

GCE

Drama Example Materials

Candidate I - Example Work with Commentaries

Edexcel

GCE Drama (6DR01 paper 01)

2009



Centre No.	Sixth Form	Centre Use Only	Edexcel Use Only
Candidate No.	Chloe	Practical Exploration	18 / 25 See SAMPLE SESSION RECORD CARD
6DR01 - Unit 1 Exploration of Drama and Theatre	Edexcel COURSEWORK RECORD CARD & AUTHENTICATION SHEET ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE DRAMA AND THEATRE STUDIES JUNE 2009	Exploration Notes	19 / 20 17 / 20
		Evaluation of Live Theatre	10 / 15 12 / 15
		TOTAL	47 / 60 47 / 60

TEACHER-EXAMINER COMMENTS

Practical Exploration:

Chloe is a bright student who was fully engaged throughout the exploration process. She thoroughly understood both texts and was able to bring this knowledge and understanding to the work. She was equally confident with a naturalistic approach or with the choral/ensemble work explored in 'Lear'. She responds very well to direction and is always keen to improve vocal & physical communication.

Exploration Notes:

Both sets of notes demonstrate Chloe's engagement with and understanding of the texts. She has fully assimilated the work done on Stanislavski and how as an actor she can use these techniques and exercises to open out the text and improve her own communication skills. She has done well to condense her prolific notes down to the word limit!

Evaluation of Live Theatre Performance:

Chloe's evaluation was clear and detailed showing an excellent understanding of production values and illustrating points made with detailed supporting examples. Style is confident and evaluative - perhaps not quite fluent enough for top band.

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	
Exploration Notes	Evaluation of Live Theatre
3000	1008

Signature: _____

Date: 22/4/09

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: _____

Date: 22/4/09

19 + 18 = 7

Exploration Notes

'A Doll's House'

Introduction

Focus: Social/political/historical/cultural context, Stanislavski

Ibsen's 'A Doll's House'

'A Doll's house' is an early example of theatrical naturalism. The play sparked controversy, and its performance was declared by one critic as 'a revolutionary action.' The cultural norms of the time are represented by the ideas and values before Nora changes, such as financial success, upward social mobility, a stable secure family, and a patriarchal society.

✓
SHC D

Naturalism

Naturalism refers to theatre that attempts to create an illusion of reality through dramatic and theatrical strategies, such as a 3-dimensional set, everyday speech forms, a focus on contemporary subjects and a representation of more social classes, notably the middle and working classes. Every action that actors did had to be believable in line with their character and the text.

✓
SH

Stanislavski

In line with the principals of naturalism, Stanislavski created a rehearsal method which allowed all actors to create characters which they, and in turn the audience, could believe in. They did this through looking at internal work (gaining a deep understanding of the character) and external work (how to communicate the understanding most effectively.) He used many techniques such as magic if, given circumstances and emotion memory.

✓
Nice summary
Pract

Radio Play

Workshop 1 – 3 lessons

Focus: Language, vocalisation, Stanislavski

• Discussion

- **vocalisation** includes: pitch (range); tone (sarcastic, angry); intonation (stress patterns); pace (rapid, slow, pauses); volume; accent/dialect (geographical, class)
- **influences** include: character (sex, background, class); given circumstances (situation, relationships); style of the play (Greek, melodrama, naturalistic); objective (intention)

✓
vocalisation
use of lang
concern

• Stanislavskian exercise

We gave people 2 opposing objective, for example, parent: 'I want to control my feelings' and child: 'I just want to forget what happened,' and observe the dynamics. Sometimes, I found it difficult to stick to my objective and keep the conversation going. However, I came to realise that this wasn't too important, as long as the overall feeling of the character represented the objective. It was quite easy to see how the language changed when the child was given the objective of 'I want to hurt my parent.' Instead of being quite submissive and pretending that nothing happened, they were more antagonising blamed the parent. It seemed like the roles reversed as instead of the parent having the upper hand, which he did in the first, the child now did. This activity helped me to understand the importance of the underlying motives of the character and how this affects their presence on stage.

✓
good personal work
from practical exploration

• Performance

We were all given an extract from act 1 to prepare as a radio play. We had to perform it behind a screen, so that total focus was on vocalisation and language. We all listened to each others and acted as critics.

Radio Play

NORA. Does he? It's quite possible - I really don't know. But don't let's talk about business. It's so boring.

DR RANK enters from HELMER's study.

DR RANK (still in the doorway). No, no, my dear chap, don't see me out. I'll go and have a word with your wife. (Closes the door and notices MRS LINDE.) Oh, I beg your pardon. I seem to be *de trop* here too.

