



BOARD OF STUDIES  
NEW SOUTH WALES

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# 1998 HSC

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## **EXAMINATION REPORT**

### **Drama**

**Including:**

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

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# 1998 HSC EXAMINATION REPORT

## DRAMA

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## **The Group Presentation**

### **General Comments**

The high standard of Group Presentations indicates that most candidates and their teachers comprehend the demands of group-devised work. Examiners noted that there continues to be some difficulties in addressing specific requirements for this part of the HSC Examination and the guidelines for the development of the Group Presentation.

Candidates should have quiet, controlled surroundings free of interruptions for the conduct of examinations. On arrival at centres, examiners go through a checklist of requirements with teachers. This checklist has been included to assist teachers' understanding of requirements prior to and on the day of examinations. It should help to eliminate some of the problems.

### **Requirements**

- Teachers have duty of care obligations to ensure they are present during examinations and to complete necessary organisation prior to the day. It must not be left to examiners to complete paperwork, set up examinations or to supervise the audience. These are the teachers' responsibilities.
- Some candidates continue to use weapons or naked flames in performance. Examiners will stop performances where these appear. Teachers must take an active role in discouraging students from using weapons, nudity, naked flames or any implement that may endanger themselves, other students or examiners during performances. Theatre is about illusion. Candidates can create the impression they require without having to use the inappropriate items.
- Candidates continue to go over or under the stipulated time for Group Presentations. Students should be given opportunities to perform prior to the examination to ensure time specifications are met. Teachers and candidates are reminded that examiners will stop performances which go over time.
- Content for Group Presentation must be original. Material can be drawn from a variety of sources but should be used in an original way. Increasing numbers of candidates are including substantial amounts of non-original work and may be penalised.
- The schools' centre number should be included on documentation rather than the school number.

### **Logbooks for Group Presentation Marking Process**

- Examiners expressed increasing concern over the number of candidates presenting without logbooks. While logbooks are not marked by examiners, they are essential in substantiating student contribution to the process of developing the Group Presentation and must be available to examiners on the day of the examinations. It is a requirement

that logs be assessed as a part of school-based assessment. When markers are corroborating the authenticity of student work, the teacher's initials and dates in logbooks are useful. Teachers' marks, feedback, marks for eisteddfods, performances etc should not be included.

- Each candidate must present their own logbook. One logbook for the entire group does not fulfil requirements.
- Students who present for examinations without logbooks are noted by examiners. Students should indicate in logbooks the names of any outside tutors, the nature of the assistance provided and dates etc.

## **Recommendations**

Examiners felt there was a need to comment on three aspects of 1998 Group Presentations to assist future candidates.

### **1 Theatricality**

It is important to acknowledge that students are working in performance rather than through unadorned text. The best performances were rewarded for their theatricality. Theatricality is created through the actors' relationship with the audience. The energy of theatre is generated when an audience enters the imaginary world created by the actors, in turn, the actors are motivated by the response of the audience. Better candidates are able to cause the audience to suspend their disbelief, by skilfully using the elements of drama to create a coherent theatrical statement. The choice and interpretation of the content and performance style creates meaning. If there is no actor-audience relationship, material remains inert. Content that is too intellectual or esoteric can be inaccessible. Theatre that dwells on the personal without linking with the audience (eg as a metaphor) also limits engagement. The relationship between actor and audience relies on an outward signal, not an internal or emotional one.

Candidates must perform, not merely speak. Helpful questions that students can ask themselves are:

- Have I engaged the audience?
- Have I communicated or reached beyond the fourth wall?
- Have I thought about how accessible the work is to the audience?

### **2 Guidance versus Direction**

Teachers continue to be confused by their role in guiding student work. The boundaries between guidance and direction for a significant minority are becoming blurred, causing examiners concern. It is the teacher's responsibility to monitor students' work. This responsibility extends to ensuring students are taught the full course requirements, including an awareness of the demands of group-devised work as specified in the *Drama Stage 6 Syllabus*

and the *Creative Arts Stage 6 KLA Handbook*, and the development of strong individual and group skills.

Guidance does not refer to direction of student work. Teacher direction occurs when the creative initiative is taken from the student and passes to the teacher. Students' work for the Group Presentation must be their own. Feedback can and should be given on performances by teachers, however teacher direction of a performance is a breach of the rules.

Students cannot be directed by teachers or outside tutors. Teachers should not encourage students to attend workshops or employ tutors who intend to work directly on the product that will be performed for examinations. There is a difference between a workshop focusing on skills and a workshop focusing on direction of material.

If the teacher is unable to verify student work, appropriate school procedures for non-certification should be followed prior to the examination, including informing the Board of Studies. Logbooks should clearly indicate workshops attended, and give the name and specific details of assistance provided by outside tutors along with dates.

The teacher should provide ongoing feedback on student work, eg in class time, during rehearsals, assessments or during scheduled meetings with candidates. The teacher can suggest areas that are not working but should leave students to devise responses to these performance problems. Examples of teacher guidance by providing feedback might be: a teacher observes a problem and guides students to find a solution through the use of questions such as the following.

- Are you using the space effectively?
- What do you want the audience to focus on at this point?
- Is your character sustained throughout? etc

When a teacher instructs students on how to solve problems, this is direction. For example, a teacher tells the students to move on certain lines eg directing or blocking, tells students to incorporate certain ideas or images, or writes scripts for students. Examples of teacher direction are:

- ‘Your voice remains at one level throughout – say your lines like this ...’
- ‘There is no conflict in your drama: include (gives a specific instruction)’
- ‘You are not communicating with the audience: add ... (gives a specific instruction.)’

A small proportion of teachers interpreted facilitation of the group presentation as offering no guidance at all. These teachers were generally unaware of examination requirements, including paperwork due on the day of the examination, had not set up the examination for the students, had not organised an audience and were not present during the examination. The quality of work presented by candidates can be affected by a lack of guidance.

### **3 Audience**

Increasing numbers of candidates are presenting without an audience. Examiners are aware of the difficulties inherent in ensuring that an audience is present throughout examinations but it is in the students’ best interests to try to overcome these difficulties to provide the best possible examination conditions. The organisation and supervision of the audience is a stipulated requirement of the examination. As the actor-audience relationship is detailed as one of the criteria for examination, it is imperative that candidates have an audience. The audience should be negotiated by the teacher prior to the examination and should be responsive and aware of appropriate behaviour. Members of the public should not be present during examinations. Performance opportunities for public audiences, parents, friends etc should be provided prior to the examination. (See the checklist following for further specifications on the audience.)

### **Group Presentation and Individual Performance Checklist**

Duty of care demands that teachers supervise the examination. This includes completing all appropriate organisation prior to the examination. The following checklist will assist this organisation.

Paperwork to be sighted or collected by examiners includes the following:

- **Group Project Certification Forms**  
Must be completed PRIOR to examination for each group signed by students, the teacher and the Principal.
- **Student-Teacher Declarations**  
To be signed by the students and teacher PRIOR to the examination. Forms certify that the work is the students’ own. Integrity must be considered when signing. Appropriate documentation should be completed if there is a question that the work is not the students’. Inform examiners.

- **Group Photo Sheets**  
Must have student photos pasted on sheets prior to the examination. Student numbers, role descriptions and centre number (not school numbers) are included. These are collected by examiners. There must be three copies of each group photo sheet.
- **A Program of Running Order**  
It is essential that students and examiners are aware of the order of performances. Student numbers should be used, not student names. Times for morning tea, lunch etc should be included. Flexibility in the program may be required. Examiners will negotiate changes as necessary.
- Misadventure details completed on appropriate school forms and sent to the Board prior to examination. Examiners should be informed of misadventures on arrival, and of any further problems that may have occurred on the day.
- The audience should be organised by the teacher prior to the examination and must be supervised at all times. The audience should be aware of appropriate behaviour and should not exceed 30 students. Members of the public should not be present. The audience should be comprised of Year 11 students or younger; there should be no Year 12 students in the audience.
- The examination area should be quiet. Avoid variations to routine (eg assemblies, fire drills, school maintenance work, deliveries, buses, excursions, bells etc). Section off the examination area to reduce interruptions.
- Organise an area for interactions that ensures confidentiality. The interaction area could be in the performance area, or close to it. It is imperative that there be no interruptions. Examiners require time to confer following interactions; confidentiality must be respected.
- Set up desks, chairs and suitable lighting for examiners to take notes. It is important that examiners are able to see and hear all candidates effectively. Avoid seating audience members directly beside, behind or in front of examiners. There will be two examiners, and at times a senior examiner.
- Logbooks for group performance should be given to examiners in order of performance.
- Make arrangements for morning tea, lunch or afternoon tea for examiners.
- Video and recording devices must not be used during examinations.
- Before performing, students line up according to the order of the photos on the group photo sheets for identification by number, photograph and short description. Students wearing the same costumes should attach something to assist examiners to distinguish between students during the performance.
- Inappropriate items should not be used in performances, eg weapons, nudity, naked flames or any implement that may endanger students or examiners cannot be used during performances. Inform examiners of the presence of any of the above, or anything resembling the above. Examiners will stop performances should any of the aforementioned items appear.



- Check that technical equipment is operated by a Year 11 student, or lower.
- Ensure performances are within time limits – Group Presentation 8–12 minutes, Individual Performance 6–8 minutes. Remind students that over-time performances will be stopped by examiners.

### **The strongest Group Presentations**

- Were effective ensemble performances with members working towards a common objective to communicate ideas, images and character intelligently, with complexity, in an entertaining piece of theatre.
- Were polished performances, with well-researched themes and in-depth treatment enhanced by effective metaphors to create layers of meaning.
- Incorporated sophisticated visual and physical images. Used symbolism appropriately and in context to create economic, insightful, significant and engaging scripts.
- Took creative risks that worked theatrically, providing an original approach.
- Demonstrated strong sense of ownership of the piece with equity of roles, shared responsibility and focus.
- Explored chosen theatrical style, were cohesive and had a clear ending.
- Used dramatic tension, timing, space, purposeful movement etc. Understood and effectively manipulated a variety of elements of drama.
- Used fast, fluid, meaningful, relevant, seamless transitions that helped to drive the ‘through-line’ of the performance.
- Used stage space inventively rather than introducing other elements such as props or repeated scene changes, blackouts or leaving the stage area. Where properties were included they were kept to a minimum but were significantly integrated to increase the dramatic effect. Relied on the actors rather than on technical support.
- Demonstrated subtly defined, complex and sustained characters/roles.
- Had experience in performing before an audience. Understood and could effectively command the actor–audience relationship by clever control of energy, pace and rhythms.
- Demonstrated high level performance skills.

