



BOARD OF STUDIES  
NEW SOUTH WALES

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# 1995 HSC

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## EXAMINATION REPORT

### DRAMA

**Includes:**

- **Marking criteria**
- **Sample responses**
- **Examiners' comments**

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# 1995 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

## EXAMINATION REPORT

### DRAMA 2 UNIT

In 1995 a total of 2540 candidates presented for the 2 Unit Drama examination.

#### THE GROUP PRESENTATION

##### Comments

Examiners were once again impressed by the awareness and sensitivity of those schools which provided quiet and supportive conditions for the examination process and where the audience was supervised well. It is still disappointing that some schools did not support their HSC Drama students in this way.

The best group work came from candidates who gave themselves every opportunity to display their expressive skills and who were willing to take risks by experimenting with theatre styles.

Teachers must be aware of the following points.

- The time limits for the Group presentation must be respected. Performances below time cannot score upper level points. Performances which exceed the upper time limit will be stopped by the examiners.
- The examiners require a running order for the days performances.
- Paperwork should be completed prior to the examination.
- Candidates must be at the school (or Marking Centre) from the time marking is due to commence until their performance examination is complete. Variations in time estimates may occur; examiners cannot be expected to wait for students to arrive.
- There should be no interruptions to the examination process by teachers or other school staff.

**The best performances:**

- showed evidence of research and workshopping;
- were energetic, focused and committed pieces;
- showed a variety of characters from original perspectives;
- used a broad range of styles and techniques;
- used strong, engaging openings;
- were integrated and coherent;
- had a clear purpose and concept;
- showed candidates had chosen an appropriate style for their skills and committed themselves to that style;
- made interesting and innovative use of space and spatial dynamics;
- didn't rely heavily on sets or technical assistance such as sound effects;
- built clever, successful transitions into the performance;
- took risks in the choice and development of material;
- were confident and well-rehearsed enough to continue regardless of minor disturbances or problems that occurred on the day.

**The weaker performances:**

- were under prepared;
- showed weak structure;
- lacked dimension, complexity or originality;
- were poorly organised and disjointed;
- used prolonged blackouts to make transitions;
- were over-reliant on technical effects, costumes, props, make up and tape recordings;
- lacked energy and commitment;
- showed characters that were one-dimensional and had no understanding of their actions or motives;
- were projections of personal experiences which were inappropriate for audience involvement;
- did not take into account the audience or what response was expected of the audience;

- relied on monologues and direct address;
- emulated soap operas;
- were unable to employ and integrate the elements of drama;
- used repetitive and overstated themes;
- used weak entrances and exits;
- used off-stage, unseen scenes which disrupted the flow of the performance.

### **Logbooks**

The better logbooks included a variety of resources and research as well as analysis, reflection and evaluation of the development process.

### **Recommendations**

- There is still need for teachers and students to be aware of the criteria and to follow the guidelines in the Subject Manual as well as the information published in the Examination report.
- There are safety issues that **must** be considered when using weapons and naked flames in performance situations. The idea of illusion or the use of a prop as a symbol should be explored in these cases.

It should be noted that examiners are able to stop performances that threaten the safety of the audience or the examiners.

- Simulation should be considered when portraying cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption or the use of other drugs.
- Examiners should not be confronted physically or verbally intimidated as part of the performance. **They are not to become part of the performance.**
- At **no time** may a prompt be used.

### **Rulings**

- No Year 12 student may be part of the audience for the examination performance.
- No Year 12 student may operate any technical effects.
- No teacher may operate any technical effects.
- Video recording of a performance is not permitted.

# **THE INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS**

## **Performance**

### **The best performances:**

- were well-conceived and well-rehearsed resulting in a complete theatrical statement;
- showed a clear understanding of the stylistic demands of the piece;
- had been researched and developed using a wide range of dramatic elements and stylistic demands;
- were tightly constructed and coherent;
- were approached originally using clear, strong characterisation;
- engaged the audience or developed an appropriate relationship with the audience;
- used space well;
- took risks that worked.
- used skilful variations in timing, rhythm and focus;
- used vocal clarity and subtlety.
- used published material creatively.

### **Note: The better self-devised pieces:**

- showed use of research and reflection;
- were well-constructed with smooth transitions;
- treated subject matter with complexity and sophistication.

### **The weaker performances:**

- were noticeably under time or over time;
- were unprepared or improvised;
- used excerpts from novels, TV or film without adapting them to theatrical form;
- used two or three excerpts with no evident connections resulting in a performance that lacked unity;
- showed unwise choice of material and little understanding of the stylistic demands of the piece;
- showed lack of focus and commitment;
- used little or inappropriate stage blocking;

- were examples of self-indulgent angst;
- used gratuitous violence, sexuality and/or profanities;
- did not consider the audience in the preparation or presentation of the material;
- were recitations rather than performances;
- read from the script;
- used lip-synching of recorded material;
- used dance movements which conveyed no sense of dramatic meaning.

**Note: The weaker self-devised pieces:**

- showed lack of experience and ability in script writing;
- were poorly constructed.

**Logbooks**

The better logbooks indicated the wide research and preparation that had been used in developing the performance.

**Recommendations**

- It is important to read widely and consider personal performance strengths when choosing material.
- Students should not use texts from any HSC area being studied, including Content Areas 4 and 5 of the Drama Syllabus.
- As for the Group Presentation it should be noted that examiners will stop performances that threaten the safety of the performers, the audience or the examiners and that prompts must not be used.

**SCRIPTWRITING**

**Comments**

The examiners felt that there was an improvement on the standard of previous years and that there was evidence that candidates had heeded advice in the Examination Report.

There was evidence of editing and workshopping. There was also a greater variety of subject matter, with brave attempts at a variety of styles including absurdism and comedy.

Many candidates still need guidance on structuring a play and how to achieve a successful ending. Other candidates lack understanding of writing for live presentation, submitting scripts that are more suitable for film or TV presentation.

**The best scripts:**

- were plays about characters rather than topics;
- displayed an awareness of audience;
- were theatrical, creating visual images rather than relying on lengthy dialogue;
- developed characters that were believable, with appropriate registers and rhythms of language;
- showed understanding of the purpose of stage directions;
- showed understanding of the concept of developing dramatic tension and focus;
- used theatrical conventions such as setting, directions and sound effects to enhance the drama;
- worked on an idea creatively, or produced a creative adaptation;
- were able to produce a strong, appropriate ending;
- were well edited, showing that the writer was in control of the structure, language and setting of the play.

**The weaker scripts:**

- would not be easily realised on stage;
- were poorly constructed and often came to an abrupt ending;
- lacked the understanding of time and space necessary for live presentation, often including too many characters and/or scene changes;
- showed no awareness of staging techniques;
- gave little or no character description or setting;
- used stereotyped characters and material;
- used repetitive dialogue;
- over-used monologues;
- were unable to develop or sustain dramatic action;
- did not successfully adapt other source material to the dramatic medium;
- were incomplete and/or hand written;
- were attempted by candidates with poor writing skills.



## Logbooks

Logbooks should be a record of the process, showing the development of the ideas and the script as well as early draft copies. Original texts of adaptations should be acknowledged in the logbook.

Candidates should avoid including details that could easily identify the candidate or the school.

Video and audio tapes included as part of the logbook are not able to be reviewed by the examiners and should not be included.

## Recommendations

- Where the play is set in an historical setting, the script should reflect accurate research.
- Avoid using plastic sleeves.

## Examples of how Cast Lists could be presented

### CHARACTERS

Tabitha James:	A seventeen year old female who is frightened of ghosts.
Carol James:	Tabitha's mother.
Stephanie James:	Tabitha's older sister.
Samantha:	Tabitha's best friend whom Tabitha confides in.
David James:	Tabitha's younger brother.
Stephen:	A family friend.
Phone adviser:	A male operator who is asked for advice by Tabitha, yet is not convinced.

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### CHARACTERS

John Dowd:	Early forties, a very business-like man.
Rachel Dowd:	Late thirties, rather thin and careworn.
Sandra Dowd:	Thirteen years old, sister of Chloe.
Chloe Dowd:	Six years old, sister of Sandra.
Jenny:	A young, attractive woman in her early thirties.
Richard:	Going bald, rather awkward, overweight. A guest

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## CAST

Mother:	Fidgety, dressed in cardigan and slippers, age approximately 35.
Father:	Skinny, feels sorry for himself, dressed conservatively, age 40.
Grandma:	Loud, know-all, overweight, dyed hair, wearing bright dress, age approximately 70.
Sue:	Quiet, slightly cynical, attractive, wearing jeans, age approximately 16.
Dr Jones:	High Status, wearing white coat, mobile phone attached to pants.
Dr Millan:	Dressed similarly, also wearing glasses.

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## Examples of how a setting may be explained

### SETTING

Except for a table with four chairs around it, the stage is bare. The same setting is used for all the scenes, the dialogue explaining where they are. For most part, the play is set in the Recreation Centre, an institute allowing the characters to 'interact'.

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### SETTING

A dimly lit stage

There are five stations, all kindergarten sized except for the bed located centre stage.

Stations throughout the performance actors move as directed in script,

between stations 1 to 5

Station 1	Apple tree on pedestal. On either side of tree are miniature thrones
2	Pedestal.
3	Pedestal
4	Double bed with bed coverings
5	Miniature TV

Audience sits on three sides of stage. The stage resembles a playroom with its above mentioned miscellaneous objects.

## SETTING

The setting is split by a set of stairs running from a catwalk stationed above the stage. The stairs are centre stage, but are facing backstage, giving the illusion of a house with upstairs bedrooms, but not greatly interfering with the action happening on stage. The area at the foot of the stairs is the entertaining area of the Davidson family home, and is tastefully furnished with several divans / sofas, a coffee table and memorabilia. Given prominence among the family photos that are placed in the middle of the coffee table is a large portrait of Patricia and Susan laughing and smiling unselfconsciously, with their arms around each other in a sisterly fashion.