NORA. Not in the least. (Introduces them.) Dr Rank. Mrs Linde.

RANK. Ah! A name I have often heard in this house. I believe I passed you on the stairs as I came up.

MRS LINDE. Yes. Stairs tire me. I have to take them slowly.

RANK. Oh, have you hurt yourself? - Medical. Never experienced what she has.

MRS LINDE. No, I'm just a little run down.

RANK. Ah, is that all? Then I take it you've come to town to cure yourself by a round of parties?

MRS LINDE. I have come here to find work.

RANK. Is that an approved remedy for being run down?

MRS LINDE. One has to live, Doctor.

RANK. Yes, people do seem to regard it as a necessity.

NORA. Oh, really, Dr Rank. I bet you want to stay alive.

RANK. You bet I do. However wretched I sometimes feel, I still want to go on being tortured for as long as possible. It's the same with all my patients; and with people who are morally sick, too. (There's a moral cripple in with Helmer at this very moment -)

MRS LINDE (softly). Oh!

NORA. Whom do you mean?

RANK. Oh, a lawyer fellow called Krogstad - you wouldn't know him. He's crippled all right; morally twisted. But even he started off by announcing, as though it were a matter of enormous importance, that he had to live.

NORA. Oh? What did he want to talk to Torvald about?

RANK. I haven't the faintest idea. All I heard was something about the bank.

NORA. I didn't know that Krog - that this man Krogstad had any connection with the bank.

RANK. Yes, he's got some kind of job down there. (To MRS LINDE.) I wonder if in your part of the world you too have a species of creature that spends its time fussing around trying to smell out moral corruption? And when they find a case they give him some nice, comfortable position so that they can keep a good watch on him. The healthy ones just have to lump it.

MRS LINDE. But surely it's the sick who need care most?

RANK (shrugs his shoulders). Well, there we have it. It's that attitude that's turning human society into a hospital.

Quick nervous pace - pretends she doesn't know

Friendly, good friends

worked to speak to Nora. Quickly hides with charm.

Medical. Never experienced what she has.

Edgy tone - more desperate reason

Angry he doesn't understand, but remains controlled

Dishevelled tone - Krogstad was once a lover

Quicker pace - doesn't want him telling about loan

Snobbish - he has never suffered

Genuine question, inquisitive

Good interpretation & understanding of character
Sees clearly how this can be communicated
Broad pace, volume, tone

Showing off - sophisticated (French)

hamming - knows what to say

Sad/weary tone - hard life

Laughing at himself - amused

Stage whisper - doesn't want to be heard by Krogstad

Hint of snobbishness - feels he is superior

Wish to realise and correct mistake; wouldn't call him Krogstad unless friends

Acts as though he has no idea

Self-selected Monologue

Workshop 2 – own time, 4-5 weeks

Focus: characterisation, language, physicalisation, Stanislavski

- Given circumstances

Who is present?

Mrs Linde - an old school friend. It is the first time they have seen each other in years.

When is it happening?

In a completely different time and culture to today. Borrowing money was unacceptable for a woman without the consent of her husband.

It occurs towards the beginning of the play. Nora reveals that she did not get the money from her father but from another source. Preceding my text, Nora says she has never told Torvald as it would wreck their relationship. She says she will never tell him.

Where is it happening?

It occurs in Nora's sitting room, which is a private place where they should be able to show their true feelings. However, Nora is not completely honest, as she does not reveal where she got the money from.

What is happening?

Nora explains to Mrs Linde how she managed to raise money to pay back the loan. She had imagined that a rich man had fallen in love with her, died, and left all his money to her. She ends on a much happier note of looking forward to prosperity and the spring. Nora is proud she has managed to conduct this without Torvald finding out.

What has happened/what might happen next?

It shows what she has gone through to pay back the loan. It subtly suggests she will be found out as she is so proud to have kept it secret. Ending on a high note suggests something will shatter everything.

- Internal work

The ruling emotion is pride. I used emotion memory to see how I react to this feeling. I laid in the dark on my bed and relived a moment of pride (when I got my GCSE certificates.) Physically, I felt myself smiling and my shoulders moved up, as though to stand tall. This helped me to understand how my presence on stage should be. Emotion memory was a key technique in Stanislavski's system to help actors build naturalistic characters. Once the character has completed the internal work and understands their character fully, they can then move on to physicalising the role.

Practicalities

*Shows a good understanding of both aspects
of Stanislavski's method.*

Solidly based on practical exploration.

