



BOARD OF STUDIES
NEW SOUTH WALES

1996 HSC

EXAMINATION REPORT

Drama

Including:

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

Acknowledgements

Q10b — Quote: ‘A merry black song ...’, Walter Mehring, in Mel Gordon (ed), *Dada Performance*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, © 1987.

Q12a — Quote: ‘I do not believe ...’, Wole Soyinka, in *Six plays*, Wole Soyinka, Methuen London, 1984.

Q12a — Quote: ‘Theatre is a form ...’, Augusto Boal, in *Games for Actors and Non-actors*, Routledge, London, 1992.

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1996 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE

DRAMA 2 UNIT

ENHANCED EXAMINATION REPORT

In 1996 a total of 2850 candidates presented for the 2 Unit Drama examination.

THE GROUP PRESENTATION

General Comments

Examiners found that the standard of Group Presentations continues to improve, with most students understanding the requirements of group-devised work.

They were impressed with the sensitive awareness of most schools to the need to keep the examination area free of intrusive noise and interruptions, but were concerned that this was not the case in all schools.

There is still need for schools to ensure that:

- students realise the time for the Group Presentation (8–12 minutes in 1997);
- marking sheets are completed prior to the day of marking, with good quality, colour photographs of the candidates in costume;
- a program or running order with names of pieces and student numbers is provided;
- candidates choosing to wear ‘rehearsal blacks’ are clearly identified, eg with coloured ribbons or patches;
- that candidates are discouraged from using weapons and naked flames in their performances.

The best performances:

- were tight ensemble pieces with equity of roles and shared responsibility and focus;
- presented a sophisticated interpretation of the criteria;
- were well researched, with imaginative exploration of the topic;
- indicated that students had explored a variety of performance forms and styles;
- had a definite thematic structure and cohesion and clear endings;

- dealt with simple ideas intelligently and with depth and complexity;
- used elements of production to support rather than intrude upon the performance;
- understood and experimented with the elements of drama such as dramatic tension and spatial awareness;
- were not overloaded with predictable narrative structure;
- used fast, smooth and meaningful transitions;
- showed subtly defined characterisation;
- took risks that worked theatrically;
- used the stage space inventively, rather than introducing other elements such as props;
- were energetic, with strong focus and audience contact;
- demonstrated that physical movement-based moments can be very effective;
- exploited the skills of the individuals within the group;
- used humour to undercut the seriousness of the context;
- had experience in performing before an audience;
- showed a strong sense of ownership of the piece;
- avoided themes involving teenage ‘angst’, suicide or mental illness.

The weaker performances:

- were over-dependent on blackouts and scene changes at the expense of the rhythm of the piece;
- used transitions that were unclear and badly managed;
- included irrelevant music and movement as a ‘fill in’ or display of skills;
- were literal or cliched interpretations of the topics;
- gave only a superficial exploration of the theme;
- used unoriginal ideas derived from TV and movies;
- were unaware of the complexities and dimensions needed for developing and sustaining a role;
- demonstrated lack of understanding of the basic dramatic elements, particularly timing, rhythm and tension;
- did not have a clear ending;

- had not rehearsed with technical support or before an audience;
- showed poor awareness of audience relationships;
- were not able to use variations in vocal and physical dimensions;
- used large sets that disrupted the flow of the action;
- imitated OnSTAGE material;
- played to the examiners;
- were not able to use the space effectively;
- made no visual or emotional contact with the audience;
- were teenage or HSC angst based;
- appeared as a kaleidoscopic collection of flashing images without connection.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

PERFORMANCE

General Comments

Examiners suggested that students should be advised to consider the options for the Individual Project carefully.

It was also suggested that only students who are proficient writers should be encouraged to devise their own performance pieces.

Students should also be made aware of the time limit (6–8 minutes in 1997).

The best performances:

- chose material appropriate to their strengths;
- had a clear understanding of the stylistic demands of the piece;
- portrayed the character with clarity and complexity;
- understood the subtext and dramatic intention of the piece;
- made the best use of their own range of expressive skills and interests;
- showed an ability to entertain and manipulate the audience;
- engaged the audience with their focus and tension;
- used creative blocking and purposeful movement which supported the performance;
- used the space effectively;
- had smooth, cohesive transitions;
- explored vocal subtlety;
- demonstrated a strong sense of theatricality;
- were prepared to take risks with genre and style;
- had carefully researched the character and the play;
- used simple sets and staging;
- had a cohesive structure, with a clear beginning and ending.

The weaker performances:

- did not understand the stylistic demands of the piece;
- impersonated the performance of a movie character;
- portrayed a character outside their experience and skills;
- presented an extract or monologue with no analysis or development of role or character;
- were recited without conviction, belief or focus;
- were badly scripted, self-devised pieces using multiple characters;
- consisted of self-indulgent, emotional angst;
- lacked understanding of the elements of drama;
- showed little understanding of the relationship with the audience;
- used unmotivated movement rather than specific blocking;
- failed to present a context for the performance;
- relied too much on costumes, props and lighting;
- had problems with tempo, pacing and rhythm;
- used dance rather than dramatic movement;
- had slow transitions, messy transitions or too many transitions.

SCRIPTWRITING

Comments

The examiners noticed an overall improvement in structure, characterisation, setting and realisation of theatrical style, which amalgamated into a complete, cohesive play. There was also more variety in themes and ideas.

Candidates considering scriptwriting should ensure that they:

- are fully aware of the practicalities of production for the theatre;
- are exposed to a variety of live theatre;
- have read scripts from a variety of theatrical styles.

The best scripts:

- were well structured with three-dimensional characters;
- used clear, well-described settings (place and time);
- included appropriate stage directions;
- showed an awareness of pace and movement;
- created different voices for each character;
- created characters who engaged with each other and developed and progressed with the dramatic action;
- used economical dialogue resulting from good editing;
- used dramatic tension to engage the audience;
- showed evidence of workshopping.

The weaker scripts:

- concentrated on plot and narrative;
- lacked a sense of theatre and dramatic focus;
- lacked a sense of movement toward a conclusion;
- were written as film scripts rather than for live theatre;
- paid little attention to characterisation;
- showed inexperience in using stage settings;
- overused the device of narrator as a substitute for other dramatic techniques;
- had difficulty indicating the passing of time from scene to scene;
- did not include a character list;
- gave stage directions for stage rather than live theatre.

Logbooks

Logbooks should be a record of the development of the writing and should include research, development of the script and characters and the draft and editing processes.

Samples from high quality scripts

Sample A

This script is an example of:

- good character list and setting
- beginning and end
- layout.

CHARACTERS

THE FAMILY

Stuart Taylor: Father to Raylene, Daniel and Mark. (Aged 79)

Ellen Taylor: Stuart's wife. (Aged 73)

Sally Taylor: Chiropractor, married to Mark. (Aged 40)

Mark Taylor: Podiatrist, married to Sally. (Aged 41)

Raylene Thomas: Retired singer. Mother to Misty and Peter. (Aged 47)

Martin Thomas: Construction supervisor, married to Raylene. (Aged 48)

Misty Thomas: University student. (Aged 19)

Peter Thomas: Raylene and Martin's son. (Aged 5)

Daniel Taylor: Model, recently separated from Judy. (Aged 31)

Judy Taylor: Fashion Designer. (Aged 31)

OUTSIDERS AND EXTRAS

Alex: Daniel's new girlfriend. (Aged 22)

Mr Freeman: A famous musical director.

Pianist

Intercom

Scientist

Doctor

Voice-over (V.OVER)

Hero

2 sequined nurses

SETTING

The play is set among Sydney's inner suburbs in the 1990s, and takes place over the period of one year.

* **NOTE:** The character of Peter is mostly a visually comic character.

INTRODUCTION

A dim light comes up on SALLY lighting a small red candle. A dreamlike musical box melody echoes through the air.

SALLY: I had the dream again. I'm lighting the red candle in a room familiar to me in the middle of a wild storm.

(A storm rages outside.)

I can hear the rain pattering on the windowpane. *(Pause)* And then ... he enters the room.

(A man, HERO, bursts into the room dressed as a heroic pirate in a romance novel.)

He takes me in his strong arms and holds me close to him.

(He holds her.)

HERO: Don't worry, Sally.

SALLY: He tells me.

HERO: Mark doesn't know.

SALLY: Then slowly, tenderly our lips meet.

(They kiss. When they stop the music abruptly cuts off.)

I always wake up around there.

(Hero leaves.)

Bummer.

(She blows the candle out with one single annoyed puff. Blackout.)

SCENE ONE: Stuart and Ellen's House

It is Christmas Day and the family has gathered for their annual Christmas lunch at ELLEN and STUART'S house. SALLY, MARK, JUDY, RAYLENE, MARTIN, MISTY and PETER are all seated at the dinner table engaged in conversation and eating various appetisers.

RAYLENE: So I told the guy, 'Listen to me you little scumball ...'

JUDY: Scumball?

RAYLENE: 'You can take this piece of rubbish ticket and stick it up your behind! Raylene Thomas parks where she wants to park, comprende?'

(Everyone laughs.)

MARK: Where did you learn to talk like that?

RAYLENE: When you've been in the business as long as I have, you learn to be aggressive.

STUART: Like a bull terrier!

MARTIN: You don't have to live with her.

(ELLEN enters holding a cooked chicken on a platter.)

ELLEN: Ta Daaaa!

STUART: Damn that smells good!

MARK: Looks delicious, Mum.

MARTIN: Better make some room on the table.

ELLEN: Now I have a feeling it might be a bit dry –

RAYLENE: Don't be stupid, Mum.

ELLEN: It's not my fault, though.

STUART: I guess it's mine then.

.....

CONCLUSION

(SALLY looks down at the candle in her hands.)

SALLY: It's easy to fall for that.

(Pause. She takes a breath as if lifting herself from her deep state.)

But, you know, what would I know, right?

RAYLENE: No ... you're right.