### **Middle-range Group Presentations**

- Demonstrated a sense of ensemble but lacked the coherence of an above-average group, with some inequity of role divisions.
- Tended to have a formulaised approach, or superficial or clichéd exploration of themes.
- Incorporated a series of dramatic techniques and styles to create variety without being sure of why the techniques/styles were being used, or focused on elaborate and unnecessary plot development rather than making the most of each dramatic moment.

- Often used repetitive movement and words or rhythms to link scenes in collage-type drama or used transitions that were dependent on lighting or music. Blackouts used too frequently or students left the stage area at the end of segments at the expense of the rhythm of the piece.
- Demonstrated only basic understanding of dramatic elements, particularly timing, rhythm and tension.
- Were more dependent on technical support or sets rather than actors.
- Demonstrated average expressive skills, displaying limited variations in vocal and physical dimensions.
- Did not use space in an inventive way.

### **Weaker Group Presentations**

- Lacked a sense of ensemble, having no definite roles and not relating well together in the space.
- Were lacking coherence and group energy and were under-rehearsed.
- Often included dull narratives, usually of a domestic or personal nature, with the focus on one or two individuals who often delivered ‘talking head monologues’ telling a story rather than enacting it. There was little understanding of the stylistic demands of material.
- Were literal interpretations of topics. Appeared as a collection of flashing or fragmented images with little or no connection and no opportunities to develop role. There was little sense of a journey. There was no clarity in material presented.
- Demonstrated little understanding of dramatic elements, particularly timing, rhythm and tension. Were visually unexciting, lacking focus and concentration.
- Showed a lack of understanding of the process. Presented poor logbooks, or no logbooks.
- Made no emotional contact with the audience, demonstrating a poor awareness of the actor-audience relationship. It was evident that the work had not been performed before an audience.
- Lacked theatricality, with no atmosphere created.
- Used awkward entrances and exits. Blackouts used too frequently or students left the stage area several times at the expense of the rhythm of the piece rather than dealing with transitions.
- Often relied heavily on technical effects that detracted from the performance.
- Ineffective use of space.
- Had little understanding of the stylistic demands of material.

- Imitated television, relied heavily on advertising slogans, rehashed 'OnSTAGE' work, included irrelevant music, movement or dance as a fill or display of skills, or imitated Rock Eisteddfod items, lip-syncing to music.
- Used clichéd or stereotyped characters/roles or did not act but played themselves in a situation that was superficial.
- Were often under-time.

## **Guidelines**

### **1998 HSC Drama 2 Unit Examination**

#### **Group Presentation**

The following marking criteria have been included to assist candidate preparation for the group presentation.

#### Criteria Applied to Each Student's Performance

- 1 Expressive Skills
  - Vocal: projection, clarity, tone, pitch, pace, dynamics
  - Movement: control, energy, spatial awareness, dynamics`
  - Timing: responses to cues, awareness of rhythms
- 2 Realising and Sustaining Role/Character
  - Belief/Conviction
  - Complexity/Dimensions
  - Relationships with other characters
  - Concentration and energy
- 3 Compositional and Stylistic Coherence of the Presentation
  - Regard to atmosphere, tension, symbols, motifs, rhythms, energy and other elements of drama
  - Establishing and maintaining a suitable relationship with the audience in the context of the performance space
  - Understanding and sustaining the interpretation of the theme

## Individual Project Performance

### General Comments

Examiners noted that the number of candidates choosing the Individual Performance option is increasing. Candidates should be discouraged from the perception that performance is the 'easier' option. Teachers should be aware of student strengths and should provide assistance in guiding students to make choices based on these strengths. Students with poor expressive skills should be strongly encouraged to consider a project area more appropriate to their skills.

While students should be encouraged to select material themselves for the Individual Performance, teacher guidance on the choice of material is advisable. Students attempting an unfamiliar style of theatre without the skills or commitment to undertaking the necessary research and familiarisation with that style might be encouraged to stay with something they are more comfortable with.

Examiners noted that, in several centres, it was clear that more time had been spent on developing group presentations, with little guidance given to the development of individual performances.

### Requirements

Candidates should have quiet, controlled surroundings, free of interruptions, for the conduct of examinations.

- Teachers have duty of care obligations to ensure they are present during examinations and to complete necessary organisation prior to the day.
- Some candidates continue to use weapons or naked flames in performance. Teachers must take an active role in discouraging students using weapons, nudity, naked flames or any implement that may endanger students or examiners during performances. Theatre is about illusion. Candidates can create the impression they require without having to use the above. Examiners will stop performances where the above appear.
- Candidates continue to go over or under the stipulated time for individual performances (6–8 minutes). Students should be given opportunities to perform prior to the examination to ensure time specifications are met. Teachers and candidates are reminded that examiners will stop performances which go over time.
- Students should be aware of the difference between dance and dramatic movement. Students should avoid making decisions to include large sections of dance and song that do not fit the context of the performance style.
- Students undertaking an individual project performance should be reminded that it is an *individual* performance; prompts cannot be used, nor can performers use extra students on stage, voice-overs off stage, or another student performing live music etc.

## **Logbooks for Individual Presentation Marking Process**

- Examiners expressed increasing concern regarding the number of candidates presenting without logbooks. While logbooks are not marked by examiners, they are essential in substantiating the student's role in the process of developing the individual performance and must be available to examiners on the day of the examinations. Teachers should verify their awareness of the process of student development of work by placing initials and dates in logbooks. Teachers' marks should not be included.
- Students who present for examinations without logbooks are noted by examiners.
- Students should indicate in logbooks the names of any outside tutors, the nature of the assistance provided and dates etc.

## **Recommendations**

Comments included under the Group Presentation section have been repeated for reference by students attempting the Individual Performance project. The following three aspects of 1998 Individual Performance projects are relevant to assist future candidates.

### **1 Theatricality**

Individual performances need to be a self-contained piece of theatre. There has been an increase in candidates presenting monologues, audition pieces or work sourced from the Internet. When approaching such material, candidates should keep dramatic context and theatricality in mind. Although there was evidence of outstanding self-devised work, students not proficient in dramatic writing tended to lack theatricality in their performances.

Candidates must perform, not merely speak the words. Helpful questions to ask include:

- Have I engaged the audience?
- Have I communicated or reached beyond the fourth wall?
- Have I thought about how accessible the work is to the audience?
- What is engaging about the performance?
- How can the engaging elements be emphasised?
- Is it clear what the performance is about?
- Does the stage blocking keep the audience interested?
- Are there transitional moments; if so, how do these add to the performance rather than detract from it?
- Is the stage space used effectively to maintain the actor audience relationship?

Candidates and teachers should also read details in the section on Theatricality included in the Group Presentation section of this report.

## **2 Guidance versus Direction**

Teachers continue to indicate some confusion as to what role they are allowed to take in guiding the development of student work for the individual performance.

Details of the difference between direction and guidance of student work are detailed in the Group Presentation section of this report. It is imperative that teachers and candidates read this section and are clear about these stipulations.

## **3 Audience**

Several candidates had an audience for group presentations, but not for individual performances. As the actor-audience relationship is detailed as one of the criteria for examination, it is imperative that candidates have an audience. The audience should be negotiated by the teacher prior to the examination. (See the checklist in the Group Presentation section for further specifications on the audience.)

### **Strong Candidates**

- Had a sense of place/environment and created atmosphere and tension throughout the performance.
- Chose material appropriate to their strengths, demonstrating a sense of theatricality, making a coherent theatrical statement using meaningful transitions.
- Had analysed the meaning of their piece and had a clear grasp of their material, adapting or changing scripts to create a sense of journey.
- Self-devised work was of exemplary dramaturgical standard, demonstrating passionate ownership.
- Presented logs that exhibited excellent understanding of developmental process.
- Understood and communicated subtext and dramatic intention and realised the style of the piece in performance.
- Avoided self-indulgent themes; leavened work with humour.
- Were skilled performers, or made the best use of expressive skills, cues, rhythm and timing.
- Were committed to the physical demands of the piece. Used subtle means to control energy, pace and rhythm to maintain the audience relationship.
- Showed an ability to entertain, engage and manipulate the audience with focus and tension.
- Demonstrated a willingness to take risks with content or style and then worked to realise them in performance.
- Drew a clear and sophisticated portrayal of a single character within their range.
- Displayed belief, complexity, dimension and conviction in character.
- Had carefully researched the character and play and understood the character's motivation and nuances.
- Confidently defined the space and used it effectively. Made definite choices on stage blocking and used strong, purposeful movement which was important to the action.

- Were well rehearsed and highly energised.
- Relied on the actor and were not overdependent on lighting, music, sound effects, props, sets etc.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Sustained chosen style but lacked the flair of an above-average student.
- Demonstrated average expressive skills; sometimes had difficulty with cues, rhythm and timing.
- Maintained an audience relationship but failed to create a real sense of atmosphere.
- Made safe but unimaginative choices on stage blocking and movement.
- At times structure suffered with unclear or messy transitions which affected the rhythm.
- Energy tended to stay at one level.
- Tended to rely on technical effects to create atmosphere, eg lighting, music, sound effects, props, sets etc.
- Sustained character but presented the character in a stereotyped, one-dimensional way.
- Portrayed superficial understanding of the character's motivations.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Impersonated performances from television, film or OnSTAGE.
- Used realism as the preferred style, with no evidence of research into this style.
- Were highly disjointed, lacking cohesion without considering a performance style.
- Failed to provide a context for the performance and often had unclear endings.
- Recited material without conviction, belief or focus.
- Made poor vocal choices, eg accents that limited vocal range.
- Used unmotivated movement blocking – unnecessary pacing.
- Often relied on props or costumes.
- Were unanimated in presentation or spoke to an invisible person on stage without acknowledging the audience, often acting in profile.
- Lacked an understanding of the elements of drama, eg had specific problems with focus, cues, tempo, pacing and rhythm. Performances lacked energy.
- Presented a monologue with no analysis or development of role or character, portraying a character outside their experience and skills or lacking clear definition.
- Played themselves, or multiple characters ineffectively.
- Made poor choices in attempting cross-gender roles.
- Employed little or no stage movement, tending to deliver lines in one spot without an emotional context.