Monologue

Stanislawski's external work.

Stanislawski's internal work

want Christine to praise me

want Christine to think I am clever

want Christine to be proud of me

want Christine to feel sorry for me

want Christine to be proud of me

want Christine to be jealous of my desirability

want Christine to be happy for me

Over-riding emotion pride, despite the fact she has broken the law. Sometimes emp as though she has self-pity - shows her naivety, a lack of sensitivity, is where she talks about having dull other. she is talking a woman who is so very little.

~~That time will never come.~~ Well, what do you think of my big secret, Christine? I'm not completely useless, am I? Mind you, all this has caused me a frightful lot of worry. It hasn't been easy for me to meet my obligations punctually. In case you don't know, in the world of business there are things called quarterly instalments and interest, and they're a terrible problem to cope with. So I've had to scrape a little here and save a little there, as best I can. I haven't been able to save much on the housekeeping money, because Torvald likes to live well; and I couldn't let the children go short of clothes - I couldn't take anything out of what he gives me for them. The poor little angels!

MRS LINDE. ~~So you've had to stint yourself, my poor Nora?~~

NORA. Of course. Well, after all, it was my problem. Whenever Torvald gave me money to buy myself new clothes, I never used more than half of it; and I always bought what was cheapest and plainest. Thank heaven anything suits me; so that Torvald's never noticed. But it made me a bit sad sometimes, because it's lovely to wear pretty clothes. Don't you think?

MRS LINDE. ~~Indeed it is.~~

NORA. And then I've found one or two other sources of income. Last winter I managed to get a lot of copying to do. So I shut myself away and wrote every evening, late into the night. Oh, I often got so tired, so tired. But it was great fun, though, sitting there working and earning money. It was almost like being a man.

MRS LINDE. ~~But how much have you managed to pay off like this?~~

NORA. Well, I can't say exactly. It's awfully difficult to keep an exact check on these kind of transactions. I only know I've paid everything I've managed to scrape together. Sometimes I really didn't know where to turn. *(Smiles.)* Then I'd sit here and imagine some rich old gentleman had fallen in love with me -

MRS LINDE. ~~What! What gentleman?~~

NORA. ~~Silly!~~ And that now he'd died and when they opened his will it said in big letters: 'Everything I possess is to be paid forthwith to my beloved Mrs Nora Helmer in cash.'

MRS LINDE. ~~But, Nora dear, who was this gentleman?~~

NORA. Great heavens, don't you understand? There wasn't any old gentleman; he was just something I used to dream up as I sat here evening after evening wondering how on earth I could raise some money. But what does it matter? The old bore can stay imaginary as far as I'm concerned, because now I don't have to worry any longer! *(Jumps up.)* Oh, Christine, isn't it wonderful? I don't have to worry any more! No more troubles! I can play all day with the children, I can fill the house with pretty things, just the way Torvald likes. And, Christine, it'll soon be spring, and the air'll be fresh and the skies blue - and then perhaps we'll be able to take a little trip somewhere. I shall be able to see the sea again. Oh, yes, yes, it's a wonderful thing to be alive and happy!

The bell rings in the hall.

Tone changes - more sophisticated

Vocalisation

Runs her hands down her dress - emphasise meaning

Physicisation

Sits down next to Christine, mimes writing

Almost laughs to herself

stands up, clasps hands to chest - love

Takes Christine's hand - reassurance

Tempo rhythm increase - excited. Points to 'pretty things' on the shelf.

Vocalisation
Physicisation
Characterisation
Interpretation
Practical

cy;
units and objectives

emotions

key physicalisation points

- Language

Emily performed a monologue from the end of the text, and I realised how different Nora's language was. In my piece, Nora comes across as immature and childish, shown by the fact if she doesn't have her own way (pretty clothes to wear) then she almost sulks. She uses her feminine charm when discussing the man who fell in love with her, to make her look desirable. She believes all problems will be solved when Helmer starts his new job.

This contrasted greatly with Emily's piece. Nora has now realised that she needs to become more world-wise and find her own way, not depend on Helmer. The roles are reversed, as Nora is now the predominant speaker, not Torvald. She speaks clearly and calmly, and realises their house is nothing more than a doll's house.

Duologues

Workshop 3 – 3 lessons

Focus: interpretation, characterisation, non-verbal communication, vocalization, Stanislavski

- Method of physical action

Stanislavski's method of physical action is where the actors would begin physical work on a character, after understanding the internal side. The actors would be asked to perform a simple stage direction, such as entering a room. The actors are forced to consider the given circumstances – why they are entering the room, how to enter a room, what the objective is.