MISTY: It's what I've been trying to tell you, Mum.

RAYLENE: *(Pause)* You're absolutely right.

(SALLY drops the candle in a drawer.)

SALLY: I hope things work out for you and Paul.

(MISTY and RAYLENE are a little concerned at her behaviour.)

MISTY: Thanks Sal.

(SALLY smiles and then exits. Pause. MISTY and RAYLENE hug. The light fades down. Blackout.

The lights come up on the family seated at the dinner table. RAYLENE and MISTY are standing away from the others performing a duet style version of 'Memory'. As the family sits enjoying the song, SALLY stands and addresses the audience.)

SALLY: Isn't it funny the way things turn out. No, not funny. Uncalculated. You can never see the cards before they're dealt. *(Pause)* I don't have the dream any more. I still dream of course, the usual sort of ones. Being chased, going to work naked, *(Pause)* meeting the love of my life. *(Pause)* But I usually don't pay attention to them any more. I concentrate on the sleeping.

(SALLY sits back at the dinner table. RAYLENE and MISTY keep singing the song. When the song is over, the family applauds. The lights slowly fade down.)

BLACKOUT

Sample B

This is a good example of describing a setting.

The Setting

This play was designed for viewing by an intimate, personal audience, therefore the ideal stage on which it should be performed is the thrust stage.

The setting is simple, with only a row of five chairs placed side by side, centre stage middle, to represent a bus stop in Scenes One and Two, a pew of a church at Ivy's funeral in Scene Three and the Jury in Scene Four.

Sample C

An example of clear and effective stage directions.

SEBASTIAN: What is it? Who's there?

ACHARA: *(she looks at him for a moment)* Oh, umm: I don't know.

SEBASTIAN: Anyway (*he starts to pace around*) as I was saying, my mother thinks that perhaps, you know, well we aren't suited to each other.

ACHARA: Does she? I see.

SEBASTIAN: But I know we are. (*As he speaks, a large man is on the opposite side of the stage. It is MIKE. ACHARA notices him but SEBASTIAN doesn't. MIKE continues to smoke a cigarette.*) I really like you, Achara.

ACHARA: Yes Sebastian, honey, we are suited to each other. However I must go. I have to go to work.

SEBASTIAN: Tonight?

ACHARA: Yes, unfortunately. So, (*she moves away*) I better go.

SEBASTIAN: Okay. Bye. (*He wanders off slowly in the direction of stage right. ACHARA pretends to run off, to stage left until he is out of sight. MIKE, standing at the back of the stage, comes forward.*)

MIKE: (*mimicking ACHARA*) Yes Sebastian, honey. (*He laughs a cruel laugh.*)

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

PORTFOLIO OF THEATRE REVIEWS

Comments

The standard of writing, the understanding and usage of theatrical concepts/terms have all become more sophisticated.

The best candidates:

- could criticise objectively and support their criticism through detailed and substantiated reference to the play;
- displayed strong evidence of research and knowledge of theatre style or background of the play. Such material was evident in the Logbook and, most importantly, incorporated into the portfolio;
- wrote in a formal, yet fluent manner and used a coherent structure which included all relevant areas of production. That is, they wrote in a review style, as opposed to an extended English essay;
- usually had seen a comprehensive range of theatre, which enabled them to showcase their knowledge of the syllabus, their facility and versatility with the practice of reviewing theatre.

The weaker candidates:

- used unreferenced opinion, which was either loaded with praise or dismissive with negativity;
- wrote in an inappropriate register, usually colloquial, with mistakes that should have been eliminated during the drafting process;
- relied on describing, rather than analysing the action on stage and showing how this related to the development of the theatrical vision;
- were restricted by the limited range of theatre they saw.

Recommendations

- Teachers need to emphasise that 4 x 850 word reviews are required. There is still a problem with the number of reviews submitted.
- Logbooks should be working documents that must be used more extensively to show the process of research and reflection. Highlighted, unreferenced photocopies of reviews do not satisfy either category.
- While acknowledging the problems of access for students living in isolated areas, students should be encouraged to see a variety of theatre. Reviews mostly devoted to amateur theatre present a very restricted range.
- Students must be encouraged to learn how to write reviews. Teachers can help by marking the drafts in the Logbooks.
- Students should be made aware of the problem of plagiarism which is usually evident through an inconsistent standard across the four reviews. Examiners are interested in the original opinions of the students.

Samples of high quality review responses

1. *A View from the Bridge* by Arthur Miller

Comments

The first two paragraphs directly address the fundamental themes of the play in an economic and articulate style. The critique of the actors' performances in the third paragraph is strongly linked to the tensions and demands the candidate sees in the text. Elements of production are touched on in the opening paragraph (later dealt with in depth), giving an overall sense of purpose and cohesion to the review.

Extract

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

by Arthur Miller

Director: Adam Cook

Set design: Justin Kurzel

Lighting design: Nigel Levings

*Original music
& sound design:* Paul Charlier

Cast: Company B – Mitchell Butel, Desmond Connellan,
Ralph Cotteril, Esse Davis, Gillian Jones,
Jonathan Mill, Justin Monjo, Marshall Napier

Venue: Belvoir Street Theatre, Sydney

Reviewed: 1 March

A View from the Bridge is the story of a passionate man fighting an inner struggle between acknowledging his desire and preserving his integrity. Playwright Arthur Miller pre-empted his play by saying, 'I have made the assumption that the audience is like me and would like to see, for once, a fine, high, always visible arc of forces moving in full view towards a single explosion.' Company B, with strong direction by Adam Cook, successfully creates this arc in a spectacular and deeply moving production. Resonant of a Greek Tragedy, the ominous mood and lingering tension of the play is reflected in the outstanding marriage of direction, design, sound, lighting and performance.

The plot is centred around Eddie Carbone, a longshoreman living near the Brooklyn bridge with wife Beatrice and niece Catherine. When two cousins, Marco and Rodolpho, arrive illegally from Sicily to reside with them, Eddie becomes diseased with the themes that pulse through this play. Frivolous attempts to quash a romance between the niece he so desires and Rodolpho bring rise to doubts of sexuality, betrayal of the human morale, and a search for justice. Eddie's stagnant attitude towards the affections of those around him, as compared to the transient views of the other characters, is symbolised in his costume which remains unvaried during the play.

Marshall Napier's passionate portrayal of Eddie seizes and sustains the intimacies behind the play's many themes. Napier's sincere characterisation captures Eddie's suppressed obsession with his niece feverishly yet delicately enough in order to allow subsequent revelations and accusations to take full effect on him. Gillian Jones steals an aching sympathy from the audience as Beatrice who struggles between defending Eddie and exposing her own opinions. Her muffled diction unfortunately dampened

the impact of her resolve to take the latter option during the intense final scenes. However it is with less fervency that I commend the remaining cast. Their characterisation was adequate, but the passion and conviction that is so evident in Miller's writing seemed lacking, particularly in the latter half of the play. Esse Davis portrayed Catherine adequately, yet a lack of emotive spontaneity was evident when she failed to rise to the considerable emotional demands made by the script, hinting at a shallow interpretation ...

2. *Stowaways* by Phillippe Genty

Comments

While lacking the sophisticated language of the first example, this candidate nonetheless shows a reasonably referenced and structured approach to a difficult piece of theatre for most HSC students to interpret. Terms such as surrealism are clearly defined as are the disparate elements of the performance.

Extract

***STOWAWAYS* by Phillippe Genty**

It is a well-known fact that 'reality copies illusion'. When Phillippe Genty wrote this in reference to his first Australian production, *Stowaways*, the common view of reality was seriously challenged.

Stowaways is a surrealistic piece. With this in mind the audience should not expect to be told a story. The audience is asked to travel among a series of sequences which are linked to each other through associations, as in a dream. Surrealism tries to express the subconscious mind through physical media. One of the most obviously surreal images was the beginning sequence, with a skiing kangaroo singing the blues, an image directly out of a dream state.

In *Stowaways* there is Genty's mixture of mime, physical movement, dance and puppetry. All of these were used in such a way that it was not particularly noticeable when one medium started and the other finished, the piece was virtually seamless. This helped to create the illusions and sustain them throughout the piece. This kind of theatre can only be described as several meanings condensed together into an image, leaving the audience with the possibility of prolonging them with their imagination and interpretation.

The piece lasted for approximately one and a half hours. It was performed without an interval, this was so that the audience remained in the illusory world, and so the illusions are not broken for the audience or the cast. This meant that a degree of attention span was required. This was one of the reasons why the show was suggested for fifteen years and above. The suggested age restrictions pertained to the reasonably difficult concepts involved in this type of theatre. There was also a degree of imagery

that would have been difficult to explain to a child, or that young children might have found disturbing, such as the floor appearing to swallow the performers.

Some of the concepts that were tackled in the piece were quite sophisticated, the audience was taken into a universe where absurd, derisory and cruel images fitted together. The only explanation that was given to the audience was a poem by Phillippe Genty on which the performance was based. From this poem the audience could glean the association of the characters, the name of the human character, and the outlines that the performance was going to follow.

‘Freaks looking like him, in fact they are him.
Freaks taking Ernest in their journey through the abyss
In search of hidden memories.’

From this the character called Ernest discovers that he is carrying all of these undetected personas within himself. These are the Stowaways ...

3. *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare

Comments

This review shows a strong example of performance analysis that is again related to the demands of the production text.

Extract

... Nonetheless, all the performances are satisfactory, some excellent. Even the variation in style can't keep this talented cast down. John Gaden as Jacques, the melancholic, captures the combination of reflectiveness, maturity, honesty and humour that the play requires. The role is a refreshing contrast with the more disillusioned characters and Gaden's interpretation of what is perhaps the most complex part is engaging to watch. The speech on the seven ages of man is especially effective; his powerful delivery combined with the use of freeze and the lines of the set ensure that the audience's focus is held completely.