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**Following is an example of a suitable layout. Examiners suggest that candidates use 10 or 12 point in the following fonts - Roman, Helvetica, Courier, Palatino, New York, Times, Geneva.**

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

In Catherine's room.

CARRIE: Catherine, Catherine. It's ten thirty. (Tapping Catherine on her shoulders through her quilt.) Catherine time to wake up. (Placing her juice by her side on a bench, kissing her on her forehead as Catherine takes a big breath in opening her eyes and making a stretching noise.)

CATHERINE: Hmrrun. (Looking over to the clock half asleep.)

CARRIE: Brought you some juice.

CATHERINE: (Sounding tired.) Thanks mum.

CARRIE: Breakfast is ready if you feel like some today.

CATHERINE: No thanks.

CARRIE: (Concerned.) Cath, is there something worrying you?

CATHERINE: (Quickly answering.) No. Why should there be?

CARRIE: It's just, you've been a bit edgy lately.

CATHERINE: (Sarcastically.) Sorry.

CARRIE: There's no need to be like that. I just want to let you know you can count on me.

CATHERINE: (Softly and sarcastically.) Yeah right.

# CRITICAL ANALYSIS

## Portfolio of Theatre Reviews

### The best candidates:

- could grasp the director's concept and critically evaluate its execution on the stage;
- drafted and refined reviews into a coherent and unified piece of writing;
- could relate all elements of production back to the vision of the production;
- could substantiate criticisms;
- wrote in a formal, sophisticated and often elegant style.

### The weaker candidates:

- submitted reviews significantly under the required length of 4 x 850 words;
- described or merely re-told the events unfolding on the stage;
- used sensational or overblown language, lapsed into cliché or were inappropriately colloquial;
- presented theatrical terms as a shopping list rather than integrating them as elements of the performance;
- presented highly personalised raves or diatribes without any corroborating evidence from the production.

### Logbooks

Logbooks should show evidence of reflection and research. They should be more than cut and paste presentations of posters, programs and tickets.

### Recommendations

- It is strongly recommended that submissions be typed with double spacing on one side of A4 paper in at least a 12 point font.
- Evidence of research should be incorporated into the reviews, especially regarding the style of theatre and knowledge of the text and playwright being reviewed.
- Candidates should be acquainted with and be able to use the appropriate level of language expected in a review.
- Reviewing of **only** school or amateur productions is not appropriate. Students should be exposed to some professional theatre and a range of theatre styles.

## **An Example of an 'A' category Theatre Review**

ANTIGONE

Sophocles : H.D.F. Kitto's translation

Riverside Theatre, Parramatta

February 1995

One of the most important relationships in the theatre, and the most crucial to the success of a production, is that of the director to the other artists - especially the actors. Although the Crossroad's production of ANTIGONE is highly visual, it focuses too much on design elements and neglects to acknowledge the value of good acting. Directed by Clara Mason, this production is filled with creative ideas, but no apparent directorial concept.

The set, designed by Tim Kobin is striking and surreal. A blood red floor is symbolic of the blood shed throughout the play. A plain white cyclorama captures the intense colours of the lighting design. Primary blue loading crates arranged into angular three dimensional structures, platforms and steps, create transitions from horizontal to vertical planes. Three black pillars suspended in mid air along the diagonal of stage right give a compositional variety to the total stage picture and the movement of the actors.

In order to reveal the shape and dimension of the set, the lighting designer, Eferbi Soropos has placed lights at various positions, directions and angles on the stage. Shadows are strongly evident within the design concept - light versus dark, parallels the themes of good versus evil. Intense colours - reds, oranges and purples - illuminate the cyclorama during various scenes. When Antigone disobeys Creon's decree, a thick crimson light transcends the stage to symbolise the blood that will be shed as a result of her offence. A single light source is used to isolate characters, and silhouette techniques are employed during chorus scenes.

The masks, by Katherine Brown, and costume creations, by Wendy Asher, establish an interesting contrast to the set and lighting elements. Although the mask designs are simple - embellished only with nests of festering dreadlocked hair - their dominating mouthpieces have a tendency to restrict the actor's projection. Without credible justification, the long flowing tunics of the costume design are coloured in a range of earthy tones. The pastel green and brown shades provide a clash rather than contrast to the angular and primary coloured set.

Despite the elaborate design elements, nothing can salvage the poor direction of the actors. In the opening scenes of the play Antigone disobeys Creon's edict not to bury her brother. In doing so she asserts the principle of love and nearly destroys her own humanity, and her own capacity for love in the process. Her greatness lies in her ability to push principle beyond self-denial in order to rediscover love and her own humanity. It is unfortunate that the performances given by the cast reflect a poor understanding of the text, and eliminate any chance of establishing these fundamental themes.

Throughout the play Antigone speaks in passionate and expressive verse. The poetic language makes special demands on the actor and it is unfortunate that in this production Morgan Smallbone as Antigone does not appear to be experiencing the feelings strongly enough to call forth such language spontaneously. While Smallbone concentrates more on a high-pitched voice and graceful demeanour, he fails to rise to the emotional demands of the language and the richness of expression becomes a stumbling block for both Antigone and the audience.

Creon's intelligent, shrewd and strongly resolved character contrasts sharply with that of Antigone. So too does the acting of these roles. Robbie McGregor as King Creon presents a more credible performance. Effective use of the mask, motivated movement and impressive voicework all combine to create a strong political figure who lacks the humanity necessary to understand his own fate.

While 'the chorus helps to set the mood of the play and heighten dramatic effects', it also adds colour, movement and spectacle to a performance. These are essential functions of the role that Mark Newsam, Daniel Keohan, John Carr and David Meador as the chorus fail to accomplish. Despite a powerful focus during the entrance, their intensity is not sustained throughout the performance. Dialogue was performed as monotone chants. Choreographed movement lacked motivation and intent. No dynamic variation to relieve the audience, bad timing and complete lack of unison combined to create a chorus uncommitted to the play. When the chorus did eventually sing, it was pleasing to note their unique and individual voices. However characteristics of modern pop music in the singing did inhibit the creation of a stately atmosphere.

The promotional poster for ANTIGONE highlights the fact that along with 'Full Mask', this production contains 'Live Music'. A diversity of instruments - sitar, flute and drums - are played to create bizarre Gothic soundscapes. Unfortunately the elements of sound that filled the theatre fail to enhance the production. The score is not performed poorly, but because of the lack of coherence with the other production elements, the 'Live Music' did not make its intended contribution.

Despite the creative nature of all the production elements, ANTIGONE is a sad spectacle of how devastating the lack of a directorial concept is to a production. With more attention paid to the acting and overall collaboration of the design elements, ANTIGONE could celebrate the success of provoking an audience and inspiring their imagination.

As the Prophet says to Creon while he claims him to be in mortal danger,

'No man is free from error.'

## **RESEARCH**

### **Comments**

In 1995 there were 42 projects covering a diverse range of topics.

It is important that students be made aware of the purpose and methodology of a research report. A proposition needs to be examined, analysed and synthesised in substantial depth. It is essential that teachers help students formulate and maintain focus on a proposal.

#### **The best candidates:**

- had a clearly enunciated purpose which underscored the whole project and was usually articulated in an abstract or introduction;
- arrived at a synthesised conclusion which drew together reflection on the material;
- used thorough, clearly documented and varied research;
- showed impeccable formatting and coherent organisation.

#### **The weaker candidates:**

- chose topics that were too broad;
- submitted material that was merely descriptive and presented no processing of information;
- showed paucity of research;

- plagiarised material.

## **DIRECTOR'S PRODUCTION NOTEBOOK**

### **Comments**

23 Director's Production Notebooks were submitted in 1995.

#### **The best candidates:**

- provided an imaginative, in some cases inspiring, vision for the staging of a production.;
- demonstrated an awareness of the contribution of all elements of production towards realising the vision;
- analysed characters, especially their psychology, in depth;
- provided strong evidence, through detailed annotation, of a sense of staging a scene, as opposed to repeating the writer's stage directions;
- organised and packaged their work clearly.

#### **The weaker candidates:**

- were vague, confused or unable to articulate the theme or concept;
- showed shallow analysis of character and the play's themes;
- revealed little or no understanding of the elements of drama or terminology like blocking or annotation;
- omitted key elements of the criteria.

### **Recommendations**

Students need to be thoroughly conversant with the roles and responsibilities of a director and be able to articulate an original, clearly defined vision of their production. The key skill is integration, an ability to relate the treatment of all aspects of production to a central concept.

## **DESIGN**

### **Comments**

There was notable improvement in candidates' understanding of the design process, and the appropriate format of presentation for each area - Costume, Set, Poster/Publicity and Lighting.

Candidates are realising the value of using a Design Concept Statement to assist in clarifying their work and intentions.

Problems with packaging and identification of component parts were fewer, particularly in the Poster/Publicity Designs when a check list was included and items clearly labelled.

**The best design candidates:**

- presented work that had an immediate and clear visual impact;
- used a design concept that clearly evolved from the text rather than one that was imposed upon it;
- demonstrated a thorough understanding of the play, particularly themes, characters, action, setting and moods;
- approached their design concept through symbol;
- included a clear, written statement of the design concept;
- followed the guidelines carefully, ensuring that each component of the design was thoroughly completed;
- demonstrated essential skills in sketching, drafting, model building or design layout;
- were aware of the theatrical process and the problems of transferring the design concept to the stage;
- sustained the concept throughout the project.

**The weaker design candidates:**

- presented their work poorly and inappropriately;
- showed little understanding of the play or the role of the theatre designer;
- failed to present a clear design concept;
- had little appreciation of the practicalities of theatre design;
- failed to include all items as required in the guidelines;
- lacked basic artistic skills such as sketching and drafting;
- failed to provide essential information that clarified the project eg. names of the characters, scenes, theatre space;
- did not sustain the design concept throughout the project.



