside of the plot. We repeated the same poem three times, for example. ✓
➢ We all remained on stage throughout the performance. This was meant to emphasise the non-naturalistic nature of our play;
➢ Signs hung around each of our necks. Upon these were the ideas/parts of society that

we were meant to represent. When reciting our poem, for example, we each wore 'HUMAN'.

SIMON HIGLETT

In May, the class went to see a performance of 'The Glass Menagerie' at the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester. It was some of the staging ideas that, more than any other aspect of the performance, influenced our Unit Four production. The piece was designed by Simon Higlett. ✓

Our group had always intended upon centring one of our scenes around a table. In our first few discussions as a group, we discussed how we could use the table in order to represent our some of our ideas. In 'The Glass Menagerie', "a memory play", Higlett had applied a turquoise tint to much of the staging and set in order to represent the imperfect nature of the protagonist's memory. In a similar vein, it was suggested by a member or our group that we could dress half of our table fit for a king whilst leaving the other half bare. This idea had to be dropped, however, as the final performance loomed because we needed the table to double up as a bed and we felt that this would be highly impractical. ✓ *Pity, good idea.*

Another feature of Higlett's set that made a big impact was his interpretation of the glass menagerie itself; the small glass animals suspended at intervals from ceiling to floor created a very eerie and ominous feeling on stage. Although on a much smaller scale, we created a very similar effect with the afore mentioned signs. Using a coat stand, these were hung from it at different heights and so as the audience could read them. As well as adding an eerie effect to our set, these also placed further emphasis on the idea that our characters were no more than ideas that we could pick up and subsequently drop whenever we pleased. ✓

HAROLD PINTER

Having done work on Pinter both at GCSE and briefly last year, the group were aware of his famously fractured style of drama. As stated on 'www.wikipedia.com', "stylistically [Pinter's dramas] are marked by theatrical pauses and silences". These are used by the playwright in order to represent tension. We hoped to make uses of pauses in our piece so as to achieve a similar effect. At the end of the 'Cards Scene', we decided to include a very long pause in order to provide a contrast for the audience...

D:	"If you can't play nicely then you can't play at all."
P:	"This is pathetic!" (Public kicks chair over and storms from room.)

Immediately after a somewhat heated exchange, those left in the scene observed around a 90 second silence. Each of the characters would avert their eyes from the Dictator whenever they were to meet as the tension mounted. The silence was meant to illustrate how scared all of the characters were of the Dictator after seeing Dan be sent from the room. This technique proved very effective. *Yes, it worked very well in performance.*

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

In order to get a better idea of how our audience may respond, we performed our piece to a class of GCSE drama students before asking them what they thought. A number of the group mentioned how they thought that Cleo made a very intimidating Dictator character. However, they expanded upon this by saying that they thought she could take the role even further in order to emphasise her high status. Another member of the class picked up on the fact that more than one of our characters was named Joe. We had taken the decision to call each of our public characters Joe so as to represent that, in the Dictator's eyes, they are one and the same. Several of the GCSE class, however, had not understood this idea and thought we had made a mistake. After explaining our reasons, they agreed that it was a clever idea but felt that we should make it more obvious We felt that this was a very valid point and, consequently, strove to alter our script wherever possible in order to make the idea of 'Joe Public' more clear. *Good.* ✓

How could she do this? e.g....

We hoped to communicate our ideas to the audience in a number of different ways; visually, spatially and aurally...

Visual

Our set was kept very simple so as not to detract from the play's messages. It was also, as far as possible, void of any real colour; we covered our table with a white sheet, our diaries in white tissue. This was meant to represent the regimented nature of our piece and the great extent to which the Dictator was in control. ✓

In terms of costume, we were all dressed completely in black apart from the Dictator who wore a white shirt. This made her stand out from the rest of the characters whilst remaining in keeping with the rest of the set. The simple costumes were meant to represent that the characters were not tied down to any particular time or place. The characters all looked the same and, thus, were deprived of any real personality. As touched upon in the previous question, this was meant to add to the 'alienation effect' on our audience. ✓

We felt it was necessary that the audience should know for definite who each of our characters were at any given point in the play. An entirely Brechtian inspired idea, we ✓ decided to make signs that we be hung around the actors neck throughout the performance. These would change as the character changed; i.e. for those multi-roling. These allowed the audience to better understand some of our ideas in terms of character. If, for instance, I had not been wearing my 'Government' sign, they may have questioned why I acted as I did around the Dictator. Simply, our signs, or plaques, clarified for the audience that our play was a microcosm of society and that our characters were not real people but representations. ✓ *They were essential to understanding your roles, given such bland costume.*

Spatial

We spent a lot of time working on the Proxemics of each scene. As our play was based around a series of quite deep thoughts and ideas, we were concerned that, in some of the scenes at least, there was not enough action. By this I mean to say that, at least in rehearsals, the piece was quite static. In Libby and Rachael's second duologue, for

instance, and within the first few run-throughs, the two of them remained sat on the bed throughout. After watching the scene a couple of times, myself and Cleo attempted to inject some degree of movement into it. We decided that, after confessing about her diary and sensing Rachael's anger, Libby should stand and move from the bed. Following this, Rachael would also get up and begin to pace quickly around the stage. Her rapid movements and amplified tone of voice were meant to represent her anger at this point. At the end of the scene, Rachael was to walk out on Libby, down the aisle of the audience. This was meant to represent the imminent breaking of their relationship.