Touchstone, the idiot servant, is played by Bruce Spence. His comic talents frequently make him the focus of attention, without letting us forget that it is the fool who has some of the most perceptive comments to make. His apparent spontaneity gives a greater level of depth. Lucy Bell's Celia is full of energy and enthusiasm, in what is a very important part. Anita Hegh and Paul Bishop as Rosalind and Orlando burst with the impassioned emotion of the young lovers, and create a plausible and entertaining relationship ...

RESEARCH

Comments

The projects were of a high standard, with many students demonstrating excellent research skills on a wide variety of topics.

Teachers should ensure that:

- candidates do not choose topics from Content Areas 4 or 5 or set texts from other subjects they are studying;
- the research area chosen relates to drama and theatre. For example, studies of film actors and personalities are inappropriate;
- material is recorded and verified in the Logbook;
- students understand the terminology of the criteria (which are addressed in more detail later in this report).

The stronger candidates:

- were clear in the focus of their proposal;
- developed their project in a sequential and coherent manner;
- arrived at well-substantiated conclusions;
- showed extensive and sometimes exhaustive research;
- utilised human resources through interviews or surveys;
- wrote in a formal manner that was always engaging and consistent.

The weaker candidates:

- chose inappropriate topics;
- relied mainly on description rather than making a systemic attempt at analysis;
- used insufficient research;
- used quoted information to ‘pad out’ the project;
- were substantially under the 3500 word limit.

Logbooks

A detailed Logbook is critical. It is essential that the Logbook verifies the process of research and reflection, and that all materials used are referenced and acknowledged.

Guidance and vigilance from teachers will assist students.

Clarification of terms

Structuring a coherent and logical statement — often the most effective technique here is a question or a clear statement of intent.

For example: *'Expressionism has failed as a popular form in modern theatre companies.'*

'The role of the fool in Shakespeare's tragedies.'

Skill in the synthesis of acquired information — means an ability to pursue the original proposal with accurate information and appropriate material.

Human resources means contact by letter, interview or survey with people relevant to the project. *Written resources* can also include video, CD-ROM, Internet access.

Recommendations

Candidates should demonstrate the research skills expected of senior students, such as acknowledging and referencing quotations through footnotes and a bibliography.

Samples from high quality projects

All three of the samples that follow exemplify the points mentioned above. There is continuity between the references and the outlined opinions and the conclusions reveal the personal insights of the writers, as well as the use of footnotes and referencing techniques.

Samples A and B — Introduction and Conclusion

Sartre

Introduction

The notions of freedom and confinement were subjects of concern for the post-World War II French Left, largely as a result of the German occupation of France during the war. Jean-Paul Sartre was the pre-eminent philosopher of the time, and he used the theatre to present these problems, not resolve them. Indeed, his plays represent a translation of his philosophy into dramatic form, and reflect his theory of existentialism, the philosophy of human freedom.

Sartre's philosophy of existentialism was first outlined in his philosophical journal *L'Être et le Néant*.¹ This asserts the responsibility of each individual for one's own decisions and makes the recognition of one's freedom the necessary condition for true human existence. This is what Sartre sought to present in his plays, and the Sartrean hero is one who recognises this responsibility, and acts on it. In order to recognise freedom, one must also have recognised and experienced confinement, as the two are inseparable. His plays *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu*² and *Huis Clos*³ deal with those things, as well as being haunted by other Sartrean obsessions, such as incest and hatred of the father.

Sartre's first play, *Bariona*, was written when he was a prisoner of war in a German camp during the occupation in 1940. He described the circumstances in a speech during a visit to the United States in 1946:

'When I was a prisoner in Germany in 1940, I wrote, staged and acted in a play which, while pulling wool over the eyes of the German censor by means of simple symbols, was addressed to my fellow prisoners ... As I addressed my comrades across the footlights, speaking to them of their state of prisoners, when I suddenly saw them so remarkably silent and attentive, I realised what theatre ought to be — a great, collective religious phenomenon.'⁴

Conclusion

... A driving force in all Sartre's writing is his serious desire to change the life of his reader, and his plays express the belief that freedom and acceptance of personal responsibility are the main values in life and that the individual must rely on his own creative powers rather than on social or religious authority. Towards the end of *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu*, Heinrich says: 'Nothing finished ever ... Death is a fool's trap for our families; for the dead man it all continues.' This thought prompts Goetz to contemplate his life and his duty in life, and marks Goetz's transition from confinement to freedom. In the same way, near the end of *Huis Clos*, Inez states: 'It's what one does, and nothing else, that shows the stuff one's made of.' When Garcin and Estelle accept this, they too can begin to do the work that is to be done. Along with Goetz, Garcin, Inez and Estelle can live truly, because they have accepted responsibility for their actions. Perhaps in an unguarded moment, Sartre would have referred to this as honourable. Yes. 'Oui.'

¹ Translated as *Being a Nothingness*

² Translated as *The Devil and the Good Lord*

³ Translated as *No Exit*

⁴ McCall, 1969

Sample C

Yiddish Theatre

Conclusion

If Kosky's work, and that of other Yiddish theatre practitioners, has a resonance beyond the ghetto — and I believe it does — then it is in its capacity as a force of regeneration and validation. Consumed by *Dybbuks*, the Jewish people have been denied a public voice for too long, but in the endurance of Jewish drama do we not detect a triumph — an exorcism of the malignant spirit? Perhaps this is idealistic, for if history has taught us anything, it is that the *Dybbuks* never lie far from the surface, but the inherent truth is clear: Through art, Jews like oppressed people everywhere, have asserted a public identity; have validated their position as valuable and dynamic human beings and thus the education and healing process begins:

‘One way of reconnecting ourselves to the rest of humanity is to say “Look what happened to us. Look what history has done to us.”’⁵

DIRECTOR'S PRODUCTION PREPARATION

Comments

This project demands theatre literacy, as candidates need to have skills ranging from an understanding of textual and character analysis to a facility with aspects of design.

Some of the best work in this section is inspirational.

The main problems lie with terminology and formatting, and these areas are addressed in the Recommendations.

The best candidates:

- offered an original and achievable vision of the text on the stage, providing the foundation to bind together all other aspects of the work;
- showed an ability to interpret and analyse character from a dramatic rather than a literary viewpoint, discussing aspects such as physicality, motivation, objectives, obstacles;
- clearly laid out all component parts;
- covered all aspects in thoughtful detail.

⁵ Joshua Sobol quoted in Ghetto Theatre Program – 1995

The weaker candidates:

- had little or no idea of the task of the director;
- failed to provide a unifying concept;
- failed to cover all components adequately, or omitted component parts;
- were very disorganised in presentation;
- relied on description or colourful effects;
- failed to address the larger demands of vision and characterisation.

Logbooks

Logbooks need to be presented separately and both items should be clearly labelled.

Recommendations

Projects should be set out in a logical progression that answers all of the criteria.

Annotations and blocking should be shown for several key sequences, rather than the whole script.

Clarification of terms

Pre-production notes includes observations on the work's structure, style, mood, characterisation and themes.

A unit summary explains the different segments of the action and the dramatic structure.

Samples of high quality projects

Sample A gives a clear and unambiguous statement of the concept, and justifies every decision with thorough research.

The Birds

... The directorial concept has been stated in parts, previously. However it is essentially the realisation of the following:

The vision of Utopia sought by an Athenian and his friend is created by a supernatural means; the individual seeks supremacy at the expense of his morality and initial ideals. He triumphs over precedent and the Gods — but loses his humanity and sacrifices his Utopia to his megalomania.

When the Aristophanic text is seen through this lens, the more serious subtext to his comedy (mostly regarded as light and superficial), is made more significant. The entire production is made more profound as it consists not only of the play's comedy, but also a meaningful series of comments on society and human nature (supposedly Aristophanes' intention — see page 12).

The concept of modernising aspects of the text and deliberately using historically anomalous elements adds to the appeal of the production as a comedy, as the audience can relate to the political satire within the play.

The melodrama of the characterisation — that is the tendency of some characters to be caricatures — is allowed for, as in this context it helps the audience's understanding and recognition of the characters ...

Sample B This concept for *Richard III* explains the symbolic references to Gothic culture and fantasy fiction and uses subtitles that show the thread that links all components, which are expanded later in the project. The section on 'The Set' covers many different aspects but is tied back to the concept of 'a dark and grieving world'. The candidate provided detailed sketches.

THE CONCEPT

SUMMARY

In my interpretation of the play I have tried to establish a dark and grieving world. I have done this by taking influences from two main sources, the first being Gothic culture and the second being the world of fantasy fiction. The Gothic influence is mainly seen through the colours and mood of the play, whilst the fantasy influence can be seen through the architecture of the set and the costume design.

THE CONCEPT AND THE SET

The set is one of the main ways in which the mood and concept of my interpretation will be conveyed. Its colour scheme is reflective of the sinister and evil aspects of the play. The way it is designed allows for multiple levels and acting spaces which all help to show positions of status and power. The throne on the stage acts as another symbol of the power politics of the play. There is a special stairway on the set that can be swung backwards and forwards to provide an additional acting space for certain scenes of the play. It also allows for the play's setting to be changed from outside to inside without having to make major set changes between scenes.

The set is a mixture of Gothic and fantastical design, with colour being drawn from the Gothic influence and the structures and forms of the set being drawn from the fantasy influence.

THE CONCEPT AND THE CHARACTERS

For my production of the play I have chosen to base all the characters on separate animals. By doing this I have been able to create a clear link between the costuming and the personal qualities of the characters. Each of the main characters has been based on an animal that has attributes similar to that of the character. I have used these animals as a basis for ...

THE SET

Shakespeare is difficult to stage in that his plays have many different settings. This usually calls for the audience to use their imaginations quite often and in my set I have tried to aid the audience in this regard by creating a set that promotes the mood and attitude of the world that I am portraying in my interpretation of the play.