# COSTUME DESIGN

## The best candidates:

- presented an original, innovative concept sustained throughout the project;
- executed renderings with an outstanding flair and presentation, using appropriate colours, textures and materials;
- developed a concept that was a visual image of the play and brought to life the personality, status and standing of each character;
- took into account the various aspects of the play (genre, lighting, set) as a total concept showing a realisation that costume design does not exist in isolation from the play as a whole;
- were accompanied by clear and effective support material such as written notes and swatches;
- addressed all the set criteria effectively;
- elected to illustrate a range of characters that reflected the scope of the text.

## The weaker candidates:

- presented a functional or literal interpretation of the text rather than showing creative originality;
- presented no design concept or one which was inappropriate;
- worked in stereotypes rather than characterisations;
- showed lack of understanding of the status of the characters;
- often lacked skills in execution;
- did not take enough care and detail in presentation;
- chose less appropriate characters who offered less scope for the design concept;
- imposed a time concept on the text, such as the 1960s or the future, rather than a design concept;
- failed to demonstrate a knowledge of the text through an effective interpretation of the play;
- submitted inadequate renderings without support material, eg. notes and swatches, which were poorly presented and explained;
- failed to address the basic criteria;
- failed to present the required components eg. number of renderings, number of characters.

## **SET DESIGN**

### **The best candidates:**

- presented a model which had an immediate and original visual impact that was strongly linked to the thematic concerns and technical needs of the play;
- took a symbolic rather than literal approach to staging;
- used the selected theatre space effectively, accounting for audience sightlines and seating arrangements;
- built the model to 1:25 mm scale and used appropriate materials that gave a clear indication of the visual and textural structure of the actual set;
- indicated logical and workable set changes, on an open stage, rather than relying on complex theatrical technology such as revolves, fly towers or intricate set changes;
- provided floor plans of the stage on a 1:25 mm scale;
- built any other props or furniture to scale;
- accounted for entrances and exits of the actors and for the ongoing action of the play.
- included a cut out human figure in 1.25 mm scale which helped to establish proportion.

### **The weaker candidates:**

- used a literal interpretation of staging such as recreating all locations in the play, rather than working on a symbolic level;
- presented a design that lacked a central, appropriate metaphor that could integrate the play as a whole;
- did not realise obvious problems of staging a production on the set that had been created;
- used the stage space inappropriately;
- did not build the model to scale;
- provided no floor plans of the stage;
- accounted for only one scene of the play;
- ignored entrances and exits for the actors;
- used poor construction.

## **POSTER, PROGRAM AND PROMOTIONAL COPY**

### **The best candidates:**

- presented two distinct and different concepts with strong visual impact and flair;
- encapsulated in each concept a visual image of the whole play;
- included all four mandatory visual items for each concept – poster, program cover, print advertisement and flyer;
- included the other three mandatory items of copy – one program insert, one brief media release, one in-depth treatment of the production;
- methodically presented the four visual items of each concept with a common image;
- used professional-style layout of design and typed material;
- showed a thorough understanding of the text, presented through the selection of material for the program insert and media release;
- had a clear idea of the intended audience;
- understood the image the theatre company wished to portray;
- included appropriate and essential information on all publicity items in appropriate layout and form;
- included a check list of each item of the project.

### **The weaker candidates:**

- lacked a visual metaphor and originality in the concepts;
- relied on computer technology to overcome conceptual difficulties;
- spent insufficient time developing the work;
- showed limited research, tending to copy with little understanding of the material;
- presented copy lacking in depth and personal response eg. program insert was basic without directorial information;
- presented concepts which were not distinctly different from each other;
- omitted to include one or more components of the project;
- showed poor understanding of the text;
- decided on bizarre or inappropriate interpretations of the text;
- failed to sustain the concepts across the project;
- showed poor understanding of the role of promotional material;

- included inaccurate information.

## **LIGHTING DESIGN**

### **The best candidates:**

- showed a thorough understanding of the text;
- presented a total design concept, creatively fulfilling the script requirements and effectively contributing to the ongoing dramatic action and mood;
- were innovative and original in concept;
- developed an effective directorial concept in staging the play, designing a set and lighting rig that was innovative and appropriate;
- presented all mandatory plans, diagrams, sheets etc in a form that was logical, comprehensive and professionally finished;
- communicated the concept effectively through a written statement that included a rationale;
- presented all work to 1:25 mm scale using appropriate terminology, notation and practices for lighting;
- provided technical information that was accurate, workable and comprehensive;
- clearly indicated all cues.

### **The weaker candidates:**

- presented a basic concept with little imagination;
- used lighting that was simply functional;
- showed only a basic understanding of the script;
- presented a directorial concept that lacked originality;
- omitted to present a directorial concept;
- had some technical knowledge but did not apply it effectively;
- listed only a limited number of lighting cues in obvious places;
- presented only a partially completed project or omitted significant items;
- showed little technical understanding and a simplistic approach;
- did not include a set, floor plan of theatre or cue sheet;
- overloaded or used dimmers ineffectively.

## **Recommendations**

- The design concept should be written and presented with the project, explaining the approach taken.
- All items should be labelled and identified clearly.
- Candidates need firm guidance developing their design concept and teachers should actively dissuade those which are inappropriate. Regular monitoring of Logbooks is essential.

## **VIDEO**

### **Comments**

It was obvious that many candidates had been encouraged and supported by teachers who demonstrated an understanding of the criteria. Regular presentation of logbooks and footage enables candidates understanding of the assessment criteria to be monitored as well as their research and progress.

### **The best candidates:**

- presented a clear narrative;
- established the setting, characters and mood in the opening shots/images;
- achieved dramatic tension and resolution;
- clearly communicated a concept using drama techniques with a range of video technology;
- tightly edited the piece using story and images to move the action forward;
- experimented with their shots before making final decisions;
- researched areas such as the subject matter, locations for filming and different video making styles;
- challenged the boundaries of their imagination but kept within their drama and video experience;
- used cast appropriate to the ages required by the script;
- considered sound quality and dealt with difficulties creatively;
- used special effects only to advance the story;
- presented a clearly identified genre;
- dubbed music post production to enhance the drama.

### **The weaker candidates:**

- presented pieces that were either too short or too long;
- lacked a coherent concept;
- produced documentaries and music clips that did not fulfil the criteria in the Subject Manual;
- did not develop ideas through character and story;
- were not creative in their choice of shots and/or images;
- did not give sufficient time to filming and editing;
- used a cast of students rather than actors of the appropriate age for the characters;
- used a cliched story line and stereotypical characters;
- did not use timing or pacing to communicate the meaning effectively.

### **Logbooks**

Logbooks should record the process of experimentation and development, together with the inclusions of storyboard and scripts.

### **Recommendations**

- The video must be submitted on a new tape, in VHS format, clearly identified with the candidate's number, the title of the video and the length of the tape.
- It is advisable to put down a control track on to the new tape before editing on to it.
- Submit the tape and logbook in a secure manner eg in a box file.
- Do not submit a video dubbed in long play.
- Experiment with making very short narratives on video before finalising the concept for the HSC video.
- Invent an original story and style within your own budget, rather than recreating movies or television.
- Use authentic props.
- Consider using prerecorded sound effects if appropriate to the style of the work.

# THE WRITTEN PAPER

## SECTION I

### Drama and Theatre in Australian Societies and Cultures

#### General Comments

Candidates handled well the new examination format, namely free response essays, rather than structured essays.

#### QUESTION 1 Contemporary Aboriginal Theatre

(a) **Aboriginal playwrights use a mixture of mime, poetry, dance and dialogue to present a vision of Aboriginal life.**

**How effectively are these dramatic forms used in The Keepers and The Dreamers?**

#### The stronger candidates:

- were able to develop the argument of the question;
- identified the use of mime, poetry, dance and dialogue in BOTH plays;
- supported this with appropriate reference to the text and explained why they were so effective in communicating the vision of aboriginal life to an audience;
- were able to link the various dramatic forms to present a compelling description of significant threads in the presentation of Aboriginal concepts in contemporary theatre;
- were also able to identify clearly the various dramatic conventions in both plays and describe their use in the plays;
- had a thorough knowledge of the play scripts and were able to see the concept of a vision of Aboriginal life to include hope and despair.

#### The weaker candidates:

- often mentioned only one play;
- sometimes confused the subject matter and dramatic forms of the two plays and were not specific enough in the examples used;
- were unable to deal effectively with the concept of a vision of Aboriginal life leading to some confused responses;
- sometimes presented a generalised discussion on aboriginal issues rather than the specific visions presented in the play;
- often referred vaguely to mime, poetry and dance but did not give specific examples from the texts;

- merely retold the stories, with some confusing the characters of the two plays.

Extract from a typical 'A' response:

*...In The Dreamers dance is used to show the dying of tradition. When sitting at home, the men of the play are drinking and telling stories, and listening to the radio, and every time a modern song is heard, there is a snap to silence and the painted dancer appears, thudding his feet and showing the difference between the European way and the tradition that needs to be held on to. This spirit is not seen by the characters on stage, so it is a tool for the audience, to show the contrast between the past and the present, he is the almost dead tradition, only left in the memories of the elders.*

*In The Keepers Maza has used a symbolic birth dance to open the play, with the white and black contrast showing the clashing of culture. This dance has the elements of music as well, the Scottish bagpipes and the didgeridoo playing together. The theme of the dance is the same for both women but uses different steps. It is used to set the theme for the play, the clash between cultures until at the end both come together...*

A typical 'D' response might read:

*In scene 1 of The Keepers a Scottish and Aboriginal dance and mime is shown. This straightaway shows the two different cultures by the way that they move, the way that they dance, the music and the way they have babies. This dance and mime shows how different the Aboriginals are from the Scottish. This mime and dance shows the differences more than the actors could say in words.*

**(b) Despite the humour in The Keepers and The Dreamers, there is a sense of pessimism about the ability of Aboriginal culture to survive in contemporary Australia.**

**How does the portrayal of the Aboriginal characters in the plays reflect this perception?**

**The stronger candidates:**

- acknowledged the place and effectiveness of humour, but related it to a sense of pessimism;
- presented an argument which balanced humour and pessimism and explained specific characters portrayal of these aspects;
- argued successfully against the suggestion of a sense of pessimism ;
- were also able to focus on the significant aboriginal characters in both plays, using references to white characters, eg. Elizabeth, to highlight the strength of aboriginal characters eg. Mirnat;
- included insights into contemporary aboriginal culture and were able to link these to characters or scenarios in the two plays;



- were able to demonstrate clearly the problems of survival for aboriginal culture and some were able to discuss this in the wider political framework of aboriginal theatre and its place in contemporary culture;
- showed specific knowledge of the text using judicious, relevant quotations.