- Were under-time and underworked, at times reading from books or scripts.
- Showed little understanding of the relationship with the audience; were not theatrical or coherent.
- Had slow, messy transitions or too many transitions, eg turning away from the audience, dropping out of character and turning back to the audience as a new character.
- Presented poorly written, self-devised monologues, or personal, didactic diatribes on beliefs and ultraisms, confessional in style, telling life stories without a sense of character. Content was often self-indulgent, emotional or angst-ridden, dealing with rape, incest, teenage angst, or simplistic ideas lacking maturity.
- Chose material that required performance abilities beyond their skills, or unable to be sustained.
- Gratuitously included song and dance in an attempt to add extra time to a short piece.



## **Guidelines**

### **1998 HSC Drama 2 Unit Examination**

#### **Individual Performance**

The following criteria have been included to assist candidate preparation for individual performance.

##### Criteria Applied to Each Student's Performance

- 1 Expressive Skills
  - Vocal: projection, clarity, tone, pitch, pace, dynamics
  - Movement: control, energy, spatial awareness, dynamics
  - Timing: responses to cues, awareness of rhythms
  
- 2 Realising and Sustaining Role/Character
  - Belief/Conviction
  - Complexity/Dimensions
  - Concentration and energy
  - Clarity in presentation of material
  
- 3 Compositional and Stylistic Coherence of the Presentation
  - Regard to atmosphere, tension, symbols, motifs, rhythms, energy and other elements of drama
  - Clarity in analysis of material
  - Establishing and maintaining a suitable relationship with the audience in the context of the performance space
  - Understanding and realising the stylistic demands of the material

## Design

### General Comments

In several areas, the standard of design projects has improved, indicating that students and teachers are becoming more aware of the guidelines. However, in some projects there still continues to be difficulties in addressing the guidelines specified in the KLA Handbook.

### Logbooks in the Design Marking Process

While the logbook is not marked by examiners, it is essential in assisting the examiners in substantiating the process and understanding much of the student's design concept. The logbook in the Design Project takes the place of the discussion process that examiners have access to in the Individual Project: Performance. Therefore, it is essential that the student highlights in the logbook, in some manner, the details considered most important for the attention of examiners. The design concept is a clear and precise statement that explains the design. This concept should come from a clear understanding and interpretation of the play, not something imposed on the play. The design concept statement is a necessary component of each design project. The provision of the design concept, both included in the logbook and written out separately from the logbook, is of immense help to examiners.

Verification of the logbook by the student's teacher is essential. This is best achieved by the teacher initialling and dating the logbook on a regular basis, eg fortnightly or monthly.

However, the student should remove any indication of his or her name, the teacher's grading or marks and the name of the school.

### General recommendations on packaging for all design projects

- **Any Dangerous Packaging is strictly prohibited. No glass should ever be used. Costume and poster designs should not be mounted in any metal or wood frames. Designs should not be fastened onto any wood, metal, fabric or ceramic mountings.**
- Each part of a design project should be labelled and numbered, such as 1/5 to identify the first of five component items.
- Where possible, all parts of a project should be presented in one package, ideally in one folder. Items should not be presented double-sided, ie on the back of another item.
- Posters and costume designs should be presented flat, not rolled.
- Floor plans for set and lighting design should be folded, not rolled.
- Sets should be constructed of sturdy material such as very light plywood, balsa wood, styrofoam core board. Loose pieces should be securely glued or fastened into place.

## Costume Design

### General comments

The standard of costume design was extremely high this year, which confirms that students and their teachers have taken note of the specifications and criteria for costume design. However, there is a need to state again that there must be a unified concept throughout all the designs. This concept, which reinforces the director's vision of the play, should be stated succinctly in a separate written statement.

### Recommendations

Candidates should ensure that:

- they include a clear, separate design concept statement
- they label each rendering on the front with the character name and the act/scene for which the costume is to be used;
- they attach a small fabric swatch or colour sample and other construction information on the front of the rendering in a way which does not obscure the character figure. They should not include items of jewellery, chains, buttons etc
- the size of the character figure occupies most of the page. For this reason, A3 is a more satisfactory paper size for costume renderings
- the preliminary sketches or written descriptions are submitted on a board/paper of the same size as the other renderings
- they do not detract from the renderings by over-elaborate decorations or extraneous borders, edges or trim
- they do not send excessive amounts of extraneous research material.

### Checklist for Costume Design

The checklist below sets out the mandatory requirements for this project as published in the *Creative Arts Stage 6 KLA Handbook*. The Individual Project: Design-Costume will consist of a single design concept for one of the plays on the Individual Project: Design/Critical Analysis (Director's Production Preparation) Test List. The design should be a readily understandable interpretation of the play's style.

The Individual Project: Design-Costume must consist of:

- renderings of costumes for at least two different characters
- a minimum of four to a maximum of eight costume renderings in total
- preliminary sketches and/or written descriptions of all other costumes for the production.

Renderings can be in media such as watercolour, coloured pencil, textas, collage or computer-aided design submitted as hard copy.

Renderings will also include fabric swatches and/or colour samples and any special construction information.

Renderings must be at least A4 size (210 x 297mm), but no larger than A1 (594 x 841mm).

Students should not make costumes in the individual project or include any dolls dressed in costumes.

### **Strong Candidates**

- conceived an original, innovative but appropriate concept which was sustained and unified throughout the total design
- accounted for the various aspects of the play such as genre, lighting, as a total concept so that the costume design did not exist in isolation from the play as a whole
- had a visual image of the play that produced renderings which created an immediate impression of the characters and their dramatic function in the play
- selected a range of characters which reflected the scope of the play
- included clear, effective support material such as swatches, written notes and colour samples as part of the renderings
- included a clear, concise separate statement of the design concept.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- did not have a unified design concept for the play
- did not present the costume design in the context of the play
- had a confused image of the character and dealt in stereotypes rather than dramatic character
- produced full renderings for minor characters whose impact within the play is minimal
- produced an excessive number of renderings of a superficial nature
- produced renderings which lacked any sense of individuality and often gave the appearance of fashion models rather than dramatic characters
- had unclear or ineffective written support
- lacked a clear written design concept.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- had no design concept
- demonstrated little or no knowledge of the play
- presented poorly drawn figures without any sense of character
- failed to address the basic criteria
- had little or no support material.

## Guidelines

### 1998 HSC Drama 2 Unit Examination

#### Design Projects: Costume

##### Criteria Applied to Each Student's Performance

- 1 Design Concept
  - Is the concept an effective interpretation of the play?
  - Does the concept show some originality and/or innovation?
  - Are there unifying elements throughout the designs?
  
- 2 Appropriateness
  - Does each design demonstrate an understanding of the character, ie social standing, period, place?
  - Does the costume suit the dramatic and technical needs of the character?
  - Do the suggested colours, textures and type of fabrics contribute effectively to each costume?
  
- 3 Execution
  - Are the renderings presented in a professional way?
  - Do the renderings clearly communicate the design concept?
  - Are the written notes, fabric swatches and/or colour samples clear and effective in explaining elements of each costume?
  - Is there sufficient support material regarding other costumes, characters etc?

## Set Design

### General Comments

There are still some problems with candidates' understanding of how the set must contribute to the play by providing the right environment for the action. Many students still have problems with scale and should take note of the following recommendations.

### Recommendations

Candidates should ensure that they:

- understand and correctly use the prescribed scale of 1:25 metric. It is absolutely essential that a student has a 1:25 scale ruler. A useful aid in coming to terms with the problem is to construct a cut-out cardboard human figure in scale. This means that a 1.8m tall human figure will be approximately 7cm (70 mm) in actual size
- identify the specific theatre space and stage configuration early in the development of the design. It is counterproductive and a poor use of time to construct the entire theatre
- are aware of the actor–audience relationship, especially in relation to sightlines, masking etc
- do not attempt to produce any lighting effects. Torches, batteries etc should not be used.

### Checklist for Set Design

The checklist below sets out the mandatory requirements for this project as published in the *Creative Arts Stage 6 KLA Handbook*. The Individual Project: Design-Set involves students in creating a design for an aspect of production of one of the playscripts listed on the current Individual Project: Design/Critical Analysis (Director's Production Preparation) Text List.

### Size, scale and weight specifications

The Individual Project: Design-Set will consist of:

- a three-dimensional model built to scale of 1:25 metric
- or
- computer-aided design submitted as hard copy
- and
- an architectural floor plan of the design in the scale of 1:25 metric
  - details of any changes to be made to the set in the course of performance.

The package weight of the project should not exceed 15 kilograms. Exceptionally large stage areas should be avoided because of the size and weight specifications.

### **Strong Candidates**

- produced a model with visual impact which was directly linked to the play's themes and technical needs by looking for a symbolic or metaphoric approach
- produced a model that gave an accurate representation of how the full-scale setting would look and work in the theatre or performance space
- made an effective use of the theatre space, with an understanding and recognition of audience sightlines, seating arrangements and the needs of actors, eg appropriate acting areas, entrances, exits, levels, etc
- included all the mandatory items, particularly the floor plan of the theatre, the floor plan of the stage area with the set, furniture and large props indicated, all in correct scale
- included all the necessary items of furniture, props and the human figure in correct scale
- presented a separate, well-written design statement which was linked directly to the play and justified in the execution of the set.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- produced a design concept that did not address the thematic concerns of the play and tended to a literal interpretation rather than a symbolic and metaphoric approach
- produced a model that had some elements of scale, but either overcompensated or under-compensated for the technical requirements of the play
- were only partially successful in their awareness of the requirements of the theatre space and did not provide imaginative solutions to staging problems, multiple scenes etc
- did not provide floor plans as required by the criteria
- did not present a separate, clear, succinct statement of the design concept.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- presented a set design that had little relationship to the play
- relied on impractical solutions that could not work in a theatre
- provided no entrances or exits for actors and no off-stage areas
- had little or no sense of scale
- had no design concept.

## Guidelines

### 1998 HSC Drama 2 Unit Examination

#### Design Projects: Set

##### Criteria Applied to Each Student's Performance

##### 1 Design Concept

- Is a complete understanding of the whole play conveyed through the design?
- Is the design an effective interpretation of the play?
- Does the design show some originality and/or innovation?

##### 2 Workability

- How well does the design account for the needs of the play? (entrances, levels, stairs etc).
- Is it evident what theatre space the design is intended for?
- Does the design use the stage space effectively?
- Is the set practical for the actors?
- Does the design concept take into account audience sightlines?

##### 3 Execution

- Are the designer's guidelines clear as to how the set is to be used for the entire play?
- Is the model to scale (1:25 metric)?
- Is the model well constructed?
- How successfully do the components of the model indicate the look of the finished set in the theatre (or performance space)?
- Is the floor plan neat, clear and to scale (1:25 metric)?