We took the beginning of act 2 and chose 3 people to act and 3 people to read it. The main idea is to allow actors to focus solely on actions. It was extremely difficult - you have to try and gage timing and fit in with stage directions whilst making the action believable. Non-verbal communication was very important, as it was almost as though the actors were miming, so every movement had to have a purpose. People who didn't have a role were allowed to stop the action at any time and ask the actors why they did a specific movement or gesture, to see if there was a genuine reason. For example, Faye asked me why I kept scuffling my feet, as it didn't really seem to fit in, and when I moved more slowly, it seemed to work much better. Joe did a very melodramatic interpretation, so we could see the contrast with what we were trying to achieve. Joe and I then improvised the scene, which meant most of them were incorrect. However, the idea was that the character still portrayed the same emotion even when the words were incorrect. 1 problem I had was that I consciously thought about my actions, so at times, they were too obvious. We also used this exercise later on, when looking at Nora's change in her belief in her husband.

- Pair work - performing an extract

In pairs, we were given an extract to perform. I got the one between Krogstad and Nora in act 2 where Krogstad has a letter for Helmer. He tells Nora how he wants to get back on his feet. Tempo rhythm was introduced. I feel that the whole scene is a power struggle between the 2 of them. Nora constantly tries to remain on top and keep the moral high ground, however he always has something better to come back with and by the end she has completely lost it.

Use of
Language

interpretation
characterisation

✓
Practise

✓
non verbal
communication

Personal
reflections

✓

Duologue

OGSTAD. It'd be a stupid thing to do anyway. Once the first little domestic explosion is over... I've got a letter in my pocket here addressed to your husband - *Quick to jump in - nervous*

RA. Telling him everything? *oily, charming tone - upper hand*

OGSTAD. As delicately as possible.

RA (*quickly*). He must never see that letter. Tear it up. I'll find the money somehow - *desperate - doesn't beg for fear of looking weak*

OGSTAD. I'm sorry, Mrs Helmer, I thought I'd explained - *false politeness - he can afford this*

RA. Oh, I don't mean the money I owe you. Let me know how much you want from my husband, and I'll find it for you. *Assumption. Krogstad is annoyed at her narrow-mindedness. Seals at her.*

OGSTAD. I'm not asking your husband for money.

RA. What do you want, then?

OGSTAD. I'll tell you. I want to get on my feet again, Mrs Helmer. I want to get to the top. And your husband's going to help me. For eighteen months now my record's been clean. I've been in hard straits all that time: I was content to fight my way back inch by inch. Now I've been chucked back into the mud, and I'm not going to be satisfied with just getting back my job. I'm going to get to the top, I tell you. I'm going to get back into the bank, and it's going to be higher up. Your husband's going to create a new job for me - *Looks straight into Nora's eyes. She dare not look away. He encircles behind her - Nora then used facial expressions to show audience her true feelings. Very powerful speech - use of pauses allows audience time to reflect / sympathise.*

RA. He'll never do that!

OGSTAD. Oh yes, he will. I know him. He won't dare to risk a scandal. And once I'm in there with him, you'll see! Within a year I'll be his right-hand man. It'll be Nils Krogstad who'll be running that bank, not Torvald Helmer! *Nora flinches - criticism of her husband*

RA. That will never happen.

OGSTAD. Are you thinking of - ? *Visual aid - uses hands to create a sign with his name on*

RA. Now I *have* the courage. *suicidal. shows this by standing completely still and keeping eye contact - no longer frightened.*

OGSTAD. Oh, you can't frighten me. A pampered little pretty like you - *Krogstad right in Nora's face - forces her to move backwards. Grabs her hair at the end, to show he is intimidating and that he crossed the boundary of what is acceptable.*

RA. You'll see! You'll see!

OGSTAD. Under the ice? Down in the cold, black water? And then, in the spring, to float up again, ugly, unrecognizable, hairless - ? *Nora's tempo ~~fluctuates~~ rhythm. Inside - extremely frantic, but outside, she tries to stay controlled*

RA. You can't frighten me.

OGSTAD. And you can't frighten me. People don't do such things, Mrs Helmer. And anyway, what'd be the use? I've got him in my pocket.

RA. But afterwards? When I'm no longer - ? *She shies away - feels disgusted and has no words*

OGSTAD. Have you forgotten that then your reputation will be in my hands? *pace turns more frantic - realisation her marriage could be in ruins. If Torvald reads the letter. She runs around - doesn't know which way to turn.*

She looks at him speechlessly.

