

**B O A R D O F S T U D I E S**  
NEW SOUTH WALES

**HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

**1998**  
**DRAMA**

**2 UNIT**

*(40 Marks)*

*Time allowed—One hour and a half  
(Plus 5 minutes reading time)*

**DIRECTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Attempt TWO questions, ONE from each Section.
- All questions are of equal value.
- Answer each question in a SEPARATE Writing Booklet.
- You may ask for extra Writing Booklets if you need them.

**SECTION I**  
**DRAMA AND THEATRE IN AUSTRALIAN**  
**SOCIETIES AND CULTURES**

(20 Marks)

Attempt ONE question.

All questions are of equal value.

**QUESTION 1. Contemporary Aboriginal Theatre**

EITHER

- (a) '(Aboriginal performance) is our voice, our perspective. We are not being interpreted, we are telling you how it is.'

Adapted from RHODA ROBERTS, Artistic Director of the Festival of the Dreaming

In what ways does the Aboriginal theatre you have studied tell 'how it is' for black Australians? In your answer, refer to TWO plays from the set texts.

OR

- (b) Aboriginal theatre has developed into a vibrant art form that educates people to see the value in different ways of living and thinking.

Discuss this statement, with reference to TWO plays from the set texts. In what ways do these plays in performance excite and challenge the audience?

Texts set for study:

Roger Bennett, *Funerals and Circuses*

Jimmy Chi and Kuckles, *Bran Nue Dae*

Jack Davis et al., *Plays from Black Australia (The Dreamers, The Keepers, Murras and Coordah)*

Robert J. Merritt, *The Cakeman*

**QUESTION 2. Theatre in Education**

EITHER

- (a) Most Theatre in Education performances are designed with a minimal set and few props.

Referring to at least ONE of the Theatre in Education plays you have studied, discuss what would be lost and/or gained by the use of a more complex staging.

OR

- (b) In Theatre in Education the education is more important than the theatre.

Discuss this statement, with reference to at least TWO of the texts you have studied.

Texts set for study:

Manuel Aston, *Fossils*

Nick Enright, *A Property of the Clan*

David Holman, *No Worries: Three Plays for Children (No Worries, Small Poppies and Beauty and the Beast)*

Peta Murray, *Spitting Chips*

**QUESTION 3. State or Regional Theatre Companies**

EITHER

- (a) The repertory of a theatre company is determined by pragmatic concerns, such as profit and the theatre space, rather than social and artistic responsibilities.

Discuss this statement, with reference to the state or regional theatre company you have studied.

OR

- (b) The Australia Council aims to encourage ‘work that contributes to the development of Australian theatre by exploring not only new content but also new processes, forms, or audiences’.

How has the state or regional company you have studied tried to be innovative in one or more of these ways?

Theatre companies set for study:

Sydney Theatre Company  
Melbourne Theatre Company  
Royal Queensland Theatre Company  
South Australian Theatre Company  
Q Theatre  
Hunter Valley Theatre Company  
Riverina Theatre Company  
Theatre South  
Murray River Performing Group  
New England Theatre Company  
Theatre North

**QUESTION 4. Australian Theatre 1965–1975**

EITHER

- (a) The Nimrod Theatre in Sydney, and La Mama and the Pram Factory in Melbourne, were all ‘rough theatre’ spaces.

What impact did such new theatre spaces have on the writing and performance of plays and the expectations of audiences. In your answer, refer to at least TWO of the plays you studied.

OR

- (b) The new theatre of the late 1960s and early 1970s reflected the spirit and concerns of its time—in performance style and content—but it has little relevance now.

Discuss this statement, referring to at least TWO of the plays set for study.

Texts set for study:

Michael Boddy and Bob Ellis, *The Legend of King O’Malley*

Jack Hibberd, *A Stretch of the Imagination*

John Romeril, *The Floating World*

David Williamson, *Don’s Party*

Alexander Buzo, *The Front Room Boys*

**QUESTION 5. Nineteenth-century Australian Melodrama**

EITHER

- (a) A typical heroine in Australian melodrama could ride, shoot, and swim. She did not faint, and was seldom in danger of a ‘fate worse than death’.

Discuss this statement in relation to the presentation on stage of Bubs and Clarice in *The Sunny South* and Aileen in *Robbery Under Arms*.