**The weaker candidates:**

- did not refer to the humour in the plays and were unable to define and discuss the sense of pessimism ;
- made no links between the aboriginal characters and their reflection of contemporary aboriginal culture and did not refer to sufficient characters;
- sometimes referred to only one play, or made scant reference to the second play.

Extract from the introduction to a typical 'B' response:

*The Dreamers is a play about the difficulties Aboriginals face in retaining their culture and living on the fringe of white society. Jack Davis portrays his characters, Worru being the central focus, with a link of knowledge of the idea. The characters are pressured with such things as poverty and isolation and although there is some aspect of pessimism the characters also portray a certain hope for the future.*

*The Keepers, written by Bob Maza, is also a play where the characters face problems in retaining their cultural heritage but ultimately, through the knowledge and understanding that is shown by the characters there is a certain semblance of optimism.*

*The Dreamers has been tinted with humour and on the surface it seems that situations have been made light of by Davis ... It must be observed that the play cannot be measured by white societies understandings as episodes such as men drinking had been intended to show that the communal spirit had been retained...*

The conclusion of a typical 'D' response might be:

*...Davis shows that each of his characters has developed a more contemporary Australian approach on their life, but still wants to hold on to their aboriginality. Where Mazas have developed a more Australian attitude and are trying to break free of their Aboriginality. Part through them and part through the white characters that are in the play.*

*The characters involved in the drama have been influenced by the Australian culture and are adversely affected by this influence and the plays are warning against this, as they see that if something isn't done to stop the loss of Aboriginal culture then it will be registered non-existent by the white contemporary culture.*

## QUESTION 2 David Holman

This topic was generally well answered and the majority of candidates chose to answer Question(a).

**(a) David Holman believes that young children need to be made aware of issues that may confront them, and that the theatre is an ideal medium to do this.**

**Discuss this statement with reference to the subject matter and dramatic structures used in No Worries and The Small Poppies.**

### **The stronger candidates:**

- showed a clear understanding of the subject matter and dramatic structures employed in both plays, and specific and detailed knowledge of the texts;
- were able to examine issues and themes, character and plot and the function of the elements of drama and how they related to the structures;
- could discuss the question strongly and more intimately from the point of view of performance because of their own experience of workshopping the text;
- were also able to explain why the theatre was so ideal a medium for dealing with the issues;
- were able also to discuss in depth the implications of the quote, with references to Holman's ideology, but this was not common.

### **The weaker candidates:**

- simply listed the issues and devices without exploring them;
- were unable to address the idea of the medium of theatre ;
- did not give sufficient evidence to support their understanding of dramatic structures;
- sometimes made generalised lists of the issues raised in the plays eg. multiculturalism, but did not give specific examples from either play;
- discussed Theatre in Education without reference to Holman or the plays;
- referred to only one play.

Extract from a typical 'A' response:

*...Lep, the Cambodian girl, is Holman's tool to communicate the issue of immigration.*

*Two Cambodian girls are asleep amongst thousands of people .*

*The sounds produced by the off stage voices would be intriguing to a small child. The plight of Lep and her sister Noi, that of refugees, would not become apparent until the voice of the captain:*

*Shortly my staff will be issuing immigration passes to all passengers.*

*This integration of subject matter and dramatic structure helps the young audience absorb Holman's message.*

*The issue of immigration is further communicated by Theo's father. The use of the Greek language would sound strange to the children, thus furthering their awareness of immigration.*

*Theo's Dad is also important in making the problems of illiteracy apparent.*

*'Hey, I no Typewrite.'*

*It is debateable at first as to whether Theo's dad is illiterate or unable to type. As he plays the computer game at Mr Brennan's school it becomes apparent that his problem is literacy...*

A typical 'D' response might include:

*Children are not as likely to get fidgety and are more likely to learn if they are having fun. Quite often children will be able to understand things a lot better if they can actually see what the people are going through, such as in Small Poppies and No Worries. In these plays children can often relate to the characters, feel what they feel, understand what is happening and quite often learn from these situations if they haven't yet experience them.*

*Moving can be quite a bad experience for young people but David Holman has shown you can get through it and everything will turn out in one way or another.*

**(b) Discuss the techniques that David Holman uses to make both adults and children see the action through the eyes of hid child characters in EITHER No Worries OR The Small Poppies.**

**The stronger candidates:**

- showed a thorough knowledge of and appreciation for the play selected;
- were able to name and substantially comment on the techniques used by Holman, relating them to the action or characters;
- were also able to focus specifically on how both adults and children see the action through his child's eyes, some going beyond the role reversal to showed deep understanding of Holman's techniques of presentation;
- referred to specific sections of the chosen play to illustrate a point using quotation or general reference.

**The weaker candidates:**

- simply retold the story without reference to the techniques, or listed some techniques but were not able to discuss them;
- were unable to integrate the two parts of the question and made only generalised comments about adults seeing the action through the eyes of child characters ;
- sometimes discussed both texts.

**QUESTION 3 State and Regional Theatre Companies**

It would seem that this topic becomes difficult to deal with effectively unless an intimate association can be established between the company and the candidates.

**(a) State and regional theatre companies must provide satisfying entertainment for their audiences, fulfil the guidelines of the funding bodies, and seek to develop future audiences.**

**Discuss ways in which the theatre company you have studied attempts to satisfy these aims.**

**The stronger candidates:**

- dealt with how the current artistic and financial policies met the needs of their audiences and possibly extended their expectation of themselves as theatre goers;
- discussed the artistic ability of the company, the various means that the company relied on for funding and were able to explain the nature of current changes, discuss the reasons for this evolution and comment on its effectiveness;
- were familiar with current projects and programs and had a broad knowledge of the company chosen for study.

**The weaker candidates:**

- presented set or prepared answers that did not address the question and only stated the aims and policies, often including information that was out of date or inaccurate;
- were unable to demonstrate an intimacy or understanding of the evolving nature of the company and various aspects of its current work.

Extract from the introduction to a typical 'A' response:

*...Being a flagship company the Sydney Theatre Company (STC) has the responsibility of providing quality theatre for the people. Its primary objective is to entertain but it also has the responsibility of unifying the country through a better understanding of our culture. It achieves its objectives not only through its main subscription season but also through developmental wings such as New*

*Stages, APT and its extensive educational program. It is through this repertory that the STC aims to entertain its audience, fulfil the guidelines of the Australia Council and the Federal Arts Funding body, as well as attract new audiences.*

*The overall aim of the STC is to entertain and educate. Obviously to entertain they have to provide high quality theatre. So the basis of entertaining is variety it offers in its subscription season. Not only does this have to be of high entertainment value, but it is also necessary that it attracts audiences so as to fund other ventures such as New Stages and APT...*

An introduction of a typical 'D' response might be:

*The theatre company which our class studied was the Sydney Theatre Company. The ways in which it provides satisfying entertainment is by being a flagship company. The Sydney Theatre company only plays productions which have proved successful at other venues, therefore there is no real risk of losing money and low numbers. The big budget productions are performed at the Sydney Theatre Company because the public will flock to see them. A way the STC also develops future audiences is by playing modern productions that will appeal to a wide range of audience eg. Saint Joan.*

**(b) How does its recent choice of plays fulfil the current artistic policy of the State or Regional theatre company you have studied?**

**The stronger candidates:**

- showed a thorough knowledge of the current artistic policy of the company and the current season;
- were able to exemplify points of policy by referring to productions;
- were able to explain the choice and balance of genre, Australian and non-Australian content and comment on audience maintenance and audience development.

**The weaker candidates:**

- found it difficult to write extensively on this topic as there was need to develop individual structure for the response rather than depending on the question to provide that structure as was the case in part (a);
- sometimes listed the artistic policy in point form without further discussion;
- made sketchy reference to recent plays or excessive discussion about one play;
- used out of date or inaccurate information;
- showed lack of intimacy with the company and its current situation.

A typical 'C' response might include:

*...Over the past few years the Sydney Theatre Company has developed a reputation for being the best theatre company in Australia partly due to their touring program funded by the Government Grant Touring Scheme. Plays such as David Williamson's Dead White Males have been swapped with companies in other states eg. Melbourne. This scheme has not been limited to the national theatre circuit however, Paris Plays Sydney in February this year involved the Wharf Theatre enjoying a week of contemporary French plays semi-acted and directed by Australians in English. In return the STC sent six plays to the Comedie Francaise, two by Australian women playwrights Hannie Rayson and Karen Mainwaring, to be read in French.*

A typical 'D' response might read:

*The Sydney Theatre Company is a flagship company of the state of NSW. The company was established in 1979 and took up residency at The Wharf at Walsh Bay in 1984. Being the state theatre company it has to keep up to the high standards and expectations.*

*The artistic policy provides the information that the Sydney Theatre Company offers the best plays from Australian, overseas and classics. This last season has seen great plays from each of the three categories, I saw Sweet Phoebe which got great reviews and went really well. This season has delivered what was promised New Stages in the STC as well. The Sydney Theatre Company keeps growing and becoming more successful. King Lear a classic Shakespeare was also performed.*

#### **QUESTION 4      Community Theatre in Australia**

**(a) How does a community theatre group that you have studied express a particular philosophy or ideology through its choice of subject matter and performance style.**

##### **The stronger candidates:**

- expressed very clearly their understanding of the inherent diversity and nebulous nature of community theatre;
- had a clear idea of the concept of Community Theatre and addressed the question in a structured response;
- defined and explained particular philosophies or ideologies and were able to express how these were reflected in both the subject matter and performance style of the particular community theatre(s) studied;
- had a good sense of what a Community Theatre could do for a community and provided examples.