There were five main ideas that I kept in mind (in addition to the theatrical norms) throughout the designing of this set:

- (i) **Sharp Edges** — This gives the feeling of a once rigid society being in tatters when it is combined with other architecture that is more anarchical in its design. It also provided an ironical setting for the characters that are struggling just to maintain control over their world.
- (ii) **Size** — Size could be used to dwarf characters and trap them physically. Size of items on stage also assists in establishing the tone and state of the world around the actors.
- (iii) **Stairs** — Stairs are an excellent way of visually representing status and power and considering the intricate web of family politics that is woven into the play, stairs can provide opportunities for interesting movements and positions of power on the stage.
- (iv) **Confines and Space** — The way space relates to the size of the surrounding pieces on the set can create either the feeling of openness or the feeling of being enclosed and restricted, yet at the same time it is not overly restricting the movement of the actors themselves. Space, amongst large buildings, can provide merely a brief break from a large monotonous and intimidating world; futile space.
- (v) **Metal** — Metal implies cold and harshness. It is also quite hostile and intimidating which fits in well with my concept of the play ...

DESIGN

LIGHTING DESIGN

An 'A' range Lighting Design was illustrated by:

- a thorough understanding of the text;
- the total design concept creatively fulfilling the script requirements and effectively contributing to the ongoing dramatic action and mood;
- an effective directorial concept in staging the play, designing a set and lighting rig that is innovative and appropriate;
- presentation of all mandatory plans, diagrams, sheets, etc is 'professionally' finished, logical and comprehensive;
- the design effectively communicating the concept and a written statement providing the rationale;
- all work presented being to scale 1 : 25 mm and using appropriate terminology, notation and practices for Lighting Design;
- accurate, workable and comprehensive technical information;
- all cues clearly indicating and supporting the design concept.

A 'B' range Lighting Design was illustrated by:

- containing all mandatory items but lacking the creativity and innovation of an 'A' project;
- a lack of clarity in one area;
- a workable but not innovative design;
- clear and logical presentation;
- accurate and appropriate technical information;
- the ongoing dramatic action being supported by the lighting design but lacking 'flair' in the approach;
- an appropriate design concept statement and a good understanding of the text demonstrated in the project;
- an appropriate but not really innovative directorial concept for staging.

A ‘C’ range Lighting Design was illustrated by:

- a functional lighting design that doesn’t enhance other areas;
- a basic concept;
- the design demonstrating only a basic understanding of the script;
- the directorial concept lacking originality and a functional rather than stimulating staging;
- some technical knowledge not necessarily applied effectively;
- the completion of most areas, but possibly lacking in one area;
- ineffectively or overloaded use of dimmers;
- a general sense of only a ‘basic’ design;
- a basic but logical presentation.

A ‘D’ range Lighting Design was illustrated by:

- a partially completed project;
- significant items missing from the project;
- little understanding of the script through the project;
- flaws in technical understanding and unclear communication of ideas;
- poor and incomplete presentation;
- no directorial concept.

An ‘E’ range Lighting Design was illustrated by:

- only some items of the project being completed;
- minimal understanding of the script or the role of a Lighting Designer;
- little technical understanding and a simplistic approach;
- no set, floor plan of theatre or cue sheet.

COSTUME DESIGN

An 'A' range Costume Design was illustrated by:

- an original, innovative concept sustained throughout the total design;
- renderings executed with flair and outstanding presentation using appropriate colour, textures and material;
- a concept that is a visual image of the play and brings to life the personality, status and standing of each character;
- an immediate and successful visual image using appropriate colour and texture;
- the design accounting for the various aspects of the play (genre, lighting, set) as a total concept so that the costume design does not exist in isolation from the play as a whole;
- clear and effective support material, eg written notes and swatches;
- all criteria being addressed effectively;
- the election of a range of characters that reflects the scope of the text.

A 'B' range Costume Design was illustrated by:

- an appropriate, sustained and visual concept, but the areas of design, appropriateness and execution not equally well treated, with one area weaker than the others;
- demonstrating an understanding of the role of the costume design in the total production and presenting interesting and well-thought-out concepts;
- a clear understanding of the text and the characters but lacking the 'flair' and originality of the 'A' response;
- the design not being as effectively reinforced as it could be by support material;
- a strong understanding of texture, colour and status.

A 'C' range Costume Design was illustrated by:

- working in stereotypes rather than characterisations;
- a functional, basic interpretation of the text — a literal interpretation rather than an original approach;
- a lack of a true 'designer's' concept;
- a lack in execution skills, particularly a lack of care and detail;

- acknowledging the technical needs of the characters but dealing with them superficially;
- unclear and ineffective written notes;
- selecting less appropriate characters who offer less scope for the design concept;
- imposing a time concept, eg the 1960s or a futuristic image, on a script rather than a true design concept;
- lack of clarity and written design concept.

A ‘D’ range Costume Design was illustrated by:

- no design concept or an inappropriate concept;
- a failure to demonstrate knowledge of the script through an ineffective interpretation of the play;
- inadequate renderings with support material, eg notes and swatches, poorly presented and communicated;
- inappropriate colours and textures;
- a failure to address the basic criteria;
- no significant character statement in the design.

An ‘E’ range Costume Design was illustrated by:

- the presentation of only a ‘partial’ design;
- a failure to address the essential criteria, eg number of renderings, characters;
- an inadequate response to the criteria addressed;
- no understanding of a ‘design concept’ or the selected script;
- no detailed knowledge of character;
- poor or unacceptable execution and presentation.

POSTER, PROGRAM AND PROMOTION COPY DESIGN

An 'A' range Poster Design was illustrated by:

- two distinct and different concepts with strong visual impact and flair;
- encapsulating in each concept a visual image of the whole play;
- the inclusion of all four mandatory visual items for each concept — poster, program cover, print advertisement and flyer;
- the inclusion of the mandatory other three items of copy — one program insert, one brief media release, one in-depth media treatment of the production;
- methodically presenting the four visual items of each concept with a common image;
- professionally produced style of presentation with clear layout and presentation of relevant information in typed form;
- a thorough understanding of the script presented through the appropriate selection of material for program insert and media releases;
- a clear understanding of the audience to which the Design is communicating and the image that the theatre company wishes to portray;
- appropriate and essential information included on all publicity items in appropriate layout and form.

A 'B' range Poster Design was illustrated by:

- two distinct and different concepts with strong visual impact;
- the inclusion of all mandatory visual items and copy but with one area lacking the consistency of an 'A', eg lack of detail in media treatment or one concept being less effective;
- clear and appropriate presentation but lacking finish;
- a good understanding of the script being reflected within the design concept.

A 'C' range Poster Design was illustrated by:

- a 'pedestrian' visual impact of each concept;
- a reliance on computer technology to overcome conceptual deficiencies;
- a lack of originality in the concepts — an obvious choice, concepts are limited;
- 'average' quality of execution, eg uneven lettering on posters, layout crowded, priorities given to wrong areas;

- insufficient time spent developing the work;
- limited and pedestrian research tending to be copied with little understanding;
- copy lacking depth and personal response — basic program insert without directorial information;
- a lack of visual metaphor being sustained throughout each concept;
- concepts not distinct from each other.

A ‘D’ range Poster Design was illustrated by:

- lacking a major aspect of this area, eg completing only one concept;
- poor understanding of the script;
- bizarre and inappropriate interpretations of the script;
- a poorly finished product but with some sense of concept;
- a failure to sustain concepts across the project;
- poor understanding of the role of promotional material;
- minimal copy, program insert missing essential information, no in-depth treatment;
- items missing from all areas;
- each promotional item failing to work effectively because of a serious flaw.

An ‘E’ range Poster Design was illustrated by:

- a poorly finished product with no concept;
- only a partial project and what was completed being ineffective;
- a significant number of mandatory items missing;
- no real visual concept, simply titles and images that had little connection with the script;
- only one concept if any;
- no understanding of the purpose of promotional material;
- little knowledge of the script.

SET DESIGN

An 'A' range Set Design was illustrated by:

- an immediate and original visual impact that was strongly linked to the play's thematic concerns and technical needs;
- a symbolic rather than literal approach to staging;
- an effective use of the theatre space with understanding of audience sightlines and seating arrangements;
- the model being built to 1 : 25 mm scale;
- use of appropriate materials to give a clear indication of the visual and textural structure of the actual set;
- a cut-out human figure in 1 : 25 mm scale to help establish proportion;
- sturdy construction with a sense of craftsmanship;
- logical and workable scene changes indicated through written instructions, diagrams or photographs;
- modern and simple set changes on an open stage, rather than reliance on complex theatrical technology such as revolves, fly-towers or intricate set changes in proscenium theatre;
- providing floor plans of the stage on a 1 : 25 mm scale;
- other props and furniture being built to scale;
- clear entrances and exits for actors;
- a well-written justification of the design concept.

A 'B' range Set Design was illustrated by:

- a strong visual impact clearly relating to the play's thematic concerns and technical needs;
- effectively accounting for ongoing action within the design concept;
- being accurate to scale with the model, items of furniture, properties and plans;
- logical and workable scene changes indicated through written instructions, diagrams or photographs;
- failing to realise problems in one or two areas, eg effective use of space or audience sightlines.

A 'C' range Set Design was illustrated by:

- tending to a literal interpretation of staging such as re-creating all locations in the text, rather than working on a symbolic level;
- a visual impact lacking flair and creativity;
- solving varied scene locations using technology rather than creativity;
- only reasonably accounting for the ongoing action within the design concept;
- being built reasonably to scale, but without craftsmanship;
- providing floor plans of stage but not reasonably to scale;
- using theatre space reasonably;
- using cumbersome scene changes;
- lacking a central, appropriate metaphor that integrates the play as a whole;
- using proscenium arch staging rather than an open plan.

A 'D' range Set Design was illustrated by:

- being a difficult set on which to stage a production;
- using stage space inappropriately;
- being neatly built, but not to scale;
- having a limited relationship to the play;
- lacking flair and imagination;
- being a completely literal interpretation of the text;
- omitting to account for a portion of the ongoing action;
- being an effective set for one scene, but failing to account for the remainder of the play;
- providing no floor plans or entrances or exits for the cast;
- being a basic attempt at construction using materials that don't reflect the actual set.