## Poster, Program, Advertising and Promotional Copy Design

### General Comments

This area of design requires candidates to show skills with both visual images and written descriptions. Many candidates were unable to combine both requirements to produce effective designs. Students should note that the copy for the media releases may also be used in both design concepts, with appropriate layout and format changes.

### Recommendations

Students must ensure that:

- there are **TWO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT AND SEPARATE** design concepts
- each item (poster, program, flyer etc) is clearly labelled for **BOTH** concepts and simply presented
- they do not send banners, flags, T-shirts, mugs, tape recordings or videos as part of this project
- **no glass is used. Poster designs should not be mounted in any metal or wood frames. Designs should not be fastened onto any wood, metal, fabric or ceramic mountings.**

### Checklist for Poster, Program, Advertising and Promotional Copy Design

The checklist below sets out the mandatory requirements for this project as published in the *Creative Arts Stage 6 KLA Handbook*. The Individual Project: Design-Poster, Program, Advertising and Promotional Copy will consist of **TWO** different design concepts and promotional copy for one of the works on the current Individual Project: Design/Critical Analysis (Director's Production Preparation) Text List. The two design concepts and copy may be for either a single production or two different productions of the one work.

- Each of these **TWO** design concepts will be presented as finished designs for the following:
  - one poster
  - one program cover and layout
  - one flyer
  - one print advertisement for a newspaper.
- The promotional copy relating to **EACH** design concept should consist of:
  - one media release aiming to attract the reader's attention and providing essential information
  - one in-depth media treatment of the production.

- The layout for the programs should include:
  - lists indicating imaginary cast, crew and acknowledgements
  - information about the playwright
  - information about the history of the play.
- The posters will be a full-colour rendering of at least A3 (297 x 420mm) size but no larger than A1 (594 x 841mm).
- The designs may be rendered by hand or produced as a computer-aided design submitted as hard copy.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Conceived TWO distinct and different concepts with strong visual impact which contained, in EACH design, a visual metaphor for the whole play and which was unified among all the items.
- Demonstrated a thorough understanding of the play which was presented through the visual images and the appropriate use of material for the program insert and media release.
- Understood the audience for which the design was aimed and the image that the theatre company wished to convey.
- Adapted the elements of the design and the necessary information to suit the different requirements for each of the mandatory items, and produced a style of presentation appropriate for each item.
- Presented a clear and concise written statement, explaining EACH design concept, which was separate from the logbook.

### **Middle-Range Candidates**

- Presented only one strong concept which was not sustained across the required items.
- Presented a commonplace visual image for each concept, with little distinction between the two concepts.
- Used common computer-generated images or photographs from other sources which were not appropriate to the design concept.
- Included all the mandatory items but failed to fully develop the work.
- Showed average quality of execution such as uneven lettering, crowded layout, visual emphasis to wrong areas, insufficient information for the given item etc.
- Did not demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the play in the written work.
- Did not present a clear, concise, written statement for EACH design concept.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Had no real visual concepts but rather used titles and images which had little connection with the script.
- Did not include all mandatory items or submitted half-completed work
- Showed a poor understanding of the script or bizarre and inappropriate interpretations of the script.
- Had a poor understanding of the purpose of promotional material.
- Submitted poorly finished designs and copy.
- Lacked basic grammar and language skills.
- Presented no written design concept.

## Guidelines

### 1998 HSC Drama 2 Unit Examination

#### Design Projects: Poster etc

This project consists of two separate design concepts. Each concept has several components and all the various components of each design must be marked out of 10.

Therefore, each design must contain the design visuals of:

- 1 Poster (at least A3 size)
- 1 Program cover
- 1 Flyer (handbill)
- 1 Print advertisement (for newspaper).

The written promotional copy, consisting of (a) media release, (b) program material and (c) in-depth media treatment, forms the other 10 marks.

#### Criteria Applied to Each Student's Performance

##### 1 Design Concept (Number 1)

- Is a clear and effective understanding of the play evident in the design concept?
- Does the concept show some originality and innovation?

##### 2 Workability

- Does each of the items fulfil its role as publicity material?
- Is the design theme sustained in each item?
- Does each item contain the essential information?

##### 3 Execution

- Is the presentation of the design formatted in a creative and professional way?

#### Promotional Copy (Words/Language)

- Is the written material appropriate and detailed?
- Does the written material show a clear understanding of the play?
- How effective is the use of language in promoting the production?

## Lighting Design

### General Comments

Many candidates find difficulty in ensuring that the examiners can easily understand the means they are using to show all the various areas, lanterns etc. All lists must be clearly labelled, overlays should be neat and uncluttered, standard lantern keys should be used and standard colour coding used throughout the design. Students should not submit models of theatres for this project.

### Checklist for Lighting Design

The checklist below sets out the mandatory requirements for this project as published in the *Creative Arts Stage 6 KLA Handbook*. The Individual Project: Design-Lighting will consist of a design of the lighting for a production of ONE of the works on the current Individual Project: Design/Critical Analysis (Director's Production Preparation) Text List.

The Individual Project: Design-Lighting will include:

- a floor plan of the stage set indicating architectural features and major items of furniture
- a plan of the entire theatre showing the location of all lighting positions
- a list of all stage lanterns used, indicating type and wattage
- a list of colour gels for each lantern
- a patching/dimmer arrangement chart
- a running cue sheet
- a production copy of at least two scenes of the script indicating all lighting cues
- the plans must be drawn to scale of 1:25 metric. They may be presented as a computer-aided design submitted as hard copy
- all stage lighting positions shall be indicated on the floor plans, whether by means of overlays or with colour coding. The area on which each lantern is focused must be indicated.

### Strong Candidates

- Showed a clear and appropriate design concept which fulfilled and enhanced the script.
- Conceived an effective directorial concept in staging the play, designing the set and planning the lighting rig.
- Contained all the mandatory plans and diagrams in a professional presentation which included plastic overlays indicating the required lanterns and the areas to be lit.
- Included a clear floor plan of the set showing walls, items of furniture, levels etc.
- Included a clear, functional copy of two scenes of the play, indicating the lighting cues.
- Presented a separate written statement providing the rationale for the design concept.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Presented a functional design that did not enhance the theatrical needs of the play.
- Demonstrated only a basic understanding of the script and the role of lighting in enhancing the mood or atmosphere.
- Had a workable concept but lacked the technical skill to realise the design in the plotting of appropriate lanterns and covering the stage adequately.
- Provided only a basic design concept.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Showed a minimal understanding of the script and the role of the lighting designer.
- Presented only some items of the project.
- Showed little technical understanding and had a very simplistic approach.
- Did not understand how to produce basic lighting annotation.
- Provided no design concept.

## Guidelines

### 1998 HSC Drama 2 Unit Examination

#### Design Projects: Lighting

##### Criteria Applied to Each Student's Performance

##### 1 Design Concept

- How effective and original is the lighting design with respect to the play?
- Does the design fulfil the requirements of the script and support the scenic concept of the play?
- Will the lighting contribute to the development of the ongoing dramatic action and mood?

##### 2 Technical Aspects

- Does the project have a clear floor plan showing the position of all the set and furniture as well as the position of all the lanterns and the areas onto which each is focused?
- Is there a list of each lantern indicating type, wattage and gel colour?
- Has there been an appropriate choice of lighting hardware to meet the technical needs of the concept?
- Is there a logical patching/dimmer arrangement chart?

##### 3 Execution

- Is there a clear production copy of the script indicating all the necessary lighting cues?
- Is there a logical cue running sheet?
- Is there a clear correlation between lanterns, running sheet and the play?

## **Critical Analysis**

### **General Comments**

Over the past few years, it has become obvious that students have been heeding the comments of the examiners. Most students demonstrate a facility for structuring a theatre review or fashioning an abstract or rationale for a research project or understanding the role of a director. Teachers are to be congratulated for their generally fine work in giving students the skills required to complete the demanding tasks of any of the three sections of this component of the Individual Project.

### **Recommendations**

For future candidates undertaking critical analysis projects, the following recommendations are suggested:

- A logbook must be submitted.
- The logbook should contain evidence of reflection and research. Reflection is indicated by drafts of material that have been revised, edited and reworked. Research is indicated by extensive note-taking and engagement with material for a purpose – not just endless photocopies and downloads from the Internet.
- Students should avoid ‘dear diary’ types of entries and focus on the process of achieving the aim of the project.
- The logbook can also be used to show research into the demands and specific responsibilities of the particular area of critical analysis – the theatre reviewer, the researcher or the director.



## **Portfolio of Theatre Criticism**

### **General Comments**

Students generally indicated an awareness of the criteria and specification requirements for this project. The criteria state that each of the critiques should be approximately 850 words in length. Submissions significantly under or over the word limits will be penalised, and students should aim for critiques between 700–900 words. There was an improvement again this year in exposure to a diversity of live theatre experiences.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that candidates should:

- investigate thoroughly and become competent in the practice of theatre reviewing. Even though only four reviews are required, the evidence in the logbooks of the strongest candidates showed that they had drafted several reviews on a variety of theatre productions. Furthermore, ample feedback and comments had been provided by teachers so that the writing process became truly refined
- see a variety of theatre – mainstream, experimental, community, local, the big musicals etc. More importantly, they need to have an appropriate knowledge of the style of theatre they are witnessing. So, for example, the student who had access only to the local theatre company production can still write a sophisticated and penetrating analysis if equipped with the ‘language’ of theatre
- be aware that reviewing a school production may restrict the range and depth of analysis in their review
- be aware that the four reviews must be from performances attended from the commencement of HSC Drama in Term 4, to its completion in Term 3 in Year 12
- ensure that each analysis includes a clear description of featured aspects of the production and clear information on roles and responsibilities
- include a critical and supported response to the execution of the text on stage, including, where applicable, the quality of the performances, the contribution of lighting, sound, set and costume
- include an indication of audience response and some evidence of knowledge of the script or style of theatre
- be aware that critiques should be written in a formal style and have a coherent structure.

## **Checklist for Portfolio of Theatre Criticism**

The checklist below sets out the mandatory requirements for this project as published in the *Creative Arts Stage 6 KLA Handbook*.