##### **The weaker candidates:**

- didn't understand the meaning of a philosophy or ideology or neglected to deal with this part of the question;

- sometimes presented a confused concept of Community Theatre, while others gave a superficial overview;
- simply retold a case study from the Fotheringham text with little or no interpretative analysis or reference to the ideology and the selected works.

Extract from a typical 'A' response:

*Sidetrack Theatre Company, based in Marrickville is renowned for expressing the ideology of Brecht, particularly during the 1980's. They primarily do this through their choice of subject matter and performance style.*

*Sidetrack produces performances that deal with the issues and concerns of the socially non-dominant; migrants, the working class, women and children. They give those who are usually neglected in a capitalist society a chance to articulate their opinions. Thus, like Brecht, Sidetrack can be considered a socialist theatre in a capitalist society.*

*Sidetrack provided a voice for migrants in 1988 with its production of Kin. This was created in reaction against the media images of happy faces multiculturalism that the Bicentennial Production conveyed. However, these images the pain and suffering that accompanied immigration, nor did it the socio-economic situation of these people. Kin was an attempt to comb at these hyper-real images and to give a sense of cultural identity to the audience...*

**(b) Why should a community need a community theatre? How do the performances of the theatre group you have studied address the needs of the specific audiences?**

**The stronger candidates:**

- were able to address the question of need and discussed the philosophy behind community theatre when explaining why there is a need for community theatre;
- were able to show a detailed and personal knowledge of a community theatre group, suggesting an immediacy of experience which individualised responses;
- wrote in detail of the processes involved in community theatre, were specific in addressing the needs of the audience, named the audience for whom the work was developed and acknowledged the interconnection of all contributors to community theatre.

**The weaker candidates:**

- did not define community theatre and were unable to address the question of need;
- gave no rationale for the presence of community theatre in that community;
- were unable to discuss more than one performance because of the case study they chose to discuss;

- named performances but didn't show a knowledge of their purpose, indicating a lack of intimacy with the community theatre.

Extract from a typical 'A' response:

*...One main community theatre which has had a great impact on today's society is the Access Arts group, which was formed in the 1980's and has produced many types of different community theatre, the main one being the Theatre of the Disabled through The Cast Off Project.*

*The Cast Off Project is a group of disabled actors who came together in the 1980s and who have worked their way nationally and internationally. These actors have to deal with many emotional needs as well as verbal and visual needs. They have substantial information which is told through their performances...their main theme being to express to the audiences that the disabled community should be treated equally and should have the same rights as everyone else in the community.*

*The main ingredient in their performance is comedy. They don't want the audience to leave with a guilt complex but to leave laughing as well as pondering on the message which has been given...*

## QUESTION 5      Nineteenth Century Melodrama

**(a) This photograph illustrates the tableau or picture at the end of Act II in an early presentation of Robbery Under Arms.**

**Discuss the use of tableau in early Nineteenth-century melodrama. Analyse this particular tableau in terms of the stage setting, and the placement and posture of the actors.**

### **The stronger candidates:**

- showed a definite understanding of what the tableau represented and its purpose in the melodrama;
- were able to focus clearly on the picture (at the end of Act II) and used it as a springboard to discuss other techniques used in the play, and highlight their knowledge of typical staging techniques used in melodrama;
- integrated all parts of the question.

### **The weaker candidates:**

- didn't understand what a tableau was or how it was used in melodrama;
- discussed the tableau without reference to the play or merely discussed the photograph;
- did not refer to the tableau at all;



- were unable to place the given scene in the context of the play and were unaware of the identity of the characters represented in the picture.

Extract from the introduction to a typical 'A' response:

*The tableau in nineteenth century melodrama was an essential aspect of that style. Along with music, lighting and scenery, the tableau was used to build up the tension and anticipation of the audience.*

*The photograph is typical of melodrama tableaux as it occurs at a stage of great excitement and tension, with strong stances and poses. The stage setting, placement and posture of the actors was essential in developing a strong and effective tableau to finish off each act...*

*At the end of each act the audience was presented with a tableau to maintain their interest until the beginning of the following Act. This technique is seen today in daytime soaps where just before an advertisement a character will be ready to reveal a secret vital to the plot and the actors stop the action and stare at the camera or at each other. The tableau was used in a similar way, making the audience frustrated and anxious for the characters they were identifying with...*

A corresponding introduction from a typical 'D' response might read:

*The stage setting is very fancy. There is trees at either side of the stage. There is a horse and a wagon and there is a backdrop showing scenes from the bush. This scene lives up to the idea that stage settings in melodrama are very elaborate.*

*There are many actors on the stage at this moment. On the left hand side there are ten actors who are playing soldiers. They are holding rifles. They are at the front left side of the stage and their stance and postures are all alike...*

**(b) Although mostly set in Australia, both The Sunny South and Robbery Under Arms are examples of true Britishness.**

**Discuss this statement with reference to BOTH texts.**

**The stronger characters:**

- clearly defined what was meant by true Britishness and also introduced the concept of Australianness;
- were prepared to write against the question, presenting arguments well and discussing the dramatic and theatrical aspects of both plays with detailed references to events and characters;
- were able to discuss the plays in the historical and political context of colonialism and the Federation era;
- were able to consider at the characteristics of English and Australian melodrama and make comparisons that were relevant to the question.

**The weaker candidates:**

- agreed with the statement but seemed unclear as to the definition of true Britishness simplistically defining it as calling Britain home or characters coming from Britain;
- made little attempt to refer in depth to either of the plays;
- simply retold the story of the plays or of one play.

Extract from a typical 'B' response might be:

*...In Robbery Under Arms the hero Captain Starlight is British, it is his wit and charm that sets him apart from the villains and also from his Australian mates. But it is his grace and virtue that truly make him a hero, not his country of origin. He is described by other characters in the highest terms, such as Dick and Jim who state he can swim like a musk-duck and track like a Myall blackfellow. His respect of women is evident in his statement we don't rob women.*

*Matt Morley in The Sunny South has British ancestry, he again is set apart as the hero by his virtue. Both The Sunny South and Robbery Under Arms though, were written for Australian audiences. Many of these people were British, but the melodramas were adapted to represent a truly Australian life...*

An extract from a typical 'D' response might include:

*Both of the plays have references to outlaws or bushrangers shows me this is how people from Britain saw Australia as being like.*

*Also because most of the settlers here in Australia were British this is probably how their plays were written so they adapted them to suit or to the Australian audiences.*

*The British element in The Sunny South is seen when Matt Morley goes to Britain.*

**QUESTION 6 Alma De Groen**

**(a) Alma de Groen's plays say almost as much through structure and visual design as through dialogue.**

**Discuss this statement with reference to The Rivers of China.**

**The stronger candidates:**

- clearly defined what they understood as structure and visual design and gave detailed examples to support this understanding;
- explained the importance and strength of structure, visual design and dialogue in a balanced, well-structured response using references from appropriate sections of the text;

- showed a thorough knowledge of the play and were able to use quotation and example effectively.

**The weaker candidates:**

- were not able to discuss visual design;
- relied on a retelling of the story of the play rather than answering the question;
- were obviously working from an English literary study rather than a Drama blue print for performance;
- ignored the reference to dialogue;
- presented prepared answers on structure which had no relation to the question.

Extract from a typical ‘A’ response might include:

*...The Rivers of China parallels two stories, each in a different time. The first, describing the last few years of Katherine Mansfield’s life is set in Gurdjieff’s institute for the harmonious development of man, and is set in 1922 – the past. The second storyline, although stated in the play to be set in the present year, has a futuristic feel about it. It is a female dystopia – where women have all the power and men are suppressed – a total reversal of the traditional gender roles. Each story has a similar purpose though – to direct the audience’s focus on gender roles; identity in relation to the roles; to the search for the soul and the identity questions that arise through this, and on getting rid of masks – these being major themes of the play.*

*While these themes are realised through the dialogue and the characters, the structure and visual design of the play add to this realisation and in turn, help to create the meaning of the play...*

<p><b>(b) Discuss how the theatrical style of <u>The Rivers of China</u> and one other of Alma der Groen’s play explores the related concepts of gender, personal identity and transformation.</b></p>
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**The stronger candidates:**

- showed clear understanding of theatrical style and made intelligent links between the style used and the issues being addressed eg. transformation;
- covered the three concepts addressed by the question showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the two plays and using detailed references;
- revealed a strong literary understanding of the plays and often included discussion of de Groen as a playwright with an overt feminist polemic thread in her work;
- presented sophisticated responses that revealed insight and advanced levels of expression.

### The weaker candidates:

- dealt with theatrical style in a generalised way and did not attempt to explore the concepts of personal identity or transformation;
- focused on the question of gender or personal identity without referring to theatrical style;
- simply retold the story;
- presented a prepared answer that did not relate to the question;
- referred to only one play.

Extract from a typical 'A' response:

*...In The Rivers of China de Groen uses the characters of Katherine Mansfield and others man as metaphors for the existence of women in our present day society. She cleverly juxtaposes time, place and political opinions with the roles of an emancipated female writer in a predominantly male supremacy world of 1922 with that of the man, a radical activist in a usurped dystopia of the present day...*

*...The Girl who Saw Everything is potently laden with the issue of the transformation of Liz and Gaz, as well as Saul and Edwina, who undergo changes in the analysis of their own lives to determine their inner selves...*

A typical 'E' response might be:

*Alma de Groen a writer of feminist works like The Rivers of China and also Vocations talks about the concepts of gender, personal identity and transformation.*

*Both plays are similar. The question of who one really are and why we are here. eg. firstly Vocations' main character the writer, married to Godfrey the teacher, Vicky the actress is with Ross the scientist.*

## QUESTION 7 Contemporary Women's Comedy

**(a) Discuss the similarities and differences between the performance styles of TWO female comedians you have studied.**

### The stronger candidates:

- referred to two contemporary, female, Australian comedians, were able to analyse the performance styles of both and highlighted the similarities and differences in style;
- used a balanced approach and showed good understanding of the meaning of performance style, relating it to context, the history of the performer and the method of imparting material.