An 'E' range Set Design was illustrated by:

- poor construction with a minimal relationship to the text;
- no sense of scale;

- using materials that give no idea of the actual set;
- being unable to be used by actors for a production;
- presenting only an elementary idea of staging;
- providing no indication of scene changes.

Recommendations

- The Design concept should be written and presented with the project, explaining the approach taken.
- All items should be labelled and identified clearly. A checklist should be provided, particularly in the Poster/Publicity Design Projects.
- Teacher comments should be dated but not signed.
- Candidates need firm guidance developing their design concept and teachers should actively dissuade inappropriate concepts. Regular monitoring of Logbooks is essential.
- Candidates need to see the finished product to emulate quality and appropriate form and detail.

VIDEO DRAMA

Comments

Candidates demonstrated a familiarity with the requirements and criteria for the Video Drama Project such as:

- the time limit of 5 – 7 minutes;
- that documentary and music clips are inappropriate as Video Drama;
- that there are a variety of Video Drama genres from which to choose in presenting a story; for example, adventure, romance, detective, satire, mystery, comedy and many more.

The best candidates:

- established the setting, characters and mood in opening shots, images;
- demonstrated an understanding of the need to present establishing shots of a location;
- told simple stories that were coherent, using appropriate video language;

- considered the impact of the soundtrack on the dramatic intent of the story;
- edited their stories to create pace;
- utilised their wide knowledge and experience of film and television drama;
- presented the progression of one idea in their Logbook, meeting the challenge of this idea creatively rather than switching to another idea;
- recognised the importance of picture quality;
- produced a well-edited work closer to the 5 minute length rather than the 7 minute end of the range;
- achieved satire and comedy in the script, filming and post production processes when appropriate to the genre of the work.

The weaker candidates:

- produced a Video Drama that lacked coherence in its narrative construction;
- showed a lack of familiarity with the editing process;
- gave little consideration to costume, setting and location;
- used gratuitous violence, mimicking the style of Tarantino and some television cop shows, thus neglecting a creative interpretation of their story;
- failed to consider that their Video Drama is intended for a viewing audience;
- presented stereotypical characters.

Logbooks

Candidates' Logbooks for the Video Drama Project should continue to attain a high standard recording the process of experimentation through to post-production decisions.

The storyboard and post-production script should fit into the Logbook and be identified either at the front or the back of the Logbook.

The Logbook should be a detailed, journalised account of the process of making the Video Drama, with regular, critical reflections on the work in progress. It should not be used as a personal diary.

Drama teachers should only initial and date Logbook comments, not sign their name.

Recommendations

It is recommended that candidates should:

- clearly identify the video tape as well as the tape cover with the TITLE of the Video Drama;
- invent their own story and style commensurate with a minimal budget, rather than re-creating what is seen on the movies or on television;
- present the best possible sound and picture quality. The tape (new) used for the original shoot should always be the tape from which the edited/final version (also a new tape) is constructed. Any subsequent versions must be constructed from the original shooting tape, or master, not from another edited version. Each time a candidate dubs from an edited tape the sound and picture quality is reduced;
- put down a control track on the new video tape before editing onto it;
- rewind tape to the beginning before submitting;
- remove the auto focus facility on the camera whilst shooting;
- remove the tab from the back of the video cassette to ensure it is not accidentally taped over;
- ensure that the sound level of recording and post-production is such that it can easily be heard as sound quality is just as important as visual quality;
- submit a Video Drama, not a documentary;
- produce a practice video drama prior to attempting the HSC Video Drama entry;
- note that gratuitous violence generally fails to further the development of the dramatic action.

Samples of Video Drama Projects

Sample A

This is a pre-emptive love story, a poem about parting, narrated by an idealistic young man, the main character of the Video Drama. It is a simply constructed narrative that presents the desire and naivety of the young man in his quest to meet what he perceives as a beautiful young woman who rides on the same train carriage as himself. Dramatic tension is created by the overwhelming desire of the narrator to talk with the female passenger and whether or not this meeting will take place. Symbolic close-ups of blue eyes, wonderful use of colour and lyrical background music fill in the video story. Then the woman leaves the train at the next station, amidst huge disappointment and philosophic narration about the destiny of meeting and parting by the passionate young man. This final scene is narrated over the symbolic image of the train track.

Features of this Video Drama

- Symbolic and unrealistic mood established by pastel colouring, slow motion and music.
- Still camera style.
- Simple, coherent story primarily shot on one location: a train carriage.
- Manipulated images, close-ups and mid-shots and used lighting to create a mood that reflected the pre-emptive love narrative.

Sample B

This Video Drama presents a story of the angst of a fat school boy who is tormented by his classmates. A strong narrative structure is established from the opening shot, which introduces the viewer to the central character, the fat boy. The boy suffers from peer humiliation and isolation as he tries to ignore the constant insults in the classroom and the playground. A repetitive soundtrack of a happy playground contrasts one scene where the boy is framed as one who is alone and miserable. Action is framed to sustain dramatic tension throughout the production. During post-production the video maker has achieved blue and white images, which help create a stark, cold and imposing atmosphere. Suicide is inferred as the final frame closes with the viewer witnessing the placement of a folded note, the pretend shooting of a cat and then finally the unwrapping of a rifle.

Features of this Video Drama

- Sympathetic story fully developed within the time range.
- Appropriate location choices — school yard, classroom, kitchen and garden shed.
- Varied use of camera angles and perspectives, appropriate to the subject matter, guiding the viewer's attention.
- Clear and effective use of titles and fades.
- Circular narrative that shows character development of the main actor.
- The narrative was primarily motivated by the images; dialogue was secondary.
- Post-production was adequate, eg music, wipes and lighting.
- Selection of background music contributed to the mood of the Video Drama.

Sample C

This Video Drama exemplifies the mystery genre. It is about a box. What is in this box that cannot be opened, has white light emanating from within and displays a warning against meddling? This box is a dangerous lure to the curious explorer in this story. The box is an interesting piece of equipment located physically in the middle of a room with no other company than that of boots lined up against the wall. Contemporary dramatic music creates constant tension for the viewer. Macabre make-up of the lone actor further establishes the mood of this mystery. To where does the explorer disappear?

Features of this Video Drama

- Bizarre music dubbed in post-production established the mood of terror and mystery.
- Attention to costume and make-up was appropriate to video framing.
- Simple, focused, yet cyclic narrative construction.
- Demonstrated an understanding of video language.
- Shot Video Drama within the required time range.

THE WRITTEN PAPER

SECTION I

Drama and Theatre in Australian Societies and Cultures

QUESTION 1 Contemporary Aboriginal Theatre

- (a) *The Keepers* and *The Dreamers* dramatise situations and incidents which appear to be exaggerated in their violence and emotion.

Discuss this statement.

General Comments

This question allowed students to demonstrate understanding of both texts, dramatic form and the playwrights' purpose in manipulating form.

The strongest candidates:

- understood the relationship between the content and the form;
- discussed violence and emotion in the context of the Aboriginal experience;
- discussed the playwright's purpose and use of theatrical conventions;
- were able to distinguish between the two plays and highlight their arguments with clear and appropriate reference to the text;
- identified the dramatic context of violence or emotion;
- argued with generalised support to determine the degree of exaggeration;
- argued strongly that the violence was close re-enactment, not exaggeration.

Candidates in the middle range:

- could express an argument without many specific references to the plays;
- tended to retell or report the plays' presentations of violence and emotion without drawing out the dramatic qualities.

The weaker candidates:

- displayed little understanding of the plays;
- did not seem to understand dramatic form;

- showed confusion between the plays;
- retold one or two incidents;
- were unable to formulate an argument.

The introduction to a typical ‘A’ response might read:

The Keepers and The Dreamers dramatise situations and incidents that look at the state of Aboriginal life. If, in places, they seem to appear to be exaggerated in their violence and emotion, this is merely to underline the total and harsh effects that we, the White society, have inflicted upon them, and help us to identify with the sorrow, and hope, of their people.

A typical ‘B’ response might include:

... To use the word ‘exaggerated’ to describe the violence and emotion in Aboriginal theatre, seems to indicate an underlying current of racial bias. In the play The Dreamers the emotions felt by Worrui about living in an urbanised way is strong and creates a sadness within the audience ... the emphasis on these points is a dramatic device to help educate the audience to the issues and concerns of today’s Aboriginal culture ...

(b) *The Keepers and The Dreamers* present a nostalgic vision of the Aboriginal past.
Discuss.

The strongest candidates:

- understood and discussed nostalgia as a conception in drama without confusing all references to ‘the past’ as being nostalgia;
- supported distinctions with close reference to the texts and used quotations;
- showed awareness of how the past was used to achieve a larger range of audience reaction than for the purpose of being nostalgic;
- showed awareness of the vision of the playwrights;
- were able to explain the visual experiences of the audiences;
- could distinguish between politicising of content and themes;
- discussed the dramatic and theatrical elements;
- showed awareness of the power of visual action in the theatre.

Candidates in the middle range:

- focused on the dramatic and theatrical elements and discussed them in relation to the text;
- tended not to come to grips with the 'nostalgia' elements;
- showed awareness of the power of visual action in the plays.

The weaker candidates:

- failed to distinguish between past and present;
- demonstrated little awareness of theatre and the audience;
- failed to discuss both plays;
- did not refer to the texts.

A typical 'A' response might include:

... This is not to say that the plays are nostalgic as they do not so much lament what is lost and past, as look forward to what may be. The Dreamers seeks to convey a sense of continuity of Aboriginal culture and uses images of the past through the character of Worru to indicate this sense of continuation. The Keepers, on the other hand, provides the idea of reconciliation between white and black Australians by using the example of the history of the Boandik tribe. While both plays use the past as a tool to emphasise their messages, they are not simply nostalgic visions of what has been ...