OGSTAD. Well, I've warned you. Don't do anything silly. When Helmer's read my letter, he'll get in touch with me. And remember, it's your husband who has forced me to act like this. And for that I'll never forgive him. Goodbye, Mrs Helmer. (*He goes out through the hall.*)

RA (*runs to the hall door, opens it a few inches and listens*). He's going. He's not going to give him the letter. Oh, no, no, it couldn't possibly happen. (*Opens the door, a little wider.*) What's he doing? Standing outside the front door. He's not going downstairs. Is he changing his mind? Yes, he - !

A letter falls into the letter-box. KROGSTAD's footsteps die away down the stairs.

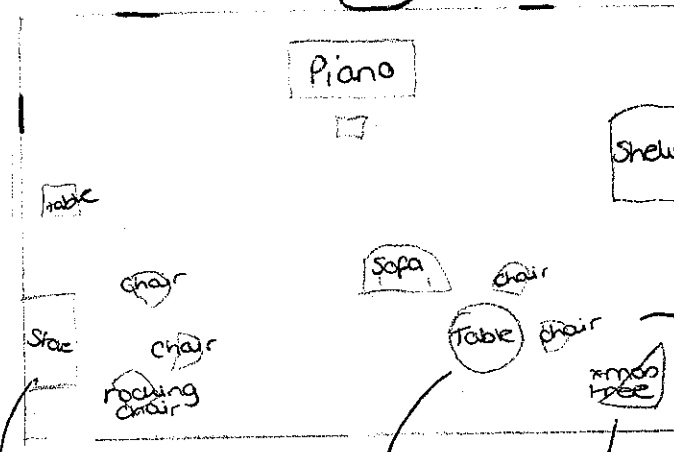
RA (*with a stifled cry, runs across the room towards the table by the sofa. A pause*). In the letter-box. (*Steals timidly over towards the hall door.*) There it is! Oh, Torvald, Torvald! Now we're lost!

Interpretation of scene & character
Vocalisation / Physicalisation
Awareness of language & signification
Good understanding of character & scene

Set Design

Stage curtain will be a gauze which images can be projected on to. Beginning - picture of a dolls house window - Looking into a dolls house. Flowers on the window sill bed. End - less colorful dolls house, no flowers. Happy dolls house not all it cracks up to be.

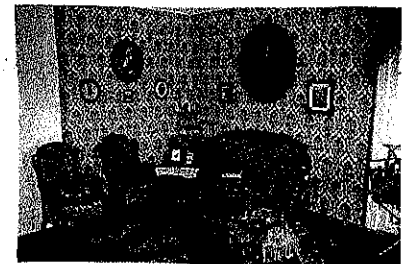
Piano focal point of upstage. Key prop - torquella.



China on shelves - blue and white plates ✓



All furniture based on 19th century English designs. Chairs - wooden arms and legs and elaborate fabric. Have a rug if it was impossible to have a carpet. ✓



Ibsen gives very detailed set design - reflects period.

Naturalism demands a realistic set.

I have used English influences - would be staged in the UK if I did it.

Still has some elements of symbolism. ✓

Nora - typical 19th century dress. Basic colour (blue) to reflect 'cheapest and plainest' remark. Hair scraped back into a bun, to represent time and show women's suppression. Made up like a porcelain doll - very pale. When Torvald finds out and she 'changes', I would have her look in a mirror and take it off, to reflect taking off her doll's mask and revealing her true self. ✓



Stage with fire - sense of warmth. Gradually die out. ✓

Vase with fresh flowers. should wilt as Nora's love dies. ✓



Front. Metaphor for Nora herself, important. She can strip off lights and decorations as Act 2 starts. ✓

King Lear

Politics of King Lear - independent research

- Divine right of Kings - all Monarchs had a god-given obligation to make sure that their kingdom stayed intact. In King Lear, it is no surprise that Kent is horrified to know Lear is dividing and sharing his Kingdom. Kent knows this will fail, suggesting that Shakespeare is emphasising the need for unity. This quote, by Fool, sums this up well:

'why, after I have cut the egg in the middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown I' the middle and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt.'

This highlights Lear's stupidity in giving all his responsibility to his daughters.

- Social hierarchy - it was believed that gentlemen could be 'made' as well as born. Men existed who were full of self-importance; driven by self-interest. In King Lear, this character can be seen in the form of Edmund, Gloucester's illegitimate son. He refuses to 'stand in the plague of custom,' and rejects tradition, seeking to thrive by new means. The fact he is illegitimate could have been motivational, creating rivalry with Edgar and a sense of determination.