- Critical analysis of at least four live theatre performances attended during the HSC course.
- Each critique should be approximately 850 words in length.
- Analysis should include:
  - detailed discussion of specific aspects of the production
  - analysis of the interpretation of particular roles
  - the presentation of particular scenes
  - the design concept.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Could identify the main concept behind a production and relate all elements of the production to this.
- Demonstrated a sophisticated command of theatre terms and applied them appropriately.
- Had generally written on a variety of productions.
- Included relevant research.
- Wrote to the word limit in an articulate manner.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Gave straight descriptions of elements without reference to how this contributed to the idea on stage, eg 'The performances were good ...' or 'The lighting was bright ...'
- Substituted personal opinion for informed analysis.
- Omitted key area or dwelt on relating the plot.
- Wrote in an inconsistent manner.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Employed sweeping generalisations.
- Submitted responses drastically under length.
- Showed minimal understanding of the craft of reviewing.
- Would omit key elements expected in a critique.
- Showed scant regard for re-drafting and re-editing error-ridden work.

## **Guidelines**

### **1998 HSC Drama 2 Unit Examination**

#### **Design Projects: Portfolio of Theatre Criticism**

##### Criteria Applied to Each Student's Performance

- 1 Describing and Selecting
  - Provision of 4 x 850-word reviews
  - Description of featured aspects of the production
  - Clarity of information regarding roles and responsibilities
  
- 2 Analysing and Synthesising
  - Critical comment on the execution of the idea upon the stage (quality of performances, contribution of lighting, sound, set, costume etc).
  - Evidence of knowledge/research into script/style of theatre
  - Statement of the overall impact on the audience/development of theme/idea
  
- 3 Language and Style
  - Understanding/use of theatre/drama terminology/concepts
  - Clarity and appropriateness of reviewing style
  - Coherence of structure

## **Research**

### **General Comments**

Students covered a variety of topics and in general displayed sophisticated research and analysis skills. Over the past few years, students' access to information has been made far easier through the Internet, e-mails and fax. The interesting development is whether such information can be harnessed in search of an achievable position. It must be strongly stressed that teachers must advise students not to undertake any project that is connected with any topic area in Content Areas 4 and 5. This prohibition applies even if the student will not answer a question in the written exam paper on the area of their project. The guidelines are very specific and it was disappointing to note that six students submitted projects on areas covered by the exam. It is most important that, with the changeover of topics and texts in 1999, teachers are vigilant in guiding students into the right topics.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that candidates should:

- adhere to the following format: The Abstract or Proposition, followed by the Body of the Project, then the Conclusion, followed by the Bibliography and any Appendices
- be aware that references should be accurately footnoted throughout
- be advised that if projects are significantly under or over the 3500-words limit, they will be penalised
- present typed submissions in size 12 font, double-spaced
- be aware that it is crucial to formulate an appropriate abstract – one that is neither too broad nor too narrow
- avoid making references to film and television unless they have a strong connection to the theatre
- avoid straight biographies of artists. Abstracts should be framed in terms of measuring the contribution of the artist to the respective aspect of drama or theatre.

## **Checklist for Research Report**

The checklist below sets out the mandatory requirements for this project as published in the *Creative Arts Stage 6 KLA Handbook*.

- The Individual Project: Critical Analysis-Research Report may deal with a form, style, movement or tradition of drama, with the work of an individual creative artist, performance group or theoretician, or with a critical or technical issue.
- This report should be the result of the student's independent research of the chosen area.
- The research may involve document research or other research methods where appropriate.
- The submitted report should be approximately 3500 words in length.
- The research report may not duplicate the work covered by the student in Content Areas 4 and 5, or work being covered in any other subject being studied for the Higher School Certificate Examination.

## **Strong Candidates**

- Provided a well articulated and developed proposal.
- Made a strong, substantiated use of a variety of resources.
- Wrote in formal register expected of a research paper.

## **Middle-range Candidates**

- Adhered to a mostly descriptive approach to their topic, providing little or inconsistent analysis.
- Based projects on proposals that were either difficult to substantiate or obvious and self-evident.
- Had sketchy research and references.
- Had lapses in writing styles.

## **Weaker Candidates**

- Submitted projects dramatically under-length
- Used the most basic research.
- Had non-existent or wholly inappropriate proposals.
- Did projects that had no focus on drama or theatre.

## **Guidelines**

### **1998 HSC Drama 2 Unit Examination**

#### **Design Projects: Research Projects**

##### Criteria Applied to Each Student's Performance

- 1      **Analysing and Synthesising**
  - Structuring a clear, coherent and logical statement
  - Developing the proposal
  - Drawing conclusions from the material
  
- 2      **Use of Resources**
  - Use of available human and written resources
  - Skill in the synthesis of acquired information  
(ie how the resources have been utilised)
  
- 3      **Style and Format**
  - Clarity and accuracy in the use of language
  - 3500 words approximately
  - Accuracy of referencing (footnotes, bibliography, acknowledgement of sources)

## **Director's Production Preparation**

### **General Comments**

There has been strong improvement in the presentation of the folders and it is strongly recommended that students follow the guidelines below and recommendations made by examiners.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that candidates should:

- provide a table of contents for ease of reference
- provide a statement of vision or concept
- provide research and pre-production notes
- provide a character analysis
- address issues such as lighting, set, sound and costume
- provide a unit summary of the work – this is a division of the work into scenes, beats or units of action
- provide an annotation of one or two scenes
- provide a bibliography or list of resources or references
- note that the key component to the Director's Production Preparation is the concept or vision and that all other areas should be strongly referred to and integrated with that vision.

### **Checklist for Director's Production Preparation**

The checklist below sets out the mandatory requirements for this project as published in the *Creative Arts Stage 6 KLA Handbook*.

- A folio of work based on one of the texts listed on the current Design/Critical Analysis (Director's Production Preparation) Text List.
- Notes on research undertaken on the work, with particular reference to its social context, its author and his/her works.
- Pre-production notes describing and explaining the approach to the work being adopted by the director.
- An outline of the design concept.
- An analysis of the characters, discussing motivation, physicality and relationships where appropriate.
- A unit summary of the work.
- An annotated script of one act and production notes indicating possible blockings of key sequences and special scenic effects.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Showed a profound and sophisticated understanding of the work in question.
- Could use this knowledge to develop an interesting and imaginative concept of the work on stage.
- Integrated all aspects of theatre into the vision.
- Presented a clearly organised folio of work.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Offered an interpretation like a literary essay, rather than a creative engagement with the text.
- Presented a straightforward or unclear concept.
- Ignored key aspects of the criteria for examining.
- Were mainly descriptive rather than analytical in key areas, eg character analysis.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Had little idea about the role or responsibility of the director.
- Misinterpreted the text or presented a vision that was impossible to stage.
- Offered a very disorganised and/or minimal folio.



## **Guidelines 1998**

### **HSC Drama 2 Unit Examination**

#### **Director's Production Preparation**

##### Criteria Applied to Each Student's Performance

- 1      Research and Analysis
  - Depth of research and use of resources, both human and written
  - Depth of analysis of the work – characterisation, structure, mood, style and themes
  
- 2      Production Concept
  - Originality and clarity of interpretation and approach
  - Integration of design concept
  - Indication of effects – lighting, sound etc
  - Detail of preparation – production notes, detail of annotation, blocking scenes
  
- 3      Language and Style
  - Coherent organisation of material
  - Skill in communicating ideas
  - Clarity and accuracy in the use of language – especially the use and understanding of theatrical terms/concepts

## Scriptwriting

### General Comments

The examiners felt that there was a general improvement by the candidature of the aspects of the structure, characterisation, setting and theatrical styles which were needed to write a complete and cohesive play for live presentation. There was a noticeable increase in candidates who were prepared to present their material in non-realistic styles, eg absurdist, and there was more use of humour.

It was noted that some candidates were ignoring the requirements of 15–25 A4 pages and submitting longer scripts. Some candidates also ignored the requirements of submitting a logbook. Candidates considering scriptwriting should ensure they:

- have read scripts from a variety of theatrical styles
- experience a variety of live theatre
- are able to communicate adequately in the written form
- are fully aware of the practicalities for the theatre
- are aware that any adaptations must be from non-dramatic scripts, eg short stories
- are aware that adaptations cannot be from already scripted plays.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that candidates should:

- be careful to follow the criteria for this project area, particularly in regard to length and setting out. Scripts should be proofread for spelling, grammar, punctuation and consistency.
- be aware of the importance of recording the development of the script in their logbooks. The logbooks should reflect the original concept, the development, drafting and refining of the script. Logbooks should also show evidence of teacher monitoring of the development of the project.

### Checklist for Scriptwriting

The checklist below sets out the mandatory requirements for this project as published in the *Creative Arts Stage 6 KLA Handbook*.

- A script for a completed play for a live presentation.
- The script may be original or an adaptation of a short story or other non-dramatic work.
- The script should be typed with double spacing, in size 12 font and 15–25 pages of A4 size.
- Character lists, dialogue formatting and all other scriptwriting conventions should be followed.
- There should be logbook evidence of preliminary drafts.

- The logbook must be submitted with the script.
- Stage settings or complicated scenic, technical effects should be described in sufficient detail to indicate that they are practicable in the production of the play.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Showed evidence of research and submitted logbooks which also contained a great deal of research about the subject of the script and characterisation.
- Showed that any research was applied appropriately within the dramatic text.
- Showed a good understanding of audience.
- Used dramatic tension to engage the audience.
- Showed evidence of good editing.
- Had workshopped the script with a variety of people.
- Were able to manipulate props and stage directions to promote dramatic action.
- Did not rely on narrators.
- Wrote scripts that were character-driven, not plot-driven.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Tended to write scripts concentrating on plot and narrative.
- Showed limited development of dramatic tension.
- Confused writing for the theatre with writing for film and television.
- Showed limited understanding of the purpose of stage directions.
- Relied on the use of the narrator to show passage of time and action.
- Did not integrate their research into dramatic dialogue.
- Used stereotyped characters and material.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Presented poorly constructed, confusing and incomplete scripts.
- Used poor editing, grammar and punctuation.
- Showed little character development.
- Disregarded the mandatory criteria.

## Guidelines

### 1998 HSC Drama 2 Unit Examination

#### Scriptwriting

##### Criteria Applied to Each Student's Performance

##### 1 Concept

- How creative is the script:
  - in its concept
  - in its realisation?
- How effectively are the characters treated or developed and is this appropriate to the style of the script?
- How skilful is the handling of dramatic elements such as:
  - dramatic images
  - dramatic focus
  - conflict and tension?

##### 2 Form

- How ready is the script for live presentation? Consider:
  - editing of the script
  - writing for an audience
  - writing for actors
- How well does the script develop dramatic action?
- How much stylistic and thematic cohesiveness has the script?