**The weaker candidates:**

- chose inappropriate performers, who were, for example, not Australian or not contemporary or not performing comedians eg. Kaz Cook;
- discussed similarities but not differences (or vice versa);
- were unable to distinguish a performance style or link it to the material, or wrote mainly about content;
- referred to groups rather than individuals or discussed TV show comedians or characters;
- took the question literally and compared looks, movements and physical characteristics of the performers;
- presented prepared material on the history of women's comedy which they were unable to relate to the question.

A typical 'C' response could read:

*Sue Ingleton has always wanted to change the face of domestic womanhood. Women are constantly being degraded by men sexually. She believes that women need to let their anger out, let flow. Sue is a feminist and bases her work around society. Her performance style is created by changing her anger into comedy.*

*Rachel Berger does the same thing. Rachel believes in equality. She creates her humour through her bad experiences with men.*

**(b) I personally don't agree with the concept of women's comedy. I think it's a bit patronising to women. If you can't hold your own against the men, then what are you doing? If you're funny, you're funny.**

**KITTY FLANAGAN 1994**

**Discuss this statement.**

The open-endedness of the question made it more difficult for the weaker students and may have accounted for the wide range of approaches to the question.

**The stronger candidates:**

- demonstrated a definite position on Kitty Flanagan's statement, then confidently proceeded to analyse the various points, making their own position on the concept of women's comedy very clear, with detailed evidence drawn from a wide knowledge of contemporary female comedians;
- referred to historical background, merely as an overview to put current women's comedy in context;

- chose to argue against the statement and presented strong, well-structured arguments;
- were able to present highly sophisticated analyses balancing historical, political, social and performance aspects of the topic.

**The weaker candidates:**

- didn't demonstrate an understanding of the philosophy or ideology behind womens comedy but tended to write a gender-based response that did not relate to the question;
- merely presented a history of womens comedy;
- did not refer to any female comedians;
- presented an apparently prepared response on the history of womens comedy, which they were unable to relate to the question.

Extract from the introduction to a typical 'A' response might include:

*Feminist writer Lynne Spencer asserts in her article Funny Girl that Women's comedy takes the powerful rather than the pitiful as its material and in this way becomes subversive.*

*Whilst to Kitty Flanagan the idea of womens comedy may seem patronizing in today's patriarchal society it is still necessary. Flanagan's quite honest statement seems essentially to be suggesting that there is no difference between men and women's humour. However as women are still a somewhat underprivileged subclass in our patriarchal society women comedians do tend to adopt a more vicious and subversive form of humour as they attack the constraints of beauty, sex, politics and the still persisting, though outdated idea of women as a subclass...*

An extract from a typical 'D' response might be:

*Kitty Flanagan summed it up exactly. There can't be just women's comedy and men's comedy. Men and women should work together to make comedy work for both sexes.*

*Although when women first started out in comedy, men wrote their scripts and told them how to act and do whatever else to make the scene funny, then in the 1940s women began to do their own comedy as most of the men away at the war. The women needed some entertainment and so women performed for other women and it became very popular.*

## SECTION 11

### Drama and Theatre in Societies and Cultures Other Than Australian

#### QUESTION 8 Greek Tragedy

This topic requires an in depth and comprehensive study of the texts and social and theatrical conventions of Greek tragedy. The questions presumed the candidates had this knowledge.

**(a) Discuss the differences between the contributions of the chorus in *Antigone* and *The Bacchae*.**

The question was clear in directing students to an appropriate response - with an accessible choice in terminology eg. contributions. It was a good drama question which discriminated successfully across the range of students.

#### The stronger candidates:

- showed an understanding that the contribution of the chorus in each play reflected the author's intention/purpose;
- had a strong understanding of the conventions of Greek Theatre and the social and cultural contexts of the plays;
- were able to discuss the relationship between the role of the chorus both plays accurately, while indicating some understanding of the subtlety with which each playwright had used the chorus to control the audience's understanding of the play.

#### The average candidates:

- were able successfully to report/describe differences, but invariably failed to discuss the differences, often simply retelling the story.

#### The weaker candidates:

- either described the conventions of the chorus with little or no reference to the plays, or retold the story with no reference to the chorus;
- displayed frequent factual inaccuracies, showing a poor knowledge of the texts, with some dealing with similarities instead of differences.

Extract from a typical 'A' response might be:

*...The function of a chorus is the same throughout Greek tragedy. It can express opinions, give advice, narrate, act, participate or spectate. The chorus heightens dramatic effects. It can set the play's location and the past happenings which affect the action of the play. It can comment to the audience on the events that are occurring or re-tell legends that parallel or have impact upon the action.*

*The chorus can add spectacle through the beautiful dances and the images that the poetry creates in others mind of the audience. There songs allow them to comment on the themes and the action, whilst giving time for the audience to take in all that has happened or prepare them for what is to come.*

*Aristotle said the chorus is an inactive watcher whose function is to display a friendly attitude to those on stage...*

A typical 'E' response might read:

*There were not many differences in both plays but one was much stronger than the other because of the way the play was performed the chorus in Antigone were mainly in the background but they also played their role in the play.*

*Whereas in Bacchae they would of used the messengers to do things. The chorus were also at the beginning of many tragedy to tell the poems.*

**(b) Discuss the ways visual elements might have been used to heighten the impact of the tragedy on the audience in the original production of EITHER Antigone OR The Bacchae.**

From the responses it would seem that this question proved ambiguous with its use of the word might because it gave the candidates scope to make directional suggestions that knowingly broke Greek theatre conventions.

It did, however, require a more sophisticated and comprehensive understanding of the form and practice of Greek tragedy i.e. visual elements, nature of tragedy, impact on audience in performance, and a detailed knowledge of the play. It did attempt to direct candidates to the theatre of the plays.

**The stronger candidates:**

- were able to bring the script to life through the description of the visual elements and their impact on the tragedy for a Greek audience;
- showed a thorough knowledge of the techniques and staging of the original productions.

**The average candidates:**

- had a good knowledge of Greek theatre conventions, but did not discuss how these elements heighten the impact of the tragedy.

**The weaker candidates:**

- showed little or no understanding of what constituted a theatrical use of visual elements;
- simply retold sections of the story or dealt with non-visual elements, such as sound;
- referred to both plays in this section.



A typical 'B' response might include:

*Euripides was a playwright who had become a master at creating spectacle and dramatic effect. In The Bacchae he used many visual elements to heighten the impact and ultimately shock the audience. He used the traditional conventions of the performance space, masks, costumes, the chorus and then enhanced these to create what was magnificent theatre...*

*...In this scene Pentheus dresses as a woman and asks Dionysus if his hems hang straight and proceeds to walk through the streets of Thebes, a situation which would have been highly amusing to the original Greek audience.*

A typical 'C' response might read:

*On stage a production of The Bacchae could be very effective with colours and different scenes. The stage would show that the play took place in the kingdom of Thebes which would have been grey and boring so they might have painted flags and flowers on the sides called pinalees and some pictures of kings. They could have put in the rooms in the palace and revolved the scenery around. There may have been chairs and tables on the proskenian...*

## **QUESTION 9      Ibsen: The Realist Phase**

The questions focused on important aspects of the plays and an awareness of Ibsen as a visual dramatist.

**A.    Discuss the ways in which Ibsen use visual images as symbols in EITHER A Doll's House OR The Wild Duck.**

This question was popular and was discriminating in that responses covered a wide range of marks. It allowed better candidates to discuss their depth of understanding of images as symbols whilst weaker candidates were clearly identifiable because of their concrete interpretations. *A Doll's House* seemed to be the more accessible play for this question.

### **The stronger candidates:**

- clearly understood the definitions of visual images and symbolism and the effect these would have on the audience;
- explained the relationship of symbolism to the thematic concerns of the play, acknowledging that symbolism was important to Ibsen's style as a playwright;
- were also able to write comprehensively about a variety of visual images, including lighting, set, costume, blocking, movement, gesture and props;
- acknowledged the historical context of the plays, noting the development of Realism and Ibsen's influence.

### The weaker candidates:

- listed token symbols such as the macaroons, Christmas tree, tarantella, without linking them adequately to the developing action/themes or explaining how they are expressed through movement or gesture;
- discussed symbols, but chose those which were not visual images, especially in *The Wild Duck*;
- wrote too generally, without adequate evidence or examples from the text, whilst others wrote too briefly with little depth;
- merely retold the story and failed to address the question, were confused about the characters or discussed both plays, instead of one as required.

Extracts from a typical 'A' response:

*...The proscenium arch picture frame stage is perfect for all realism, but particularly for Ibsen's A Doll's House. With its box set and fourth wall it reflects perfectly Nora's imprisonment within her seemingly comfortable but false world with her husband Torvald. The imaginary fourth wall separating actor from audience, depicts once again Nora's isolation, thus amplifying her imprisonment.*

*Ibsen's brilliant use of the visual in conveying meaning to his audience extends further than merely stage structure. His ingenious use of the set in conjunction with the stage, provides a more intense and clearer visual picture of Ibsen's messages.*

*It must be noted initially that the set is the sole set used through the course of the play, once again symbolising Nora's entrapment within her false world.*

*The setting is a cluttered set, a beautiful and pretty set, filled with chairs and sofas and delicate pretty things, such as china figures, flowers, ornaments and engravings.*

*It is indeed a beautiful set but it only amplifies Nora and Torvald's illusionary relationship and home...because in reality neither exists within their home or within their relationship...*

*The set provides a building block upon which Ibsen can further create his masterpiece by adding properties to create other visual effects.*

*The Christmas tree signifies a very important visual image to the audience, not only reflecting the that it is Christmas time, a time that is shrouded in the aesthetic and worldly with false merriment, but provides a striking contrast...*

**(b) To thine own self be true.**

**How is this ideal explored in *A Doll's House* and *The Wild Duck*?**

This question was answered well by the more able candidates, but did not attract the full range of marks. It was felt to be the more difficult of the questions.

