

GCE

Drama Example Materials

Examiner's Comments

Edexcel
GCE Drama (6DR02 paper 01)
Section B - Group Performance
2010

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Note to centres: The Examiner commentary has been specifically produced to support centres by providing examples of marking bands. Examiners are only required to make brief comments to support the marks awarded. The comments below are based on the real examiner's comments for the real candidate's work. Please note that bands have been given instead of marks.

Examiner's Performance Details

A very emotive interpretation of the piece. Extremely well directed with detailed director's notes explaining how the family cannot live with each other.

All characters were shown in performance very sensitively and the important breaking of the glass was extremely well communicated to the audience.

The space was used particularly well with split levels from the higher of which Tom was able to share his narrative. An engrossing performance.



Director's Notes: *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams

The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams that was originally written as a screenplay for MGM, to whom Williams was contracted. Initial ideas stemmed from one of his short stories, and the screenplay originally went under the name of 'The Gentleman Caller'. The play premiered in Chicago in 1944 and in 1945 won the prestigious New York Drama Critics Circle Award. *The Glass Menagerie* was William's first successful play.

Interpretation of the play: The play is very much autobiographical with *Tom* being Williams showing an upbringing with his neurotic mother (*Amanda*) and sister *Laura* who has suffered from early childhood with polio. The play shows the period just before Following in his father's footsteps, Tom leaves his family to become a writer and escape his mother's endless emotional blackmail.

We wanted to show a family who cannot communicate because of a complete lack of understanding of each others needs. Amanda is obsessed with bring up her daughter without any acknowledgment of her disability. She spends her time planning for a 'gentleman caller' who will come and court her gentle but painfully shy daughter. From the outset of the play we wanted to show the bleak outlook that would inevitably shroud Laura. Notably, all the men in the play have either left or will leave the play before the end.

Character Interpretation:

Amanda: Amanda is a nightmare of contradictions. She can be charming, witty and very amusing while she can also be bombastic, unpredictable and very shallow. She is unable to cope with men and drives them away as soon as they get into the house. She does not understand Tom or Laura's feelings and drives over them without care or thought. She is very selfish and self centred woman.

Laura: Has suffered throughout her childhood because her mother has failed to equip her with the ability to survive and overcome her disability. She is highly sensitive and most generous of individuals who recognises other people's feelings before her own. Terrified to go out into the world, she has spent much of her time in the confines of the bleak apartment.

Tom: Tom is at the very end of his tether with his mother and already has plans to leave and make his own way in the world. He escapes Amanda by seeing movies, shows or just by getting drunk. He totally misinterprets his mother's request for a suitable 'gentleman caller' and leaves his unfortunate sister to a fate confined to her mother's presence for the rest of her life; something that he never forgives himself for.

Jim: Basically a nice man who come to see the family under the false impression that he is there simply to enjoy the evening. An amateur psychologist, he attempts to give Laura the confidence that he feels that she lacks. However, he allows to much close physical proximity with her and provides her with a first kiss.



Examiner's Notes

Tom Wingfield

Female student wearing a flat cap, braces, white shirt, brown trousers.

Vocal skills - very strong opening monologue with thoughtful intonation "you think I'm crazy". Thoughtful vocal timing which attracted laughs unexpectedly but pertinently. Band 3

Movement skills - well paced movement that showed both resignation and exasperation. Enhanced effectively by facial expression. Band 3

Characterisation - A most effective characterisation particularly in showing the ultimate "respect", "mother I apologise". Band 2

Communication - Engaged the audience from the very beginning in the elevated position. Communicated the themes and ideas of the text poignantly. Band 2

Amanda Wingfield

Female student wearing white and pink floral dress.

Vocal skills - some lack of clarity and quick pace, however, gave a "shallowness" to the role where the actual lines spoken were not as important as the manner as which they were delivered. Band 3

Movement skills - High level of energy and used physicalisation effectively to block and confront other characters. Band 2

Characterisation - A well thought through and convincing portrayal of the mother. Also showing the more amusing charming side when appropriate. Band 2

Communication - Communicated character and the themes of the piece well with the audience. Band 3

Laura Wingfield

Female student wearing a yellow dress.

Vocal skills - Used projection and modulation to show the journey from the insecure and unhappy girl to finding real meaning in life and then back again. Band 2

Movement skills - Responded extremely well to Jim in body language showing a layered dismantling of the barriers between them. Band 2

Characterisation - Communicated the pathos of Laura with great skill using pace and timing. The performance never became melodramatic and was moving. A very sensitive Laura. Band 2

Communication - Communicated character and the themes of the piece well with the audience. Particularly Laura's more wistful thoughts. Band 2

Jim O'Connor

Male student wearing a grey suit.

Vocal skills- Well sustained accent, intonation, pace used to charm the Wingfields. "Candlelight is my favourite kind of light". Band 2

Movement skills - Well structured throughout showing the gradual approach to Laura which worked well. The reaction to the broken glass was very sensitive. Band 2

Characterisation - A most convincing gentlemen caller, demonstrating an easy going confident manner communicating how he won over the trust and confidence of Laura. Band 2

Communication - Engaged the audience at a high level, contrast between relationship with Amanda and Laura, was thoughtfully communicated. Band 2