OR

- (b) In the nineteenth century the artificial conventions of the stage were employed to engage the audience in real emotional and moral issues.

Discuss this statement, with reference to BOTH *The Sunny South* AND *Robbery Under Arms*.

Texts set for study:

Alfred Dampier and Garnet Walch, *Robbery Under Arms*

George Darrell, *The Sunny South*

**QUESTION 6. Louis Nowra**

EITHER

- (a) What is important in Nowra's plays is not the overall plot but the sequence of brief images, incidents, and events from which the plays are constructed.

Discuss this statement, with reference to at least TWO of the plays set for study.

OR

- (b) What happens in the present is the product of what happened in the past.

Referring to at least TWO of the plays set for study, discuss how Nowra contrasts theatrical images of an older world with images suggesting a new world.

Texts set for study:

*The Golden Age*  
*Summer of the Aliens*  
*Sunrise*  
*Visions*

**QUESTION 7. Women and Contemporary Theatre**

EITHER

- (a) Any woman you bring onto the stage will be seen first as someone to be looked at before she can be thought of as someone who can be taken seriously.

Discuss this statement, with reference to the work of the performer AND the characters in the play you have studied.

OR

- (b) In what ways can the work of the performer AND the playwright you have studied be seen to explore stereotyped images of women?

Women performers:

Robyn Archer  
Wendy Harmer  
Justine Saunders  
Ruth Cracknell

Women playwrights:

Linda Aronson, *Dinkum Assorted*  
Alma de Groen, *The Rivers of China*  
Dorothy Hewett, *The Chapel Perilous*  
Hannie Rayson, *Falling from Grace*

**SECTION II**  
**DRAMA AND THEATRE IN SOCIETIES AND CULTURES**  
**OTHER THAN AUSTRALIAN**

(20 Marks)

Attempt ONE question.

All questions are of equal value.

**QUESTION 8. Shakespeare in Performance**

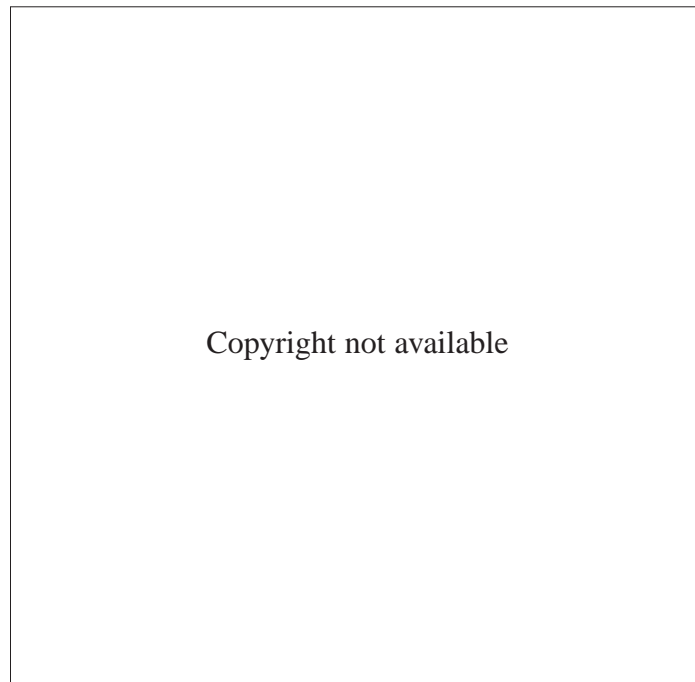
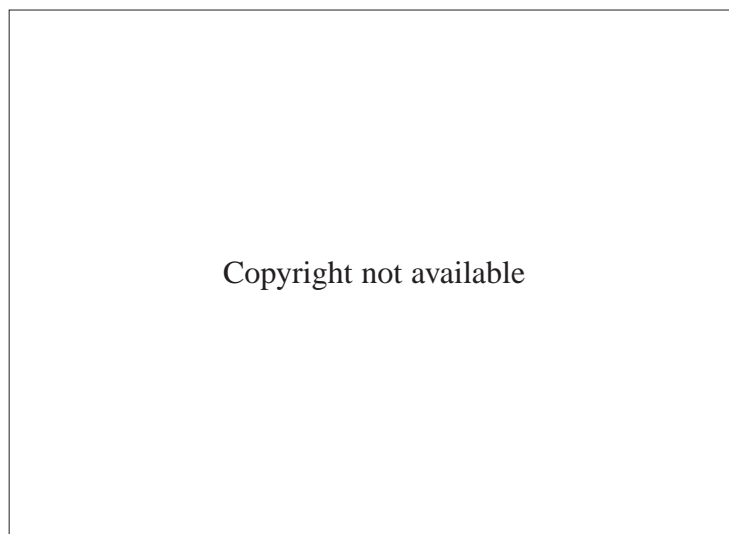