A typical 'B' response might argue:

... Thus, the audience is taken on a journey back in time to witness the richness of the Aboriginal culture of the past: the contrast of this beauty with the surrounding scenes of present-day violence, drinking and poverty create the subtle sense of nostalgia for what used to be. Maza shows that 'racial conflict' is a universal problem, and the ending of his play indeed focuses on the possibilities for the future rather than a longing to re-establish the past.

A typical 'C' response might begin:

Using a variety of dramatic techniques a vision of the Aboriginal past is presented in both The Keepers and The Dreamers. This vision is nostalgic in its sense of loss and longing, but it is not nostalgic with the connotation of being unrealistic in its vision. There is also a sense of hope established through the humour to prevent the nostalgia for the past becoming as important as hoping for a better future. The techniques used to present this nostalgia include poetry, mime, dance and dialogue.

QUESTION 2 David Holman

- (a) David Holman is able to mix conventional theatrical structures and forms with devices children use while playing.

Discuss how this mixture operates in EITHER *No Worries*
OR *The Small Poppies*.

The strongest candidates:

- presented well-structured, analytical responses;
- showed an excellent grasp of conventional theatre structures;
- were able to link these to children's play with examples;
- argued well about how the 'mixture' operated in the play;
- used close reference to the chosen text.

Candidates in the middle range:

- described structures and devices rather than analysing how they were used;
- discussed theatrical conventions;
- found difficulty relating theatrical structures to the 'devices children use while playing';
- identified aspects of the play's structure and/or devices without relating them to the question.

The weaker candidates:

- gave a generalised description of the play;
- listed some elements of drama in the play.

A typical 'A' response may have integrated arguments:

In No Worries David Holman is able to successfully mix conventional structures and forms with the devices children use while playing. By merging the two aspects, Holman creates a powerful and dramatic experience with which children can identify. He is able to use a conventional theatrical experience to present themes and issues to an audience not usually familiar with drama and theatre.

Songs and rhymes are devices children use while playing, and Holman uses them to make his audience more receptive to the theatrical experience. For example, throughout the play, scenes are linked and settings identified by a continuing song, which is also a form of narration, preparing the audience for a change of scene or a change of mood, eg transporting the audience with the Bell family when they moved to the city.

(b) Holman's plays are energetic, enthusiastic and fast-paced.

Do these characteristics of the plays allow issues and ideas to be presented successfully?

The stronger candidates:

- were able to discuss the characteristics individually and link them with the presentation of ideas and issues while analysing the degree of theatrical effect that Holman achieves;
- used close reference to the plays;
- focused on the plays' impact on the audience.

Candidates in the middle range:

- often focused on the issues or characteristics without linking the two;
- used generalised description of the plays in terms of their energy, pace and enthusiasm rather than specific, referenced examples.

The weaker candidates:

- did not address the question;
- used the words of the question repetitively to present weak, unstructured responses.

A typical 'A' response might structure an argument:

The use of singers as a narrator in No Worries presents the plot through rhyme and tunes. The audience's focus is drawn to the rural hardship experienced by the Bells by the words of the song.

*Then at six her dad goes out
He finds the rain gauge dry as dry
He looks up and swears aloud
At another empty sky.*

The use of the song provides a variation to dialogue, and while it is fast paced and presented energetically, it also manages to capture the stress and difficulty of drought for the farming community.

Sound effects and offstage voices are used to heighten the impact of the tension and to show time passing. Matty and her family's transition from the country to the city is accompanied by traffic noises and shouting made by other members of the cast. Thus manipulation of the human voice is used to present apparent chaos and fast-paced action.

QUESTION 3 State and Regional Theatre Companies

- (a) Analyse the responses of the state or regional theatre company that you have studied to major changes in government funding and policy decisions in recent years.

General Comments

Few students attempted this question, as it was demanding and required more than just listing recent developments. The instruction 'analyse' may have deterred students, yet the ability to analyse is a requirement of studying this topic.

An 'A' range response may have included:

The STC's aim has always been to produce quality theatre. In order to achieve this, it is heavily reliant on funding. However, in the early years of this decade it faced both what was known as 'ceiling funding' and the economic depression in Australia. 'Ceiling funding' meant that the STC could only receive a maximum of \$300,000 in funds, where previously they were receiving more. This plus the economic difficulties of the recession meant that the STC had to change its financial structure in order to survive.

Richard Wherret, who was the Artistic Director of the STC at the time, did exactly that. He adopted a new artistic policy designed to provide commercial and 'high profile' art, while simultaneously providing new and politically generated work within smaller projects, parented by the main company. This resulted in the diversification of the six aims of the company, which meant the STC could broaden its audience base within the limits of the funds available.

(b) Many theatre companies attempt to increase and diversify their audience.

Discuss the ways in which the state or regional theatre company that you have studied has attempted to extend its reach.

General Comment

The majority of candidates attempted this question. Most responses were based on the Sydney Theatre Company, although some candidates explored Theatre South, Q Theatre and Riverina.

In both questions it was important for candidates to know the history and changing philosophy behind the theatre company's programs.

There appears to be a need for more independent research rather than relying on information provided by the theatre company.

The strongest candidates:

- made value judgements on programs and particular recent productions;
- were knowledgeable and analytical in their discussion;
- used relevant and current examples.

The weaker candidates:

- simply listed the different aims of the companies, without judgement or analysis.

QUESTION 4 Community Theatre in Australia

(a) Community theatre has the freedom to create original and exciting theatre.

Discuss this statement with reference to the work of a community theatre group that you have studied.

General Comments

There was not a large candidature for this topic.

The strongest candidates:

- understood the need to discuss the statement by agreeing or disagreeing with it;
- substantiated their arguments with specific examples of the work, material, performance styles and venues that the group selects;
- showed a good understanding of the scope and philosophy of the community theatre.

The weaker candidates:

- gave an account of some activities of a community theatre group;
- lacked depth of analysis;
- failed to show how the group could create original and exciting theatre.

A typical ‘A’ response might argue:

Community theatre breaks away from mainstream theatre conventions. It is innovative in that it allows communities to create an identity. It gives the group the freedom to express the character and plight of the community. The individuality this allows leads to original and exciting theatre, through which the group is able to identify its aims and philosophies. It exposes its audience to issues and ideals, perhaps even solutions through the medium of theatre that is exciting and creative, and sometimes confronting.

(b) A community theatre group must restrict itself to performances that are directly relevant to the community it represents.

Discuss this statement.

The strongest candidates:

- argued for or against the statement with clear, referenced evidence.

The weaker candidates:

- lacked depth of analysis;
- tended to repeat the same point;
- failed to show why performances should (or should not) be restricted to those directly relevant to that community.

QUESTION 5 Nineteenth-Century Australian Melodrama

- (a) Describe some of the conventions of dialogue used in nineteenth-century Australian melodrama, and discuss their influence on performance.

General Comments

Candidates who attempted this question showed some idea of the conventions of dialogue, but less competent candidates showed increasingly greater difficulty in dealing with their influence on performance.

The strongest candidates:

- linked the dialogue conventions to performance confidently and directly;
- made consistent reference to both plays through the use of examples or quotes;
- linked the arguments and examples to the specific needs of the essay.

Candidates in the middle range:

- were not successful in linking the conventions of dialogue to performance;
- used fewer and more general references to the plays studied;
- were seldom able to draw a convincing conclusion to unite the two strands of the question.

The weaker candidates:

- listed features of melodrama, including dialogue, but did not attempt to answer the question;
- retold aspects of the storyline.

An example of an 'A' response could read:

In nineteenth-century Australian melodrama dialogue was used in different ways to represent different classes, countries or cultures. Some techniques used included 'asides' and, in some cases, singing. All these conventions were used to create humour by misunderstanding and were used to highlight underlying themes or issues such as the attitudes of the English to the bush.

Asides are a common feature of melodramatic plays. They are used to strengthen the rapport and contact with the audience, which is an essential component of the theatre of melodrama. As characters share their innermost feelings (which are often contradictory to what is being expressed on stage) with the audience, the character is revealed more fully. The audience responds to this and the nature of melodrama is achieved.

- (b) Both *The Sunny South* and *Robbery Under Arms* have bushrangers as central figures. Discuss the different ways these characters are presented and the theatrical conventions that underlie their presentation.

General Comments

This question proved to be one that students did not answer well. In particular they had difficulties with the mythologies surrounding bushrangers, and in elucidating these were manipulated by the playwrights.

Candidates in the ‘B’ range:

- displayed an understanding of the conventions but were unable to draw distinct conclusions;
- made links between the conventions of melodrama and the presentations of bushrangers;
- did not analyse conventions enough to justify statements.

Candidates in the middle range:

- discussed the roles of the bushrangers;
- spent only limited time delineating the conventions of melodrama;
- displayed a knowledge of the text but were not always able to relate this to the question.

A typical ‘B’ script might include:

These characters are presented in vastly different ways and the theatrical conventions of nineteenth-century melodrama such as linear, predictable plots, set design, predictable themes and simple characterisation help present bushrangers as central figures in both plays. Captain Starlight in Robbery Under Arms and the detestable Dick Duggan in The Sunny South have major, crucial roles that are crucial to the story.

QUESTION 6 Alma de Groen

- (a) Discuss the ways in which the style and structure of *The Rivers of China* reflect Alma de Groen's view of Mansfield as an innovator and experimenter.

General Comments

The question reflected the challenging and demanding nature of this topic. Most candidates understood the plays, and could discuss the themes, issues and structures.

An improved standard in response was noted by examiners.

This was by far the more difficult question and strong candidates looked at the question in its entirety. Some candidates tended to have difficulty with the word 'style' and wrote about the structure of the play, with little reference to the second part of the question.