##### 3 Conventions and Practicalities

- Scriptwriting conventions are followed such as:
  - layout
  - character list
  - dialogue formatting
  - stage setting and directions and effects
- How practical is the script for production? Consider:
  - scene and costume changes
  - venue, style and size of production
  - cast size
  - scenic and technical effects
- The work is a complete script, typed with double spacing on 15–25 pages of A4-size paper

## Video Drama

### General Comments

The standard of video drama projects continues to improve in all areas: narrative, artistic and technical. Candidates demonstrated a familiarity with the specifications and criteria for the Video Drama Individual Project such as:

- the time limit of 5–7 minutes
- the inappropriateness of art videos, documentary and music clips
- the choice of a variety of video drama genres to present a fictional story, eg adventure, romance, detective, satire, mystery, comedy.

### Difficulties Encountered by the Candidates

- Some video tapes were submitted blank, without the dubbed video drama.
- Some video drama projects were submitted without the logbook for verification.
- One candidate submitted a video tape and a separate audio tape, which affected the marks in this area.
- A candidate noted in the logbook their hiring of a professional editor.

### Recommendations

Candidates should ensure that they:

- produce a practice video drama prior to attempting the HSC Video Drama entry
- show the video drama to an objective person to ensure the meaning is clear, especially if incorporating a high degree of symbolism
- remove the in-camera time and date display
- set the sound level in recording and post-production so that it can be easily heard and is consistent across all scenes, as sound quality is just as important as visual quality
- 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
- identify the soundtrack in the credits
- put down a control track on the new video before editing onto it
- edit the final video drama onto the beginning of a new tape
- rewind the tape to the beginning before submitting
- remove the auto-focus facility on the camera while shooting
- remove the tab from the back of the video cassette to ensure it is not accidentally taped over
- clearly identify the video tape as well as the tape cover with the TITLE of the video drama

- submit a video drama that is a work of fiction, not a documentary, music clip or ‘real TV’
- consider access to casting talent related to the character descriptions in the screen script. For example, if the story includes an older person who cannot be cast appropriately, reconsider the concept and characters of the story
- produce a video which engages the viewer
- invent their own story and style commensurate with a minimal budget, rather than recreating what is seen on the movies or television
- note that gratuitous violence generally fails to further the development of the dramatic action.

### **Checklist for Video Drama**

The checklist below sets out the mandatory requirements for this project as published in the *Creative Arts Stage 6 KLA Handbook*. Familiarisation with the checklist is recommended for students attempting this project.

- Preparation of a short but complete video drama developed by the student. The VHS video should be 5–7 minutes in length.
- Students must undertake the roles of:
  - writer
  - director
  - camera operator
  - editor.
- The logbook should include:
  - pre-production development
  - storyboard detailing narrative, types of shots, soundtrack and special effects
  - shooting script with dates, description of shots, location and continuity
  - post-production editing script.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Established the mood in opening shots.
- Relied on a limited cast, usually two or three people.
- Portrayed a character-driven story.
- Demonstrated a strong understanding of video language to develop the dramatic action.
- Framed innovative, unobtrusive shots to support the action where necessary and varied shots to create meaning.
- Achieved satire and comedy in the script, filming and post-production processes when

appropriate to the genre of the work.

- Developed and released tension in the drama to engage the viewer.
- Enhanced the dramatic meaning of the story with a carefully considered soundtrack.
- Understood the importance of sound and picture quality to engage the viewer.
- Edited their stories tightly to create pace.
- Utilised their wide knowledge and experience of film and television drama.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Attempted to tell a story too advanced for their video-making ability.
- Engaged the viewer on a journey but often left them wondering just what had happened.
- Presented inconsistent shots and editing production, with some very good work alongside some glaring errors.
- Portrayed strength in one or two areas of story, characters, setting, camerawork, editing or choice of sound, but would be let down in the other areas.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Produced a video that lacked coherence in its storytelling.
- Considered casting, costume, setting and location as unimportant.
- Presented stereotypical characters.
- Showed a lack of familiarity with the editing processes.
- Produced too many effects which did nothing for the action of the drama.
- Used gratuitous violence, mimicking the style of Tarantino and some television cop shows, thus neglecting a creative interpretation of their story.
- Seemed to have problems with time management, with the project either being filmed in a day or not enough time allocated for the editing process.
- Either gave little consideration to what they wanted to say with their video or overstated their point.
- Failed to engage the viewer.

## An 'A' Sample of a Video Drama Project

### Narrative

'Blood' is the story of a young woman who kills in self defence, disposes of the body and is subsequently haunted by her actions. The film begins with the tense, physical confrontation which results in the murder. After a brief moment, the young woman quickly moves toward disposing of the body, apparently successfully, in a drain. Just as she relaxes again (and thus the viewer does also) she has a disturbing nightmare of her victim seeking revenge. She wakes up to relieve the tension again only to discover that the crucifix she disposed of with the body is back in her kitchen. The young woman rushes to the drain only to find the body has disappeared. At this she takes her own life and, as she lays dead, the viewer sees shots of the body and the crucifix still in the drain.

### Features of this Short Video Drama

- Music and sound effects used to create appropriate mood and beautifully synchronised with the action, eg to enhance the mood or to counterpoint the action.
- Attention to props, both as symbols and to further the action.
- Variation of shots appropriate to the action.
- Camera used creatively to reveal important information.
- Colour filters on camera to create mood.
- Inventive placement of camera that was never intrusive or jarring, eg bloody mop plunging into bucket of water, filmed from bottom of bucket.
- Inventive framing and mise-en-scene.
- The student's ability to create emotion with their camera placement, choice and shots, music and editing meant that they did not have to rely on the acting ability of their performers.
- Tightly constructed storyline which keeps the viewer engaged as it moves expertly through its four separate climaxes.
- Wonderful attention to detail, eg eight different shots in nine seconds to create urgency of car driving away.
- Fast cutting to accelerate the drama.
- Jump cuts to further story.
- Edits on movement maintaining a feeling of action.
- Editing effects and animation used to enhance the story, never extraneously.
- Student was not afraid to embrace different styles.



## **Guidelines 1998**

### **HSC Drama 2 Unit Examination**

#### **Video Drama Project**

##### Criteria Applied to Each Student's Performance

###### Section 1: Pre-Production

###### Skill in screen writing for a short video drama

- Narrative construction
  - inferred and explicitly presented events of the story and plot, opening and closing, pattern of development (storyboarding) for 5–7 minutes, character relationships
- Video language
- Originality

###### Section 2: Production

###### Skill in directing the action to create dramatic meaning

- Camera operation
  - framing the action, angles, focus, length, size, light, camera movement, perspective, special effects
- Directing
  - setting, location, lighting, costume, mood, narrative focus, character responses, tension, timing, casting relevant to character description.

###### Section 3: Post-production

###### Skill in post-production to create dramatic meaning

- Editing
  - edit points (eg fade out/dissolve/wipe/cut), continuity, rhythm, time manipulation, special effects on VHS format
- Sound
  - sound levels, background music, sound effects, appropriate to screen drama, dialogue
- Titles, post-production editing script

## The Written Paper

### Section I

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

##### 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.

#### General Comments

Contemporary Aboriginal theatre was, once again, a very popular topic.

#### Strong Candidates

- Composed a coherent argument which was well supported by a detailed knowledge of the plays and displayed a deep understanding of the nature of Aboriginal theatre.
- Understood ‘interpreted’ and the ‘how it is’ in both a theatrical and social sense.
- Demonstrated a breadth of knowledge across the topic, often mentioning additional plays beyond the two required in the question.

#### Middle-range Candidates

- Understood the question but could not quite articulate a coherent argument. They did show a good to fair knowledge of the plays and many wrote (some at length) about what happens in the plays.
- Wrote with passion about ‘how it is’ and displayed a fair knowledge of how the messages are conveyed to an audience.

#### Weaker Candidates

- Did not address the question directly or even by implication.
- Used few specific references to the plays and often simply retold some of the events.
- Revealed, on occasion, paternalistic and even racist attitudes, eg ‘the natives’.

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*.

### General Comments

Significantly fewer candidates answered this question. The most common texts used and cited were *The Dreamers*, *The Keepers* and *Bran Nue Dae*. Only a few candidates used *Funerals and Circuses* or *The Cakeman*.

### Strong Candidates

- Discussed the statement showing a thorough understanding of both the art form, theatre, and how the plays in performance confront, challenge and even excite audiences. These candidates were able to select specific moments in two plays which supported the impact these plays have on both black and white audiences – especially *The Dreamer* and *Bran Nue Dae*.
- Demonstrated a breadth of knowledge across the topic, often mentioning additional plays beyond the two set for study.

### Middle-range Candidates

- Attempted to discuss the statement but often in a very general way.
- Seemed to have good knowledge of texts and could give many references to the plays.
- Attempted to give indications of how the plays can have an impact on audiences to challenge them.

### Weaker Candidates

- Tended to avoid ‘vibrant art form’ but focused on ‘educates people’ without addressing ‘different ways of living and thinking’.
- Tended to retell incidents from plays without reference to the statement or without integrating as part of an argument.
- Rarely addressed ways in which the plays in performance could excite or challenge the audience.

## Sample of an 'A' Response – Question 1 (a)

Aboriginal theatre gives black Australia a voice. Aboriginal theatre grew out of a political need. Aboriginal performance allows black Australia to tell the world exactly how it is. The two plays, 'The Dreamers' by Jack Davis and 'The Keepers' by Bob Maza, do not attempt to hide aspects of Aboriginality. While they reflect on the past, as a time of peace and harmony, they also explore contemporary Aboriginal life, as it is.

In these two plays from black Australia the playwrights write with a sense of first-hand experience. A voice from the past is heard. Davis draws on aspects of the corroboree to depict the spiritual past. The dancer is representative of the the past, a time of great customs, beliefs and a strong relationship with the land. The dancer, however, is also symbolic of a culture that is dying alongside Worru.

Davis portrays an honest picture of modern Aboriginal life. He does not try to hide the drinking, lawlessness, bad-language and childish squabbles. Alcohol rules in the Wallitch family, it can be seen in the empty bottles, swaggering, hangovers, violence and retching. Davis accepts that this is a problem and so does not hide it.

The depiction of Aboriginal life is brutally honest and at times very harsh. His characters are symbolic rather than realistic: He shows characters who are in limbo. Eli has lost his Aboriginal culture. He boasts of his dishonesty: 'Me and old patchy had a good day'.