FIG. 1. AN EXAMPLE OF ELIZABETHAN STAGING





## QUESTION 8. (Continued)

EITHER

- (a) What do Figure 1 and Figure 2 tell us about early-seventeenth-century performance compared with the possibilities of modern performance?

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the greater technical resources available for the modern performance of Shakespeare's plays. In your answer, refer to at least TWO of the plays set for study.

OR

- (b) Shakespeare's plays were not universal—his ideas, themes and values rely on modern theatrical interpretations to make them relevant.

Discuss this statement, referring to modern performances of Shakespeare's plays. In your answer, refer to at least TWO of the plays set for study.

Texts set for study:

*The Taming of the Shrew*

*Romeo and Juliet*

*The Merchant of Venice*

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*

**QUESTION 9. Caryl Churchill**

EITHER

- (a) Caryl Churchill has employed a variety of writing processes, including collaborations with various theatre companies.

Discuss how these processes affected the content, style, and performance of TWO of the plays set for study.

OR

- (b) In Churchill's plays, the personal lives of individuals are seen to derive meaning from their social and political relations and, in turn, to shape the social whole.

Discuss the techniques Caryl Churchill uses to explore the impact of society on the individual character.

Texts set for study:

*Fen*  
*Cloud Nine*  
*Vinegar Tom*  
*Serious Money*

**QUESTION 10. Greek Tragedy**

EITHER

- (a) Greek tragedies were part of a religious festival and often contained religious rituals within the action.

Discuss how the festival context, the staging and the content of *Antigone* and *The Bacchae* reflect the importance of ritual.

OR

- (b) How did Sophocles and Euripides explore the destructive consequences of human actions in the performance conventions and content of *Antigone* and *The Bacchae*?

Texts set for study:

Sophocles, *Antigone*  
Euripides, *The Bacchae*

**QUESTION 11. Peter Brook**

EITHER

- (a) How have Peter Brook's productions used actual experiences in the theatre space, as well as illusions, to achieve their effect?

In your answer, refer to his productions of *Marat/Sade* and EITHER *King Lear* OR *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

OR

- (b) Peter Brook's productions provide rich theatrical experiences using very simple theatrical means.

Discuss this statement, with reference to *Marat/Sade* and EITHER *King Lear* OR *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

**QUESTION 12. Dario Fo**

EITHER

- (a) Dario Fo's theatre is not based on characters but on situations.

Referring to TWO of the plays set for study, discuss how Fo achieves his political and comic theatrical effects by putting conventional characters in unusual situations.

OR

- (b) Dario Fo writes in the Italian theatre tradition, where the central figure has always been the performer rather than the writer.

Discuss this statement in relation to TWO of the plays set for study.

Texts set for study:

*Accidental Death of an Anarchist*

*Can't Pay, Won't Pay*

*Mistero Buffo*

*Trumpets and Raspberries*

**Please turn over**

**QUESTION 13. Augusto Boal**

EITHER

- (a) 'As the most important element of the theatre is the human body, this book is concerned with physical movements, distances, volumes, relations . . . but it is not a recipe book.'

Discuss the importance of the games and exercises in Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-actors* to the theory and practice of his Theatre of the Oppressed.

OR

- (b) Boal's basic philosophy is in sympathy with the oppressed and the belief in humanity's ability to change.

What similarities and differences do you see in the ways he deals with political and personal oppression?

**QUESTION 14. Commedia dell'arte**

EITHER

- (a) The use of *lazzi* to give life to a performance suggests that the other conventions of the Commedia dell'arte were flawed.

Discuss this statement.

OR

- (b) The actors had at their disposal a range of stock elements that they could call upon to give the impression of onstage improvisation.

Discuss the balance between improvised theatre and stock elements in the Commedia dell'arte.

**End of paper**