### **The strongest candidates:**

- were able to compare and contrast Ibsen's treatment of the theme in both plays in an integrated answer;
- discussed several characters from each play, showing a good understanding of the concept 'To thine own self be true'.

### **The weaker candidates:**

- failed to understand the concept to thine own self be true and tended to discuss only concrete examples of lies and deceit in both texts;
- didn't fully understand ideal and confused it with Greger's Summons to the ideal and the idealised family life in *A Doll's House*;
- retold the plot without referring to the question or the quotation;
- only discussed one play;
- were too general, with insufficient specific evidence from the text.

Extract from a typical 'A' response:

*...Ibsen particularly believed that human beings were shaped by heredity, social milieu and the pressures of the moment. In both plays Ibsen seeks to break through this in order to find the truth. Thus both in The Wild Duck and A Doll's House, Ibsen breaks the illusions of characters in the plays and brings them to a point of realisation about the truth. In The Wild Duck Ibsen grapples with truth and illusion and the potentially destructive nature of idealism. Through this he seeks to confront audiences by breaking the rules and hypocrisy of society and showing the audience the importance of individuality. The illusionary world that Werle creates for the Ekdals allows the Ekdals to create an illusionary world for The Wild Duck. Ibsen tries to show that people often lead lives of illusion in order to be happy.*

*When Gregers tries to impose his own idealism on the idyllic surrounds of the Ekdal family, Ibsen show the destructive nature of idealism and the importance of understanding oneself before imposing one's will on another...*

*The lighting is important; it is different in each act and is calculated to correspond to the mood that leaves its own special mark on each of the five acts, the idyllic surrounds of Act III Daylight streams in from a window in the sloping roof, the curtains are drawn back...a few doves fly back and forth is shattered by the imposition of Gregers idealism and by the end of Act IV, it begins to grow dark. By Act V, when Gregers idealism has finally resulted in the destruction of the Ekdal family...a cold morning light filters in...*

A typical 'B' response might conclude:

*The ideal To thine own self be true is revealed in the conclusion of the play when Hedvig takes her own life with the pistol. The tragedy of this waste of an innocent, loving child is heightened by Gina and Hjalmar having the truth forced on them. But they will still live a life lie and will never be truly happy, demonstrating the consequences of self deception...*

## QUESTION 10 Dada Theatre

(a) Much Dada Theatre involves a calculated insult to the audience. The question that remains to be answered is, why?

Describe some of the insulting elements used in specific Dada pieces, and explain this desire to provoke the audience.

### The strongest candidates:

- demonstrated a better sense of the historical and intellectual context framing the performances;
- differentiated between the different types of audiences in the relevant contexts (and their specific responses);
- gave specific explanations of the effects that particular performances had upon audiences, demonstrating an appreciation of style;
- presented a coherent account of the philosophy of the movement and supplied appropriate examples.

### The weaker candidates:

- did not discriminate between the different types of audiences;
- described the insults but were not able to offer explanations for the them;
- were not able to relate performances to specific social conditions;
- were unable to differentiate Dada performance from Dada art;
- appeared to be rewriting rote-learnt facts.

A typical 'A' response might include:

*...revolted and greatly affected by the destruction and carnage of World War I, the Dadas were born. Sensing the need for artistic freedom, they subsequently protested against a society they believed had insulted their every sensibility. They felt the need to destroy all existing conventions, namely Anti Art, the Dadas Theatre introduced the use of very provocative material and performance styles to express their strong concerns for the future of the century...*

A typical 'D' response could read:

*...Dada theatre was a small group of people who got together to shoe there thoughts and feelings about the war and they showed this in insulting ways. Dada started in 1914 in a small cafe called Carbaray Voltaire in Zurich. Hugo Ball was one of its first members. Their plays were rude and very insulting for the people to watch but it was to get the point across...*

(b) Dada was born from a need for independence, and a distrust of accepted ideas. People who join us keep their freedom.

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**How is this declaration reflected in the theatrical techniques and performance styles used in Dada theatre?**

**The stronger candidates:**

- gave lengthier responses which dealt with the issues (eg. of independence, accepted ideas, freedom), differentiating between them and explaining how they were reflected in specific performance practices.

**The weaker candidates:**

- discussed theatrical techniques and performance styles but did not relate them to the statement;
- did not provide enough specific examples connecting the practice with the issues, Sometimes they appeared to be reciting rote-learned facts.

Extract from a typical 'A' response:

*Sound poetry was a series of made up sounds or noises that demonstrated the pointlessness of language and language's inability to perform the things it was meant to do such as negotiation and communication. Often the Dadas would make up languages themselves or use multi-lingual texts. Simultaneous poetry demonstrated the fact that many things go on at once. This confused the audience even further.*

*The notion of chance poetry was introduced to parallel life and the uncontrollability of life and fate, the fact that humans have no control over their destiny or things that are bigger than they are such as politics and war...*

*The Dadas parodied and satirised what they saw happening in society. They held a mirror up to society and with their shock tactics they provoked the audience into thinking and questioning their values...*

A typical 'D' response might read:

*In relating this theory to the Dada stages in each phase you see a resemblance of eg. Anger/Depression in their work. Relating Anger/Depression Colone Hanover in the Pastoral Play you can see the anger in the boy, frustration in the sherhardes who wouldn't curtsy at the right time...*

## Question 11 Peter Brook

There were only a few responses to this question but they were generally of a high standard. They appear to have only a few resources to assist them, seeming to rely only on the text for information on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Question (a) was most popular and generally answered better.

**(a) Peter Brook has made his productions both gut-wrenching and intellectually stimulating for the audience.**

**Discuss the distinctive ways in which Peter Brook achieves this.**

### **The strongest candidates:**

- understood and defined the terms gut wrenching and intellectually stimulating and related them well to Artaud and Brecht and their influence on Peter Brook;
- seemed to have more trouble understanding or verbalising what intellectually stimulating than they did with gut wrenching;
- were able to use effective examples from the productions and the texts.

### **The weaker candidates:**

- were unable to refer to specific plays to substantiate their responses to Peter Brooks theories;
- may have benefited from a direct reference to the texts in the question.

A typical 'A' response might include:

*Brook not only used Artaudian devices in an effort to make his plays gut-wrenching, but believed in Artaud's concept of removing the barriers between audience and actor for a shared theatrical experience. His plays aim to incorporate the audience into the space...His research centre CIRT is dedicated to this as is the fire damaged theatre in France where the plays he produces are about transitional states such as The Cherry Orchard. The actual space is large and empty with maximum actor-audience interaction...*

*...Brook's production of King Lear saw the play being approached from a neutral point, to dispel the myth that Lear is necessarily right, and also he hoped for the actors to create their characters independent of Lear's journey...*

A typical 'C' response may read:

*...in the rehearsal process Brook uses the actors to dig below the script to get out all the inner meaning of each scene, Brook knows what he doesn't like and knows what he does like...when Brook was to produce Weiss's Marat/Sade he involved the whole cast in a before script exercise studying psycho people institutions...*

**(b) What is Peter Brook's vision of the role of a theatre director?**  
**In your answer you should refer to at least TWO of his productions.**

**The strongest candidates:**

- were innovative in interpreting the question;
- one, for example, took the approach of comparing previous productions of *King Lear* with Brook's production of *Lear* and *The Marat Sade*, and what this implied about Brook's production and directing techniques.

**The weaker candidates:**

- were unable to find a clear focus to the question;
- found difficulty in gaining a real understanding of Brook techniques, and mentioned only a few general examples of Brook role as director;
- had difficulty because of having to rely on hearsay or second hand interpretations of his plays;
- showed evidence of problems in accessing information.

Extract from a typical 'B' response:

*Peter Brook believes that the most effective method of directing consists of a fusion of several directing methods that all combine to engage the audience by using all the possible theatrical elements (total theatre) to involve every part of you. Theatre is a disturbance. This can be shown by looking at elements in his production of Marat/Sade which he believes is a complete assimilation of all the best theatrical ingredients around and King Lear which is a play that represents a crossroad in his career, where he abandoned the restrictions of British Theatre of the time.*

*Sound is used in many new ways to effectively engage the audience in Marat/Sade. Peter Brook believe that words must express an emotion by sound and so para-linguistics such as exclamations, screams, sobs, babbling and yelling are used throughout the production...*

*The use of movement is also an aspect Brook directs in many new ways to engage the audience. He believes that action must take on concrete representation...*

*But ultimately the most essential aspect of Peter Brook's vision of the role of the theatre director is engaging with the audience was the one he took the actors through. Peter Brook believes the work of rehearsal is looking for meaning and then making it meaningful Rehearsals become a living process...*

## QUESTION 12 Wole Soyinka

Very few candidates attempted this topic.

## QUESTION 13 Augusto Boal

The questions in this topic were answered well.

(a) **How does this photograph from Games for Actors and Non-Actors illustrate Augusto Boal's practice?**

**Discuss how this practice relates to the theory and ideology of the Theatre of the Oppressed.**

The photograph was a good visual stimulus. The reproduction was clear, but the layout could have been improved by having a bigger gap between parts (a) and (b), as some candidates thought that both questions referred to the photograph.

### **The strongest candidates:**

- had a thorough knowledge of Boal's motivations and practice and could discuss in terms of theory and ideology, using the picture as a starting point;
- discussed specific examples purposefully.

### **Average students:**

- had a basic understanding of Boal's theory and ideology but did not relate it to the photograph;
- used examples but did not relate them to the question.

### **The weaker candidates, who were few in number:**

- could describe the photograph but could not relate it to Boal's theory and ideology.