Aural

A poem was devised by myself that was to be repeated three times over the play's course. From outside of our main plot, the poem was meant to both alienate our audience and also help us to further explore the theme of power in our piece. Each time the poem was recited with a different emphasis yet, each time, was read under the title of 'Human'. This was meant to represent that, given absolute power, every human being is fundamentally the same. *Do you think this worked?*

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

Within every culture, including our own, there is and always will be some form of discrimination. More often than not, this discrimination is founded upon nothing but pre-conceived ideas about a certain race or person. We explored this idea over the course of our piece. Cleo's assertion within our opening scene that Dan is "not just a boy" but "all that is wrong with society", for example, is founded upon no more than a dislike for him. We made a conscious decision to give no reason for this. Here, we hoped to represent the idea that within a society or a dictatorship, and when the 'chips are down', someone or a group of people will often be made a scapegoat for a country's problems. In Nazi Germany, for instance, Hitler pinned Germany's economic frailties on the Jewish people living there. *yes.*

cultural,
Historical.

The overwhelming reason that there will always be discrimination within society is that people are different. Whilst there will always be those willing to fight for democracy, they will also always be those seemingly fixated upon creating imbalance within a society. By this, I mean to say that Hitler was not the last dictator and Nazi Germany not the last dictatorship. Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe (seen right), for instance, appears to be the most recent in a long list of dictators scrutinised by the world's media. Before him, there was Saddam Hussein, and, previous to that, Bin Laden. Simply, what I hope to illustrate by this is that the themes entailed within our group's stimulus of 'The Holocaust' are not dead. The issues considered over the course of our piece are universal and ever-lasting. Just as 'The Holocaust' itself will always have relevance within a society, therefore, as would our piece.

political,

Another key concern of our play was that of equality. Linked with the ideas of discrimination and dictatorships, we wanted to provoke thought from our audience on the theme of equality. If discrimination is inevitable, we hoped to pose the question that,

surely, equality is unattainable. In a utopian society, equality must be seen as the cornerstone. As far back as human records document, equality has always been an ideal for which to strive towards. Socially, therefore, it is a highly controversial issue. We hoped to represent this idea, that equality is an untenable human ideal, within a scene from outside of our main plot...

Realist: "It's impossible."
Dreamer: "For God's sake!"
Realist: "It's impossible because humans are not perfect-"
Dreamer: "It's not impossible."
Realist: "-and they never will be."

We did not want to force any ideas upon our audience; only present certain themes to them so as they could make their own judgement. In the given scene, therefore, we tried to present both sides of the coin, as it were. Myself, as the dreamer, was representative of the positive outlook with regards to equality and Dan, as the realist, the negative.

Our piece being set at an indeterminate point in time, we were not restricted by any historical facts or details. We could not have been accused of getting the dress or accents of our characters wrong, for instance, as they were entirely our own creations living within our own unique world. The group was, therefore, allowed to exercise much more creative license than if we had have chosen to set the piece, for example, in the midst of World War Two. *Good point* ·

To conclude, I believe that the social and historical context of our piece was communicated very effectively to our audience. We made our intentions very clear that it was a highly political piece form the outset by projecting images of past dictators and such like upon the backdrop to our set. The signs hung around our necks also represented to the audience some of the context behind our piece in that many parallels could be drawn between our characters and famous figures in history.

3,464 words

Comments from the Moderator:

Candidate E (Tom)

Development & Structure:
A practical and creative contribution is recorded in the teacher-examiners notes that demonstrate Tom's commitment and creative input. He has clearly used a range of his own experiences to influence the work e.g. he talks about 'Nineteen Eight-Four' as well as theatrical influences. He is working between bands 2 and 3 on this element.

Performance:
Tom gives a very competent performance representing 'government'. He is strong and calm bringing an air of authority to the role. He is well aware that governments can often look foolish and he manages to show numerous different sides to his character, sometimes through the language he has chosen to use but often through his demeanour. He assumes a slightly nerdy aspect without it becoming comical and at times, the audience feel some sympathy for him. His portrayal is within the middle band.

SWED:
Tom has more or less followed the questions although he has chosen to run questions 2 and 3 together. It isn't clear why he has done this although it is perfectly acceptable to do so. He is close to the word limit which is always a sensible idea and the entire SWED reads well. It starts off in very general terms but gets much better as he gets more detailed . His section of who and what has influenced him was different in that it mentioned Simon Higlett and Harold Pinter and it had a genuine and refreshing tone to it. Overall, middle band work.