An 'A' candidate may have begun:

Feminist writers like Alma de Groen are often concerned with the kind of transformation possible only through art, thus her use of the writer Katherine Mansfield to illustrate this belief. The concept of artist as self, and freedom through art, are portrayed through the style and structure of the play, and help show de Groen's perspective of Mansfield as an innovator, and an experimenter.

De Groen uses the structure of two narrative threads ...

- (b) How is the idea of gender identity explored in EITHER *Vocations* OR *The Girl Who Saw Everything*?

General Comments

This question gave candidates plenty of scope.

Very few candidates gave a definition of 'gender identity', and therefore tended to misuse the term.

The development of identity in both genders needed to be explored.

Weaker candidates simply retold the storyline and explained characters' roles.

A typical ‘A’ response might read:

The blurring and dissolving of the boundaries in the apartment visually parallel the ambiguity in expectations of the characters as they search individually for their inner sense of identity. As in her other feminist dramas, de Groen uses gender reversals to offer insight into the problems associated with role stereotypes in present society.

For example, in one scene de Groen uses comedy to evoke the underlying seriousness of a situation. At Vicki’s audition, Ross bursts in with stroller and baby demanding ‘What the hell do you mean by leaving us stranded in the western suburbs?’ This classic cliché of female domesticity has been lightened by placing it in an opposite context. The emotions involved, however, are fundamentally similar, and the focus of gender identity has been used to comment on the benefits of an egalitarian society.

QUESTION 7 Contemporary Women’s Comedy

- (a) Explain how ONE current Australian woman comedian whom you have studied has achieved wide recognition by developments in her material and performance style.

General Comments

There is a real problem in terms of access for study of this topic. Students can rarely see stand-up comics performing because so much of the work is done in pubs and clubs. Trying to gain an understanding of stand-up comedy from the comedian’s work in other fields is almost impossible.

The stronger candidates:

- understood that there were two main styles of comic performance and were able to place their chosen comedian within a style;
- were able to link a performance style and the way in which it was a reflection of society;
- were able to explain the public acceptance and recognition of the comedian in terms of the material and its presentation.

Candidates in the middle range:

- displayed limited understanding of the concept of performance style;
- had some knowledge of the comedian’s style, but could not analyse its effect in performance.

The weaker candidates:

- referred only to performance work in television;
- generalised about the comedian rather than making specific reference to style.

A typical answer in the high ‘C’ range might include relevant points that are not expanded sufficiently, for example:

There are two main styles a comedian can choose to use for performance. These include characterisation and stand up. Magda plays numerous characters such as Pixie Ann, a broad characterisation of a sports commentator who interviews unsuspecting victims. She asks stupid and inane questions to well-known sporting people.

She also plays characters that reflect the attitudes of certain groups in our society, take for instance the skinhead, Michelle, who is often seen with her boyfriend Ferret.

- (b) Originally, female comics based their material on self-criticism, laughing at experiences that are exclusively female. Thankfully the last decade has seen that emphasis change.

Do you agree? Base your response on the work of at least TWO Australian female comics.

The strongest candidates:

- demonstrated a good overall knowledge of the development of Australian Women’s Comedy, before moving on to discuss the two female comics;
- presented a clear, concise line of argument;
- used appropriate evidence of documentation from a range of sources beside the suggested texts;
- showed a sound knowledge of performance styles used by current Australian women comics;
- consistently linked both parts of the question — the work of the two comics to the change in emphasis in material.

Candidates in the middle range:

- presented a working knowledge of the development of women’s comedy;
- were not able to use documentation effectively;
- displayed limited understanding of the concept of performance style;

- tended to rely on general comments where specific arguments were required;
- used limited examples of the comedians' work.

The weaker candidates:

- were limited by lack of knowledge of the development of women's comedy;
- did not deal adequately with the two comedians.

The beginning of a typical 'A' response could have read:

Charles Norman recalls of women's comedy of the early 1900s: 'For women to do comedy was a set of songs with a few funny lines that they had worked on for years and years.' Men had control over the industry, so for women to get a laugh it was necessary to play sexual objects for the men, or pose as a nagging wife or possessive mother ... although in the 1970s and '80s women began to use feminism to achieve what they wanted in comedy, often using humour as a weapon, many comedians believed that there was no importance in ridiculing men, as men had ridiculed them in the past.

This last decade has seen the rise, and survival, of many more female comics, who are beginning to perform a much broader range of material.

SECTION II

Drama and Theatre in Societies and Cultures Other Than Australia

General Comments

A majority of candidates answered Question 8 or Question 9.

Many candidates failed to attack the question, confining their answers to the plot or the history of the movement.

Very few candidates were able to deal with the social and political contexts of the theatrical movement.

QUESTION 8 Greek Tragedy

- (a) In crafting their tragedies, the Greek playwrights were as much concerned with staging and performance as they were with words and song.

Discuss this statement with reference to the overall theatrical effect of EITHER *Antigone* OR *The Bacchae*.

The strongest candidates:

- addressed the concepts of staging and performance, noting the visual effects of costume, mask, special effects and conventions;
- included the movement of the chorus, though few recognised the relationship of this to song;
- discussed such things as the use of irony in the dialogue or the use of choral ode to break scenes;
- linked words and song to thematic content and purpose;
- were able to visualise the play in production;
- were able to quote examples from the text to support their opinion;
- considered the effect on the audience;
- included the social and political context of the play.

Candidates in the middle range:

- were not able to link the different parts of the question;
- lacked depth of knowledge of one play;

- were not able to discuss the purpose of the theatrical effect or relationship to the audience;
- described staging and performances of Greek plays without reference to the words and song.

The weaker candidates:

- re-told information about Greek Tragedy without reference to the question;
- referred to both plays;
- were not able to deal with the theatrical effects.

A typical 'A' response:

In The Bacchae Euripides was indeed as concerned with staging and performance as he was with the words and song. At this time, in the fifth century BC, Greek playwrights wrote, directed, trained their chorus and often acted the main role, and even though this play was apparently performed nine years after his death, the care taken by the poet originally, and passed down to the son or nephew who staged the play, is evident in the script and the evidence that survives.

In The Bacchae there is much opportunity for theatrical effects, and as Greg McCart commented in his critique of Greek Tragedy in 1993, 'The playwrights were extremely competitive in their use of staging, properties and furniture'. Euripides was to no extent less competitive. The mechane, a crane situated behind the skene was used by the ancient Greek tragedian to represent the Gods. When Dionysus appears at the beginning and the end of the play, this effect would most certainly have been used. It added great status to the actor and would have been pleasing to the priest of Dionysus who sat at the centre of the front row. In the context of the Festival of Dionysus, such things may have helped this play to win the prize, as it did.

The use of sound effects such as thunder and crashing may have been used when the man from Lydia was freed from Pentheus' palace. This would have added enormity to the nemesis of the Gods as a result of the hybris of Pentheus. Euripides also used his script as a kind of sound effect to enhance the visual action on the stage and enable the people at the back of a 17,000 or so strong crowd to understand what was going on. Such as occurred as Agaue holding the head of her son Pentheus in her hands and the chorus of Bacchantes remarking:

*A mother's hand defiled
Blood and dripping red
Caresses the torn head
Of her own murdered child.*

Such aural imagery would have been appreciated by the ancient audience, who would have been enthralled and disgusted by the action of the play. In this way Euripides used

theatrical effects and his script to create an incredible experience for his audience. The overall theatrical effect would have been greatly heightened by the sound and sight of a mother who has just killed her son.

The chorus, made up of oriental Bacchantes, would have fascinated their audience. Orientals, as well as the Thebans, were apparently regarded very poorly by the Athenian audience. The chorus were men dressed as women, something that was common, but still, it is believed, repulsed the audience. By intentionally making the Chorus disliked by the audience, Euripides was able to achieve a distance between the audience and the characters that would have enabled the audience enough space to understand the fate of these characters and perhaps heed more closely the message Euripides expressed through Dionysus.

'It is a wise man's part to practise smooth tempered self-control and by a Messenger Reverence to the Gods is man's noblest possession: and wisest too for those who possess it.'

Masks were worn by all actors, including the Chorus. The masks were very carefully designed with Pentheus' mask being in contrast to the man from Lydia. Pentheus would have worn a mask with angry features and dark colouring. This would have contrasted well with the mask of the man from Lydia (the human form of Dionysus) which would possibly have worn long golden curls with effeminate features. This representation of the God would not have been appreciated by the audience, but was apt as Dionysus was the God of youth, wine, fertility and enjoyment.

Along with the masks, costuming was quite important to the staging of the play, especially in the scene where Pentheus is being led to view the Bacchantes. The man from Lydia dresses Pentheus in a 'long, flowing gown'. This attire not only represented women's clothing, but also was the burial raiment of the period. In this way, Euripides achieves dramatic irony, as the audience becomes aware that Pentheus has been dressed for his death.

All of these theatrical effects helped Euripides to express his message and helped to show more clearly the fall from power of those who do not obey the Gods.

Euripides was concerned with his script, which also enhanced the play's overall theatrical effect. In the second strophe the Chorus discusses this new religion's dogma, the second and third strophes are devoted to the myth and the Epode is devoted to the ritual of this Dionysian religion. The play does not simply tell a story, it becomes a poetic reference to the religion of the time.

The use of dance and song 'by the Chorus as in any ancient Greek tragedy offered relief from emotion charged' episodes of the play. It is also important to note that this Chorus of Bacchantes was extreme Ion status — not only were they Oriental and from Thebes, they were women! This made their fate, although not nice, less shocking than if they were a group who represented high society. This is also the reason the play's message is not expressed by the Chorus as it usually is, but by onlookers such as Tiresias and the Messenger, as well as Dionysus, who, inevitably, gets the final say.

In Euripides' The Bacchae, the Chorus, the sound effects, the costume, the masks and the use of visual and aural imagery all add to the overall theatrical effect of the play.

(b) Discuss the ways in which the attitudes of the Chorus influence the audience's perception of EITHER Antigone and Creon in *Antigone* OR Dionysus and Pentheus in *The Bacchae*.