Extract from a typical 'A' response:

*...Theatre as language is linked to Boal's ideologies of using theatre as rehearsal for change. Thus he focuses on acting, transforming spectators into spect-actors, from objects to subjects. He believes theatre is a weapon for change, and that people are the means of production. Theatre is not revolutionary in itself, it is a rehearsal for revolution. Thus he empowers spectators and gives them the courage and strength to enact how they would like to overcome their oppressions in real life.*



*Theatre as a discourse is the last stage in transforming the spectator into the spect-actor. Invisible Theatre is part of this stage. It is when the actors prepare a detailed core script based on a pressing controversial issue and take this piece into the public and perform it in a forum where the audience/spectators become spect-actors without even knowing it. This is definitely a rehearsal for revolution. Newspaper theatre, Breaking of Repression, Photo romance and Ritual and Myth Theatre are all other types of Theatre as a Discourse...*

A typical 'E' response might include:

*Augusto Boal thought that in acting, the actors should be close to each other. His activities contained a lot of touching. He thought that it was the best way to know your fellow actors and know their capabilities and feelings. In the photo provided it shows just what I am talking about. You can see the closeness of the three on the left hand side. On the right hand side it shows the outsiders looking in. Even though they are away from the main group they are still close together. This practice relates to the Theatre of the Oppressed due to the closeness and togetherness of each actor.*

**(b) The main categories of Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed are image theatre, invisible theatre, and forum theatre. Discuss how the roles of the audience differ in the three categories.**

This question was clear but did not discriminate well as the majority of candidates had enough information to answer this question well. However, the sophistication in the handling of the second part of the question (roles of the audience) did help to discriminate.

**The strongest candidates:**

- gave a detailed analysis of the form of theatre, relevant examples of the three categories, and the differing roles of the audience and Boal's purpose.

**Average answers:**

- had a less detailed understanding of the main categories and examples were described rather than analysed;
- made less reference to how the roles of the audience differed.

**The weaker candidates:**

- gave a simple retelling of what the three main categories were with no reference to the differing roles of the audience.

An extract from a typical 'A' response:

*Image Theatre is a series of wordless exercises in which participants or the audience creates embodiments of their feelings and experiences. Beginning with a selected theme, participants sculpt images on to their own bodies or others bodies. These frozen images are then dynamised or brought to life through a sequence of movement or interactive exercises. There are three stages in which the images are presented. Firstly the real image which shows the world as it is. It always presents an oppression. Then the ideal image is presented, which is the*

*image of ideality, the world as it could be, in which the oppression would have disappeared and is always a presentation of the desired society, in which existing problems would be overcome. And finally when these two images are presented by participants, the real image is then presented once again and the debate begins, showing the process of going from oppression and changing the world to the world as it could be. This is called the image of possible transition.*

*An example of Image Theatre is in Sweden where a girl presented an image of a woman lying on her back, legs apart, with a man on top of her in the most conventional lovemaking position; a man then reversed the image, but the girl insisted the oppression is still there, so she created an image of a man and a woman sitting facing each other with legs intertwined, two free liberated people...*

A typical 'C' response might read:

*Image theatre falls under the stage that Boal has called theatre as a Language. In this he means the language of the body rather than language referring to dialogue. Image Theatre calls on its audience against the traditional definition of audience to stop being spectators and become what Boal calls a spec-actor. By this Boal means that rather than just sitting back the audience is called on to take part in the action. This is similar in all of Boal's work.*

#### **QUESTION 14    Commedia dell arte**

There was a broad range of answers to the questions in this topic. The better candidates used part (b) to write extensively and with knowledge about commedia.

**(a) Look carefully at the (three) illustrations of Commedia dell arte characters below. Discuss the ways in which their external appearance expresses the nature of each of the characters.**

This question did not require specific analysis and led some candidates to present the commedia character as static rather than reflecting the variety of roles that character may represent in different settings, times, scenarios.

##### **The strongest candidates:**

- mentioned the animal imagery, social class, stance, gaze, different interpretations of the character and placed the characters in the general context of commedia dell arte.

##### **The average candidates:**

- managed to discuss what they knew about the characters, concentrating mainly on costume and mask, but found it difficult to extend their knowledge eg. some were unable to relate the costuming to social class except at a very superficial level.

### The weaker candidates:

- gave only a basic interpretation of the costumes and masks and were not able to relate the external appearances to the nature of the characters represented.

Extract from the introduction to a typical 'B' response:

*All of the Commedia dell arte stock characters had his/her appearance to express his/her personality and nature. The masks and costumes being the major factors but also involving stance, movement and sound.*

*Pantalone was an elderly miser which was emphasised by his large hooked nose and wrinkles. He wore quite elegant, expensive looking clothes that emphasised his wealth. Pantalone was paranoid about people trying to steal or con money from him and thus he carried a knife and was always on the ready. Pantalone traditionally wore red pants – where the name pantalone stemmed from – and often wore a codpiece, which depicted his feelings that he was a bit of a ladies man when he was younger. His large beard emphasised his nobility and he stood proud when he wasn't hunched protectively over a bag of money. His hat was another sign of wealth as it was often made from a fine material. Overall Pantalone's appearance depicted his very nature...*

**(b) Discuss specific ways in which commedia dell arte performance reflected aspects of the society from which it arose.**

### The strongest candidates:

- dealt with the character and performance origins and linked them to the society of the time;
- were also able to explain the role of commedia in satirising the society;
- had a deeper knowledge of commedia and were able to integrate this knowledge into the specifics of the question.

### The weaker candidates:

- had difficulty explaining the origins of commedia;
- could discuss some elements of society but had great difficulties relating it to commedia performance.

Extract from a typical 'B' response:

*...The characters of the commedia dell arte performance are perhaps the greatest example of the performance reflecting aspects of the society. The character of Pantalone for instance typifies the aging head of the family at that time in Italy. He was stingy, always trying to marry off his daughters, tall and scrawny and as Rudlin describes spoke in a high pitched chicken squawk. This character typified and stereotyped what a similar man was in real society. Il Capitano also was a stereotype of a certain type of person. He was the loner, out of town type, who built himself up to be more than he was. Frequently Il Capitano would be reduced from might to misery, success to failure as part of the plot in Commedia. The character of Tartaglia too was...*

# APPENDIX

## The Marking Process

### Itinerant Marking

#### The Group Presentation and Individual Project: Performance

Pilot (practice) marking was carried out over two days (Friday and Saturday) a fortnight prior to the practical examination. From the 45 markers involved, 16 teams of two markers under 7 Senior Examiners comprised the final itinerant marking team, with the remainder comprising the reserve list.

A selection of talented Year 10 students had been asked to form groups and prepare one of the topics from the Topic List using the same guidelines as those used by HSC students.

The applicants selected for pilot marking were taken through the processes they would need to bear in mind when marking performances, namely:

- the need to use the whole range of marks
- that candidate s performances should initially be impression marked using an A-E range, followed by reference to the criteria printed in the Subject Manual.

Print outs indicating the possible marks, the criteria and working mark sheets were provided.

Performers were assessed and ranked individually by each marker, opinions discussed in pairs then shared in a plenary style discussion led and extended by the Supervisor of Marking.

This led to a better awareness of the need to eliminate preconceived ideas and standards and base entirely on the candidature presenting. Marks and ranking were shared and discussed in order to highlight and consider any inconsistencies and work through the possible reasons and solutions.

Markers were asked to record their marks, rankings and notes and these were collected at the conclusion of the pilot marking and used as part of the criteria for selection of the final teams.

As the **Individual Project: Performance** is also marked by the itinerant marking teams, part of the pilot marking period was allocated to the criteria and process of assessing and ranking candidates attempting this project.

Each candidate was double marked in both the Group Presentation and the Individual Project Performance.

Senior Examiners met with the Supervisor of Marking at the end of the first week of itinerant marking to ensure the process was running smoothly and efficiently.

At the de-briefing impressions of the strengths and weaknesses of Group Presentations and the Individual Project: Performances were recorded and suggestions for future candidates and teachers were collated as a basis for this section of the Examination Report.

### **Submitted Projects**

Using the criteria printed in the Subject Manual for each project area, Senior Examiners selected examples that were indicators of the full range of probable marks. These were then used in the pilot marking process.

Under the guidance of the Supervisor of Marking, Senior Examiners prepared an impression marking sheet using the literal grades A-E, and a more detailed sheet correlating the marks possible for the project within this the range.

At briefing meetings the emphasis was placed upon parity between the projects, using the full range of marks.

Though the pilot marking is brief, it is solid and sustained, providing strong and clear guidelines for each team and developing criteria.

At the conclusion of marking, markers are required to comment on the projects, listing strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for future candidates. These comments are then collated as the basis for this report.

### **The Written Paper**

Sample scripts from each question were selected for pilot marking. These samples represented a possible range of answers, and were graded into categories, A-E, as described below.

Markers spent pilot sessions categorising scripts to confirm their impressions of the range of responses, then discussing and consolidating the process of allocating marks.

#### **The A response (20 - 19 marks)**

- shows an excellent understanding of the demands of the question;
- addresses each part of the question in a logical and coherent way;
- substantiates the answer with examples, quotations, evidence from the set text(s)/recommended reading and general knowledge of drama and theatre;
- analyses and critically debates the issues.
- shows an excellent understanding of specific dramatic terms;

#### **The B response (18, 17, 16, 15 marks)**

- shows an understanding of the demands of the question;
- gives relevant examples from recommended set texts;
- begins to grapple with the complexities of the issues raised by the question.

The **C** response (14, 13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7 marks)

- shows a limited understanding of the demands of the question;
- fails to give sufficient supportive details or examples
- re-tells the plot of the set text(s);
- re-iterates the general history of the topic;
- reveals factual knowledge of the topic unrelated to the question.

The **D** response (6, 5, 4, 3 marks)

- shows a lack of understanding of the question;
- gives insufficient information or irrelevant information;
- may give incorrect information;
- fails to analyse the issues.

The **E** response (2,1, 0 marks)

- is generally very short;
- reveals little or no understanding of the requirements of the question and lacks any general knowledge about the terms used in Drama and Theatre;
- shows no familiarity with the general topic or texts set/recommended;
- includes, in some cases, candidates who try to answer all seven questions in each section, instead of one, as required.