Dolly is the one character who can keep things together. Davis presents her character as hope for the future. She will ensure that Shae and Meena finish school, money or no money. She is the link between Worru's past and the kids future. Dolly is worried about what is happening to her own culture, she says to Meena:

'Why don't you get some decent friends instead of hanging round those barefooted blackfellas?'

Davis presents the difficult task of living in suburbia with an Aboriginal sense of identity, as Worru puts it:

'Now we who were there, who were young, are now old and live in suburbia.'

Worru is torn between his past and modern life. What he was brought up to know, his customs, his way of life, has vanished. There is no resolution, in fact Davis' perspective is very pessimistic.

However, Davis is suggesting some type of answer. You cannot go back to traditional life, nor can you completely succumb to contemporary life. It is better to adopt the positive aspects of the past and teach the children to be proud of their heritage – Dolly is an example of this.

Davis is insightful and non-judgemental in his writing. The humour of the play is never far from the surface of the play. While presenting an honest picture of contemporary Aboriginal life there is the capacity to laugh at the desperate moments of circumstances. In the middle of a struggle to survive, there is laughter, otherwise the reality of life is unbearable. It is a laugh of endurance – a survival of a race, of people. Davis' voice tells the audience that despite bad health, alcoholism, violence and poverty, the Nyoongah spirit is surviving.

In 'The Keepers', Maza uses white characters to show the historic faces that have shaped the future for black Australia. Spanning two generations, the play is a vehicle for showing Aboriginal beliefs, way of life and their intimate relationship with the land: 'This land is us'.

'The Keepers' explores the destructive effects that European settlement had on black Australia. It shows the way the law did and perhaps still does favour the white. Maza presents the initial contact between Aboriginals and Europeans as being a conflict between the differing attitudes towards the land. For the Europeans it was to tame, own and conquer. For the Aboriginal it was to use and to worship.

The movement from the past to the period after European settlement explores the way it is for black Australians. It shows the systematic shooting down of Aboriginals and then even an attempt to poison them through their water supply. 'The Keepers' also suggests that racism works both ways. While the white characters are usually stereotyped to be overtly racist, even Danny, who is Aboriginal has a racist attitude: 'Its amazing our government lets all these wogs in'. Racism works both ways in today's society.

Maza, like Jack Davis, does not try to hide the disastrous effects of alcohol. Danny is reduced to a disorientated mess as he drunkenly abuses everyone who loves him. It is important that the playwrights are telling it how it is. The reality of alcoholism, lawlessness are important issues which need to be faced.

The play is moving in the way that it explores that it hasn't always been white aggression which has cost Aboriginality to lose their way of life, but white ignorance. Both 'The Dreamers' and 'The Keepers' point to the idea that white Australia has the responsibility and power to make a change.

Aboriginal theatre grew out of a political need, a need to be heard. Because the playwrights of black Australia are telling it as it is, they have had a great impact on influencing white Australia and, in doing so, have enabled them to forge a future based on understanding and respect for the indigenous past.

## Question 2 Theatre in Education: General Comments

More candidates studied this topic than any other.

Both questions were answered by large numbers; Question (a) attracted slightly more candidates.

There was a full range of responses from clear, articulate and well-organised essays to simplistic, short and generalised responses.

- Most candidates understood the nature of TIE.
- Many candidates had obviously studied and prepared more than two texts set for study and some used these effectively in their answers.
- Most tended to write about how effective TIE is, but ignored the theatre/education debate.
- Many had little idea of ‘complex’ staging, and thought this meant more props.
- Some felt ‘No Worries’ was suitable for TIE but ‘The Property of the Clan’ should have more complex staging as it is a more complex play.

The most popular texts were ‘No Worries’ and ‘The Property of the Clan’. However, ‘Spitting Chips’ and ‘Fossils’ were studied by a significant number of candidates.

Texts set for study:

Manuel Aston, *Fossils*

Nick Enright, *A Property of the Clan*

David Holman, *No Worries: Three Plays for Children*

Peta Murray, *Spitting Chips*.

## 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.

### Strong Candidates

- Engaged fully with the question, discussing the proposition of whether the play would be improved or otherwise with the use of more complex staging.
- Supported their argument with close reference to at least one play.
- Displayed insight into the nature of TIE performances and actor–audience relationship especially the importance of imagination.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Often argued why simple staging was most appropriate to TIE performances from a practical point of view.
- Possessed detailed knowledge of at least one play without capitalising on this to answer the question, especially in relation to performances and staging, rarely showing how simple (or complex) staging would support or enhance the play in performance and how this would be received by the audience.
- Focused mainly on the issues in the play(s) and rarely on the actor–audience relationship.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Composed a limited argument, usually only mentioning the difficulties of transporting sets and props and the cost involved, with little reference to theatrical concerns.
- Wrote about the themes of TIE with little reference to performances, especially actor–audience relationship or imagination required of the audience.
- Some candidates wrote only in the most generalised manner about TIE, with few references to a specific play in performance.

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.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Composed an articulate essay that argued either for the importance of theatre in capturing the attention and interest of children/teenagers so that ‘education’ could occur, or argued that both ‘education’ and ‘theatre’ were equally important in TIE.
- Made specific and detailed references to at least two plays, showing how theatrical techniques were used to create the performance.
- Related theatrical techniques in communicating ideas and issues.
- Made reference to specific moments of strong actor–audience relationship that can occur in TIE performances – recognising and identifying with the characters and the issues.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Usually argued, in a simple statement in the first paragraph, that ‘education’ was more important than theatre.
- Developed the essay by writing, often in great detail, about the plots, demonstrating detailed knowledge of themes and issues of at least two plays.
- Often made only brief mention of ‘theatre’ without demonstrating an understanding of theatrical techniques used in the plays.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Tended to agree that education was most important, then proceeded to retell the events of two plays (or sometimes only one) in varying degrees of detail.
- Referred to the term 'theatre' without any reference to theatrical techniques; some even ignored the term altogether
- Some candidates wrote a whole essay about the history and theory of TIE with little or no reference to any specific plays or performances.
- Made little or no reference to the impact of the plays on an audience of children or teenagers.



## Sample of an 'A' Response – Question 2 (b)

To say that the education is more important than the theatre in Theatre in Education plays would contravene the essential intent of those involved. Theatre in Education attempts to marry together the didactic, the polemic and the aesthetic to create a piece of work that encourages an active approach to learning rather than a passive one, whilst also ensuring that the play itself is vibrant, contemporary and fresh. Indeed, the vast number of theatrical styles often employed in just one Theatre in Education play – mime, puppetry, circus, vaudeville, song, dance and poetry – unite to create a play that is often more entertaining than some mainstream adult plays. The fact that Theatre in Education plays seek to educate a young audience provides the director and cast with a purpose, and the age of the audience provides these people with a unique set of demands and constraints. Together, these requirements contrive to create a piece of theatre that is as entertaining as it is educative.

This conflation of the didactic with the aesthetic is clearly demonstrated in the two plays I have studied 'No Worries' and 'Spitting Chips'. In 'No Worries' Holman addresses many issues such as change, acceptance, friendship, racism and universality; whilst aiming to entertain his predominantly infant-school aged audience. It is essential that the audience be entertained, because if their attention-spans are not maintained, the issues presented will not reach a receptive audience and will not educate. To this end, Holman employed many theatrical techniques in his play to blend education with entertainment and ensure continued attention span. The humour he employs is a re-occurrent motif designed to relax the audience, and the frequent songs are also designed to serve the same purpose: to entertain in order to make an audience receptive to education. The plays themselves also break with traditional theatrical convention and address the audience out of character at the commencement of the play in order to relax them and prepare them for the nature of theatre. The colloquial register also serves to relax the audience and to ensure that the audience identifies with the protagonist and thus learns along with her the importance of acceptance of change and acceptance of others. All of these techniques conspire first and foremost to entertain, as entertainment is essential to a successful education of the audience.

Similarly, Murray's 'Spitting Chips' employs these techniques and others to appeal to the youthful audience and prepare them for a process of understanding and education. The marginally older audience – junior secondary students – enables Murray to employ less overt techniques such as sarcasm and irony on the education of her audience, but also makes it more difficult for her to entertain this audience. People of this demograph tend to form close-knit subcultures and be suspicious of people who do not form part of this group. This trait can work to excellent effect if the playwright can tap into this 'vibe' and exploit it, as is done successfully in 'Spitting Chips'. By making the protagonist an 'old fashioned brat' who is rude to her elders, feisty, and partakes of archetypally youthful pleasures such as drumming, the audience can identify with her, are entertained by her antics and are receptive to education. By making her also rather rebellious – disrespectful, rude and the drum kit is symbolic of rebellion and anger – the director can tap into a feeling common in his target audience to appeal to their sensibilities to respond affirmatively to the character. A study undertaken by a few of the people who began Theatre in Education, Brian Way and Richard Courtney, shows that the 10-15 age group identifies with characters who remind them of themselves or whom they would like to be.

In order to ensure that the play's entertainment value is not obscured by the issues, Murray employed a dynamic script structure whereby a serious scene was always followed by a comedic one, to offer 'comic relief'. The other jokes and also the fight scenes, drumming and temper tantrums also serve this purpose, and thus proliferate the play. Holman also used these basic techniques to break up his play, although on a less violent and cynical level: he did not have any 'Barbie-Doll Massacres' as Murray did, but instead employed sing-a-longs and an interpolating narrator.

The fact that Theatre in Education is designed to bring theatre to the schools and thus reach an audience not usually familiar with live theatre ensures that entertainment remains a priority in the scripting of a play. In many schools, the 'arts' are devalued and theatre in education is finding it particularly difficult to survive economically ensuring that Theatre in Education in schools is a rare occurrence. Also the communication technology of the modern world has created an audience more sophisticated and cynical, and also less familiar with traditional methods of entertainment such as theatre. It is thus absolutely essential that the plays are entertaining, as they not only seek to educate but also seek to encourage children to attempt their own performances by breaking down the theatrical process. If entertainment does not occur, Theatre in Education fails.

Therefore, education is certainly not more important than theatre in Theatre in Education, as in order to ensure entertainment, a dazzlingly wide variety of theatrical styles and techniques are employed without which education would not occur.

### **Question 3 State or Regional Theatre Companies**

EITHER

(a) The repertoire 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.