The strongest candidates:

- explained the playwright's use of the chorus to focus on the two characters and influence the audience's perception of them;
- took into account the physical appearance of the Chorus;
- saw the Chorus in relation to the theatricality of the play;
- discussed the role of the Chorus in relation to the audience;
- used extensive quotation and example;
- were able to explain the changing attitude of the Chorus in *Antigone*.

Candidates in the middle range:

- showed some understanding of the text;
- described the general function of the Chorus without specific reference to the question;
- lacked textual reference;
- listed general information about Greek theatre with little reference to the question.

The weaker candidates:

- retold the story;
- did not refer to the question.

QUESTION 9 Ibsen : The Realist Phase

(a) In EITHER *The Wild Duck* OR *A Doll's House* show how the sets and costumes reflect the lives of Ibsen's characters.

The strongest candidates:

- presented a structured argument with close reference to the play;
- realised the characters through costume;
- understood how Ibsen used set and costumes in a realistic and symbolic sense to explore and expose the inner lives of the characters;
- identified how Ibsen used Realism and Symbolism;
- discussed colour, texture and the visualisation of the play;
- were able to see the play from the perspective of the audience.

Candidates in the middle range:

- discussed the sets and costumes in detail but did not successfully link them to the exposure of the characters;
- discussed properties as symbols;
- generally referred to only one character.

The weaker candidates:

- discussed both plays;
- discussed either sets or costumes;
- gave a detailed discussion of one aspect of the set, eg the Christmas tree;
- summarised the play.

(b) In *A Doll's House*, what dramatic use does Ibsen make of the minor characters — Mrs Linde, Krogstad, and Dr Rank?

The strongest candidates:

- understood the dramatic effectiveness of the three minor characters — how they affected Nora and Torvald, how they reflected aspects of them;
- dealt with the three characters equally;
- identified what the minor characters represented in a symbolic dramatic sense;
- discussed performance devices/techniques, eg status, focus, timing;
- used effective references and quotations;
- referred to the use of irony, suspense and exposure.

Candidates in the middle range:

- described each minor character and what they did without referring to the 'dramatic use';
- identified Nora's relationships to the minor characters;
- concentrated on only one of the characters.

The weaker candidates:

- lacked understanding of 'dramatic use';
- simply retold the story;
- did not relate the minor characters to the major characters;
- discussed both plays.

QUESTION 10 Dada Theatre

- (a) Dada was never really a coherent movement with a clear set of principles. It was a collection of devices, and a desire to provoke, used in the service of a wide range of attitudes and beliefs.

Discuss.

General Comments

There was a small candidature for this section.

Almost all candidates answered Part (a) despite the fact that (b) was such a good question.

This question required a degree of sophistication in discussion and social understanding and appreciation of the movement.

It required candidates to respond to a number of key concepts.

The strongest candidates:

- demonstrated a strong understanding of the social, historical and artistic context of Dada theatre;
- effectively analysed specific performances and how/why they provoked the audiences;
- had an excellent overview of the four Dada periods;
- were able to identify key words of the question, eg ‘coherent movement’, and grapple with the implications;
- made specific and correct references to manifestos;
- looked at ironies, eg as soon as it became a recognised movement it lost its impact, and neatly tied this into the question.

Candidates in the middle range:

- became entangled in a historical account of Dada and did not relate this to the question;
- listed ways of provoking rather than discussing the actual movement;
- were not able to make specific references to performances;
- were not able to relate the names and places they knew with the social context in which Dada operated.

The weaker candidates:

- showed no understanding of the attitudes and beliefs of the movement;
- did not address the question;
- were unsure of what or who the movement was provoking.

(b) A merry black song interrupted by the chords of a reveille. Curtain. The Guard, in full moonlight, with a burning lantern. A gong sounds five times. Flashes of light.

‘The last of the trumpet breaks off croakingly. The Guard, frightened, straightens up, crows, saluting to all sides.’

WALTER MEHRING, *Simply Classical*

What elements in this description of a performance are characteristically Dada? In your answer, refer to other Dada performances you have studied.

The strongest candidates:

- discussed the different elements in the quotation and knew how they reflected the philosophy of Dada;
- referred to other performances with ease;
- knew *Simply Classical* well;
- could argue against the topic.

Candidates in the middle range:

- couldn’t ‘unpack’ the quotation;
- made a brief reference to the text then wrote a prepared answer;
- listed other performances studied but were unable to relate them to the question.

The weaker candidates

- avoided the quotation;
- wrote a list of things they knew about Dada.

QUESTION 11 Peter Brook

- (a) Describe some of the most striking features of Brook's production of EITHER *A Midsummer Night's Dream* OR *King Lear*. Comment on them in relation to Brook's views on theatre, life and Shakespeare.

General Comments

This was a difficult question to be answered succinctly in an examination context.

The strongest candidates:

- coped well with a very difficult question;
- addressed all aspects of the question;
- understood chronologically Brook's development as a director and his philosophy;
- showed an in-depth knowledge of the Shakespearean text.

The weaker candidates:

- did not address the question;
- described rehearsal processes;
- neglected Brook's ideas and philosophies;
- made little or no references to text or production.

- (b) Look carefully at this photograph of the guillotine sequence from Brook's production of the *Marat/Sade*.

Using this photograph as a starting point, discuss how Brook used the inmates in *Marat/Sade* to achieve the characteristic effect of his production.

The strongest candidates:

- used the photograph as a starting point to in-depth analysis;
- were able to refer to specific character types;
- incorporated the rehearsal process;
- recognised the inmates' function as a dramatic device in Brook's exploration of actor/audience relationships;

- showed an understanding of the theatrical influences of Artaud and Brecht;
- reduced the distinction between the real and the unreal;
- introduced the methods of Grotowski.

The weaker candidates:

- ignored the photograph;
- had little knowledge of the production, the performance or the text;
- had little understanding of the characteristic effects of Brook's productions;
- used generalisations that did not refer to the question.

QUESTION 12 Wole Soyinka

- (a) 'I do not believe that the function of the writer is to ignore the tragic aspect of human experience.'

WOLE SOYINKA

How does Soyinka use dramatic conventions in *The Road* and *A Dance of the Forests* to explore the tragic aspects of human life?

General Comments

This is a very difficult topic which seems to be poorly understood.

Few candidates answered this question. Those that did had difficulty relating the dramatic conventions to the tragic aspects of the plays.

- (b) Soyinka's work draws heavily upon the traditional rituals, beliefs and customs of Nigeria, as well as dealing with the contemporary social and political issues of that country. Do you think this blend of elements could lessen the impact of his dramas on western audiences?

Few candidates answered this question.

QUESTION 13 Augusto Boal

- (a) Discuss Augusto Boal's plan for transforming spectator into actor, and comment on the strategies he proposes to achieve the transformation.

General Comments

This topic was poorly answered generally, with candidates taking a descriptive rather than an analytical approach.

The best answers to both questions had a clear understanding of the social and political context of Boal's work and supported their answers with varied and relevant quotations.

The strongest candidates:

- were able to differentiate between actor/spectator;
- showed a good knowledge of transformation of spectator into actor;
- looked at the social context and implications;
- addressed 'plan' and 'strategies' and put them into the social context of an empowering process;
- looked at the historical position of the spectator in the theatre and were able to discuss the traditional notions of Aristotlean theatre in the light of Boal's theatre practice.

The weaker candidates:

- simply listed Boal's theatre form;
- neglected to address the 'transformation';
- focused on the process rather than the 'intended transformation';
- gave descriptive, detailed descriptions that had no link to the question.

- (b) 'Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society.'

AUGUSTO BOAL

Discuss the extent to which Boal's practices reflect this statement.

The strongest candidates:

- dealt with the 'form of knowledge' and discussed the process of transformation and the motivation behind the process;
- dealt with 'society' as an original and universal concept as well as historically.

The weaker candidates:

- did not address the question;
- simply described some practices;
- had little or no understanding of theatre as a 'form of knowledge';
- described specific situations in isolation;
- regurgitated the three forms (image, forum and invisible).

QUESTION 14 Commedia dell'Arte

- (a) An actor in a commedia dell'arte troupe had unlimited freedom in performance.

Do you agree? Discuss this statement in the light of your knowledge of commedia dell'arte.

General Comments

Answers in this topic had substantial content and were very well answered. It is a good topic for drama students because of the practical nature of the teaching. Workshop activities enhanced students' understanding of the topic and were often referred to in the answers. Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of mask and of the physical and theatrical qualities of commedia.

The strongest candidates:

- mentioned the social context and related it to the question;
- were able to argue both sides of the question;
- dealt well with the notion of freedom;

- were able to explore the effects of performance;
- supported their arguments with a wide range of evidence;
- explained the paradoxical nature of mask as both limiting and freeing;
- explored the subtleties of status, scenario, grummelot and improvisation;
- referred to the satirical nature of commedia.

The weaker candidates:

- lacked the confidence to challenge the statement;
- boxed themselves into a corner with the term ‘unlimited’;
- used vague generalisations;
- described scenarios but did not relate them to the question;
- described the history of commedia without reference to the question;
- failed to mention the mask and its effect on performance.

(b) Discuss the relationship between masters and servants in commedia dell’arte.
How were these relationships expressed in performance?

The strongest candidates:

- related the question to performance and looked at status, stock characters and the nature of commedia and its social context;
- discussed the function of master/servant in relation to the plot;
- discussed the role of the servant in relation to the audience;
- demonstrated understanding of status and reversal of status and the subtlety of this reversal.

The weaker candidates:

- did not look at the characters ‘in performance’;
- did not refer to status;
- ignored the relationship between master and servant;
- simply discussed the stock characters without reference to the question.

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 those participating, the final itinerant marking team and Senior Examiners were chosen, 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.

Printouts 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 assessment 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 by the Supervisor of Marking 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.

At the debriefing 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 range.

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

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

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;
- retells the plot of the set text(s);
- reiterates 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 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.