SCH

Beginning of the play

Focus: language, interpretation, non-verbal communication

Act 1 Scene 1 from line 34 onwards.

Non-verbal Communication

King Lear is up-stage, daughters' down-stage. Therefore, Lear can't see their reactions and facial expressions, but audience can. Also, Goneril and Regan are stage right together. Cordelia is stage left alone. This alienated Cordelia and showed a bond between Goneril and Regan.

VASP
Good explanation
of deliberate
use of
blocking

Example:

'Long is our court have made their amorous sojourn,
And here are to be answer'd.'

Action: Cordelia smiles sweetly to herself: knows she is well loved. Goneril and Regan exchange a glance and sneer - dissatisfied with their husbands compared with Cordelia's choice.

Language

Shakespeare achieves a sense of Lear's self-importance through his use of language:

'Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.. Unburthen'd crawl toward death.'

This dark powerful imagery creates a sense of drama and emphasises meaning. He later uses powerful imagery when he disowns Cordelia - a foolish act. Goneril also understands the importance of language:

'Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter.'

This is false, but Goneril needs to flatter Lear to benefit when he divides the Kingdom, as does Regan: they use language to their advantage. They don't love him as they say, shown later when they plot against him. Cordelia contrasts with them by being truthful, and knows how ridiculous her sisters' sound.

what meaning?

How were these lines delivered?

Edgar's Speech

Focus: visual, spatial and aural elements and interpretation

- we were given **Edgar's speech** to interpret: either alone, in pairs or as a group. We decided to do it as a group choral performance, to reflect the fact that Edgar speaks in more than 1 voice in the play, and that he's aware people are hunting him – could use echoing/repetition to create a sense of fright. It was also more exciting to interpret.

Miss recorded our interpretation so that we could look at its effectiveness. There were several things we noted:

- disjointed whispering and changing of speakers helped to create a more panic-stricken atmosphere
- end line that was just said by Alex made it seem decisive – said in a low, meaningful tone
- fragmented movement created a sense of insanity to further the effectiveness
- dark lighting created an eerie atmosphere which captured the audience, and this was aided by the fact that everyone kept direct eye contact with the audience – a hypnotic glare
- 'roaring' added to the intensity which was created by pace

Edgar's Speech

My comments concern our use of choral movement and voice, portraying how hunted and frightened Edgar feels. This physicalisation allowed the audience to empathise with Edgar.

11 arranged on 3 levels of staging, initially very close and leaning over each other. Remaining still, all do 4 heavy breaths: a use creating intensity and giving the impression of nervousness. Another 4 breaths whilst moving heads to 4 different positions, as if searching.

Still image surrounding Alex - frames his speech

3 back girls point to 2 different positions - no place to go

Rebecca stands and reads, representing Edgar's former self. Claire and Chloe try to pull her back down - no longer that person

Chloe, Claire and Rebecca merge into a 3-headed beast. Pause to mark the moment. Frightening image - reflect Edgar's disturbed state of mind.

Actors down-stage wipe faces as if camouflaging. Some wretchedly pull hair. Sense that society has turned against Edgar - now rebelling.

Loud screams - sense of pain / fright

Actors upstage scratch arms, pull hair, then begin to pull Joe's - harm him. Insane grunting noises.

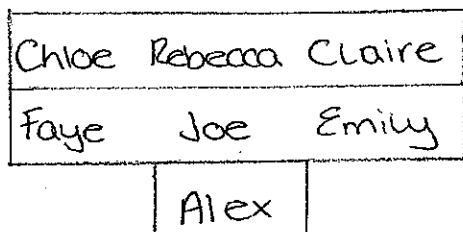
Joe: 'Poor Turlygod!' Top line echo in high pitch, middle in middle pitch, Alex in low pitch. Repeat with 'Poor Tom!'

Alex only. Framing device. Definite end.

EDGAR Alex;
I heard myself proclaimed,
And by the happy hollow of a tree
Escap'd the hunt. No port is free, no place,
That guard and most unusual vigilance
Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may 'scape
I will preserve myself, and am bethought
To take the basest and most poorest shape
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast. My face I'll grime with
filth.
Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots,
And with presented nakedness outface
The winds and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars, who with roaring voices
Strike in their numbed and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
And with this horrible object, from low farms,
Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes and mills,
Sometimes with lunatic bans, sometimes with
players,
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! poor Tom!
That's something yet; Edgar I nothing am.

pitch why differences? explain

Birds-eye view of set.



Performance piece

Focus: interpretation, visual, spatial and aural, characterisation

- The task
- given a chunk of text to edit and make into a coherent performance. The scenes we used were act 3 scene 4 to act 3 scene 7.

- Drama mediums and how they were used in our performance

Staging:

We used tiered rostra with a raised level up-stage centre, stepping down to the down-stage area. This symbolised 2 themes: originally, it was a catwalk for Goneril and Regan to show vanity, however, it became very symbolic of the division between sanity and madness. This theme is shown when Lear talks to Edgar/Poor Tom on one side, with the Fool and Kent on the other. At times, I did find this stage restricting. If you were standing towards the back of it and wanted to get to a character the other side, you either had to climb over it (looking clumsy) or walk all the way around it. Therefore, I think it may have been better to just have a shorter projection, still showing the divide, without restricting character interactions.

Proxemics:

Important in the blinding of Gloucester. All other characters, particularly Goneril and Regan, remained close to Gloucester centre stage as he was bound to the chair. It was very intimidating towards him, and the gouging out of his eyes would have huge shock value. The fact that they circle him, remaining close, resembles a predator with their prey and an interrogation sequence.

Characterisation:

Lear. Central character, so Alex needed to create something stable. Initially, he used a very deep, manly voice; however, he found that he struggled to sustain this. He then based his voice on Ian McKellen, in his recent portrayal Lear. This worked as Alex could sustain it throughout. He hunched over to look old and fragile - this contrasted with the beginning of the play where he stands tall and proud. He is reliant on the Fool and Kent, and uses the Fool to get down off the rostra, making him seem more vulnerable.

Character Interaction:

The character interaction, verbal and non-verbal, between myself (the Fool) and Kent in act 3 scene 4 was interesting. They were unsure what to make of Poor Tom and wanted to keep Lear away from him, but failed. They constantly exchanged glances, especially when Lear called Edgar the 'noble philosopher.'

Good practical awareness

Visual

Vocal

Chloe manages to communicate her clear understanding of the text + how she + her classmates interpreted given sections concisely as is necessary given the word limit imposed.

Shakespeare's R & J – Joe Calcaro Norwich Playhouse

Norwich playhouse was opened 13 years ago, and it was converted from an old brewery. The stage is end on, although the front row of seats are extremely close to the stage. It was here that I witnessed how a Shakespeare classic could be given a new lease of life, as Joe Calcaro's 'Shakespeare's R & J' really did impress me. There were only 4 actors in the production, all of whom played a student and then also took on other roles.

Calcaro's play is a scripted adaptation of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, set in a 1950's strict boys boarding school. The four boys run into the chapel late one night during 'lights out' to escape their oppressive routine, and they begin reading the original Romeo and Juliet. The play uses the majority of Shakespeare's text, but two interwoven themes unfold: those of the original play, consisting of male authority and tensions surrounding sexuality, and those brought by Calcaro of the oppressive nature of public schools, and a journey of self discovery in the 4 boys.

They used the entirety of the relatively narrow space. The set was fairly naturalistic, consisting of real candles, pews and an altar, with great attention to detail. In a very Brechtian style, the set was then transformed into Juliet's bedroom and Friar Lawrence's jail, and the audience would accept 'the balcony' as just that, even if it didn't accurately reflect it. An important prop was the book of Romeo and Juliet, which was used throughout. For example, when the boys were told Mercutio was dead, they frantically flicked through the book to see if it was true, as they were filled with disbelief that family conflict could end in death.

The costume, although quite mundane, served a greater purpose. The boys essentially remained in their school uniform consisting of a shirt, a tie, a jacket and formal trousers, but as the story unfolds, the actors symbolically rid of their blazers as they rebel against their school's authority and gradually begin to discover their true selves. Towards the end of the play, three of the boys replace their school uniform, but Romeo does not. I feel this reflects the fact that Romeo has learnt too much and has matured too far to ever return to the suppressed school boy. One extremely versatile prop was a white sheet, which was used with ease and diversity throughout the performance – it was used comically to show the Nurse, to show Lady Capulet and used as a shroud. Most imaginatively, it was wrapped around Juliet and then pulled from her, as though her mother and the Nurse were whipping her life away from her.

Music was mainly recorded, and the sounds of the organ set the scene in the chapel as the boys begin to sing 'Jerusalem.' Recorded sounds include those such as the school bell and footsteps, but they are also to create an atmosphere of panic as the Friar's plans begin to collapse, reflected by the sounds of thunder and lightening. A radio is used, and when it is first switched on it starts off as a hymn; but quickly changes to contemporary rock and roll -which would have been frowned upon at the time. The actors also create their own sounds through choral chanting and also through drumming on the pews to intensify the emotions of fear and tension.

Evaluation

Summary

Production values
Supported examples

Production values
Supported examples

✓ The lighting was fairly simple. There were white washes used throughout this performance and at the beginning dim lighting reflected the fact it was night time, so the boys entered with torches in a naturalistic touch - and it helped to emphasise the fact that they were not supposed to be there. They used at least 10 real candles which were repeatedly blown out and re-lit, and the most poignant moment where this could be seen was when they were blown out just before the duel when Mercutio was killed, symbolically showing that his life would be 'snuffed out.' They were then re-lit when Juliet was placed in her tomb, to create a calm and innocent peacefulness.

Production values
Supported examples
Evaluation

✓ The actors in this performance were superb. The play consisted of very physical and ensemble theatre, as they all played multiple roles - and I have to say that they seemed to do this with relative ease, which surprised me with such a challenging text. Vocalisation and the presence of the actors on stage were key factors in determining which role was being played. A brilliant set piece was when Lord Capulet was telling Juliet that she was to marry another man, and not Romeo. Three of the boys became Juliet's father and the split the insults between them. The insults then moved to a more physical bullying as Juliet's trousers were pulled down and she is thrown to the floor, picking up on the key theme of male violence. The proxemics were fantastic - one memorable moment being when Lady Capulet and Juliet were on opposite sides of the stage, showing the rift between them and their different ideals. 2 of the actors were extremely brave, as the theme of homosexuality really did hit the audience as they kissed many times throughout the performance - and credit has to be given to them given the fact that the audience consisted mainly of students, to which a few reacted in an unappreciative manner.

Supported examples

✓ All in all, I would recommend this play to anyone who wants to see a Shakespeare classic given an exciting edge. The fact that the play constantly strived to work on 2 levels really did enhance this performance - on the one hand dealing with the difficult contemporary issues, and on the other dealing with the initial motives of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. The complexities of the themes in this play were shown so imaginatively and creatively that it just worked, and the movement from the initial playfulness of the boys, when they are tossing the magazine around, to the tragedy really does help the audience to understand the journey that they boys have been through.

Evaluation

Word Count: 1008

Clear understanding of production values with detailed & well observed examples. Evaluation comments are clear & supported. Style is confident but perhaps not quite faultless enough for top band.

10

GCE
Drama Example Materials

Candidate I - Commentaries

Edexcel
GCE Drama (6DR01 paper 01)
2009

Commentary on Exploration Notes for Candidate I: Chloe

What the Moderator says:

This is over the word limit- strict at 3,000. Some of the headings do not match the notes therein. The characterisation section for *Doll's House* seems to be more about context and historical details, than characterisation and the work she did towards this. Not fully detailed, but still shows outstanding understanding.

What the Principal Moderator says:

The notes are divided into a number of workshops, an excellent idea to help candidates maintain the contact between understanding and knowledge and how they go about achieving them.

After a brief introduction, bringing together the SPHC with the ideas of Stanislavski, she goes into the first workshop. This is about language, vocalisation and Stanislavski. She continuously explains what she has done, whilst analysing the effects and her growing understanding. She adds a section of annotated text. Workshop 2 is about characterisation, language, physicalisation and the practitioner again. As the teacher says, this is solidly based on practical exploration. She then sets out her annotations for her monologue and goes on to explore how another student's monologue worked.

Workshop 3 looks at interpretation, characterisation, non-verbal communication, vocalisation and Stanislavski, again. Many examples are evident of how her practical work leads to understanding of the text and there is annotated script of a duologue; all good preparation for Unit 2, Section A.

The designs for the set clearly show they are rooted in her understanding of the play, its SCHK context and of Stanislavski.

Her notes on *King Lear* explore language first, along with non-verbal communication. The teacher points out that these are not fully related to how the lines might be delivered. When she goes on to look at VAS elements and interpretation, the notes are clearly related to practical exploration.

The notes about characterisation, staging and proxemics are clear and concise examples of an ensemble actor, working with others, towards a shared understanding of the text.

Top band

Commentary on Evaluation of Live Theatre for Candidate I: Chloe

The Moderator felt the evaluation was genuinely excellent.

Chloe shows her very clear understanding of how set and staging work and gives consistently clear examples of this. She assigns meaning to actions. Each scene is analysed and evaluated objectively with several mentions of audience reaction. She uses excellent vocabulary and her written communication is similarly confident.

She displays her subjectivity a little too clearly in places but, overall, she successfully summarises the key elements of the production very intelligently.

Band 2