### **General Comments**

It should be noted that not all companies were studied this year. By far the most popular was the STC.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Had a clear understanding of the issues the question raised, ie pragmatism versus social and artistic concerns.
- Possessed a detailed knowledge of the theatre company they had studied and were able to mount a discussion on what tension these competing concerns had created for the company and how the company had attempted to deal with them through repertoire, venue, and other policy initiatives.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Could describe the pragmatic concerns facing the theatre company and had an awareness of the competing demands of pragmatism versus artistic integrity.
- Had a tendency to list and describe the repertoire and the artistic policy of the theatre company as a substitution for real engagement with the question of balancing priorities.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Revealed limited knowledge of the company's repertoire and could not engage the question.
- Often chose to recount information about the theatre company that had little relevance to what was required.

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.

### **Strong candidates**

- Wrote coherently and convincingly about the theatre company’s attempts at innovation in new work, new processes, forms or audiences. Also showed a knowledge of the aims of the Australia Council and could detail the attempts made by the chosen company to ‘contribute to the development of Australian theatre’.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Had a good knowledge of their chosen theatre company. Knowledge of how the selection of plays was innovative was evident.
- Wrote of particular performances to support argument of innovative content, processes.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Did not engage the question.
- Presented a range of information about particular plays or performances out of the context of the question
- Could list repertoire without showing how repertoire could be innovative.

### **Question 4 Australian Theatre 1965–1975: General Comments**

This topic was attempted by many candidates who displayed a sophisticated understanding of the historical and social contexts of the plays as well as detailed knowledge of the texts. Many wrote clear and articulate responses.

Both questions were attempted, with (b) attracting slightly more responses.

Most popular texts were *Don's Party* and *The Floating World*, although other texts were studied by significant number of candidates.

### **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 performances of plays and the expectations of audiences? In your answer, refer to at least two of the plays you studied.

#### **Strong Candidates**

- Placed the plays in a historical context and detailed the ways in which 'rough theatre' space influenced the writing and performance of plays.
- Detailed how the new approach of Romeril, Williamson, Buzo, Hibbert, Boddy and Ellis and the actors' collectives influenced the theatre of the new wave.
- Were able to link the 'rough theatre' concepts to performance style and the range of different approaches to the making of theatre.
- Understood the nature of the audiences and how the theatre spaces created a new relationship with audiences.
- Displayed a deep and detailed knowledge of at least two of the plays set for study, often focusing on content, language, and audience expectations at the time.

#### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Wrote of the special nature of Australian theatre during this period, displaying an understanding of 'rough theatre' – style and content.
- Made detailed reference to the chosen plays.
- Some tended to write (sometimes at great length) about the social and political climate of the times without linking this to the question of theatre at this time.

### Weaker Candidates

- Understood the importance of the ‘new wave’ to Australian theatre.
- Wrote about the social and political climate of the times, in varying degrees of detail and accuracy.
- Made little or no reference to the nature of the theatre spaces other than to name them.
- Tended only to mention the language of the plays realising the importance of Australian vernacular and content.

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*.

### Strong Candidates

- Had excellent understanding of the spirit of the times – social and political climate.
- Had detailed knowledge of two plays and showed how these plays reflected the spirit and concerns in performance style as well as specifically Australian content and vernacular.
- Understood that although plays may have become ‘dated’, the issues are still relevant today and performance style developed then has great relevance and importance to Australian theatre today.

### Middle-range Candidates

- Had good knowledge of two plays and made references to the social and political concerns of the time.
- Did not address the issue of relevance or dismissed the plays as having little or no relevance other than as part of Australian history.
- Made little or no reference to performance style.
- Some confused ‘relevance’ with notions of time, ie the plays are dated.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Understood the importance of the plays as part of Australian theatre history.
- Showed a simple understanding of the spirit of the time – social changes.
- Made some references to the plays.
- Dealt with concept but made little or no reference to performance style.
- Tended to ignore ‘relevance’ or dismiss plays as not being relevant today.

## Sample of an 'A' Response – Question 4 (b)

The surge of Australian theatre which was encompassed in the 'New Wave' of the late 1960s and 1970s heralded a move away from the previous American and British theatrical ethnocentricity which had seen the Australian theatre 'decked out in borrowed robes, with borrowed voices telling borrowed tales' as put by Leonard Radic. It was a theatre inspired by Grotowski's concept of 'poor theatre', music, vaudeville and slapstick, and which stemmed from a growing sense of Australian pride and nationalism in rebellion against international domination over all aspects of Australian culture, particularly theatre. The plays of this era reflect the feelings of Australians both towards our own lifestyles and morals, and furthermore towards those which are impressed upon us through societal pressures.

'No longer did management feel the need to tuck the Australian play away shyly and embarrassedly, into a season or mini season of its own for fear of contaminating its well-bred British, or brash American cousins'. Here Radic sums up the basic premise of the new wave.

With the opening of the La Mama theatre in 1967 by Betty Burutall in Melbourne (later [1970] moving as the APG to the Pram Factory) and its Sydney counterpart The Nimrod Street Theatre of 1970 founded by Ken Horler, Richard Werrett and John Bell, a rough new stage was made for our rough, new, talented and adventurous playwrights. These writers, predominantly middle-class scholars and men such as Horler, David Williamson, and John Romeril wrote plays which brought the Australian language, vernacular and slang, Australian stereotypes, predominantly the 'ocker' male, and set in Australian places with home-grown concerns and values. This was why this New Wave of theatre in the late 1960s and early 1970s reflected the spirit and concerns of its audience. It was a rough, brash, and boisterous movement which defied the traditional 4 act play and broke right through the proscenium arch into small coffee house theatres with almost filmic pieces of theatre.

When reflecting upon the importance of the New Wave, the dramatic impact which these pioneers of Australian Drama had on the shaping of theatre as the thriving cultural medium it has become today; being both accessible and affordable (in some forms) to all who wish to enjoy it, this in itself pertains to the fact that the very relevance that these plays – in performance style and content – have to us today is that they are the very foundation upon which modern Australian theatre is based. Although our concerns change with time, the fact that we are able to express these concerns, free from censorship upon our stages, comes directly from the work of our theatrical predecessors.

Although our concern may change with progress, it is important to note that many aspects of the Australian culture are firmly planted in our heritage, and these stereotypes remain as part of our theatre. David Williamson's 'Don's Party', which was written in 1971 and based on the 1969 elections in Australia, was first performed by the APG at the Pram Factory in Melbourne in 1973. Williamson's work had been criticised for its lack of character development and the fact that his play 'Don's Party' seemed to hold no real social message. In fact, 'Don's Party' held more than a social message; it held up a mirror to the state of marriage and mateship in Australian society at the time of the play. Williamson encompassed the Australian language — 'c--- features' — and embraced the male stereotype of the boisterous 'ocker': 'shitting, shagging, shaving. Same old routine' says Cooley, one of the play's most vibrant and lovable characters who is as crude and loutish as ever seen before on stage, yet he was acclaimed by critics as being 'a true portrayal of the middle-class Australian male. Striving for something and not knowing what to look for, so he just follows the leader', as stated by Katherine Brisbane. The style of the play is loose and filmic, with short scenes and dual dialogue. The relaxed staging of the play directly mirrors its content. The surge of the new sexual liberalism which had come from the recent 'hippy movement' stemming from Australia's involvement in the Vietnam war, and consequently our fight to stop our involvement in an imperialist war being fought well beyond our nations scope. The concerns expressed in 'Don's Party' reflected the spirit and concerns of its time – in performance style and content – yet its relevance is clear. These brash new expressions of Australian ideas and the obtaining of an Australian theatrical identity paved the way for our modern drama, and broke down the constraints which had previously held us in the clutches of our American and British cousins. They give us the means through which to trace back the foundation of Australian drama and the concerns of the time.

Although a much more politically intent playwright than Williamson, John Romeril managed to both effectively comment on society as a whole and its effects on the individual in his plays, specifically 'The Floating World'. He explores the comment made by Graeme Blundell 'are we just becoming products of an international Dippy-bird culture?' Do we as Australians bow down to our 'cultural superiors', both as a nation

and as individuals? Romeril is assessing the extent to which society shapes the patterns of life of individuals. The central character of 'The Floating World', Ken, finds himself plagued by self-doubt and loathing as he feels he is 'scabbing' on his mates who died in the atrocities of the Burma railway, as he is on a cruise-ship 'The Cherry Blossom' bound for Japan. His xenophobia and cultural isolation leads him to become emotionally incapable of dealing with the situation, and he ends up being forcibly restrained after attempting to stab the first Japanese people he sees when the ship comes to shore. Although tales of war and the 'flash-back' of returned soldiers are rarely mentioned in our society today, the primary focusses of this quasi-absurdist piece still ring true. Ken's inability to forgive himself for his war crimes, and likewise forgive the Japanese for their ruin his quality of life. Resentment and revenge plague him, he is afraid of being separated from the crowd, or showing any sign of sensitivity. These issues are still marked in our society today where mates are still forced to deal with both family and societal pressures which temper their behaviour. Although almost three decades have past since the initial emergence of the new wave, its ability to reflect the spirit and concerns of the Australian people does not fade with time. The issues of marriage, money, mateship and the individual's place in society still hold firm places in the concerns of contemporary playwrights. The very nature of the 'New Wave', the fact that it was the establishment of Australian theatre (both in terms of content and playwrights), alludes to the fact that it will always hold relevance to our theatrical culture as it is where the Australian identity began, we cannot destroy that, only add to it.



### 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*.

#### Strong Candidates

- Focused their response on the ‘presentation on stage’, discussing the wider theatrical conventions of depicting female characters and contrasting this against the Australian heroine.
- Made detailed reference to the three characters and their presentation.
- Discussed the actor–audience relationship in the depiction of the Australian heroine.
- Discussed role of music, lighting, costume etc in presenting the heroine.
- Displayed a wide knowledge of the topic.

#### Middle-range Candidates

- Knew the topic and discussed the characteristics of the typical heroine.
- Often failed to fully engage the ‘presentation on stage’ aspect of the question though made mention of conventions of melodrama – particularly the authentic settings and use of tableaux – without really showing how these related specifically to the heroines.

#### Weaker Candidates

- Displayed a superficial understanding of the question’s intent.
- Recounted incidents from the plots of the two plays but did not discuss aspects of ‘presentation on stage’.
- Some candidates only referred to one play.

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*.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Provided challenging arguments in response to the question.
- Knew the topic thoroughly and could provide detailed examples of the 'artificial conventions' and how these were used to engage the audience.
- Discussed the recurrent themes of national identity and moral dilemmas in the plays and how the theatrical conventions of Australian melodrama were employed to depict these themes.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Displayed a sound knowledge of the topic.
- Had some problems with the term 'real', discussing melodrama as realism. The 'realism' of the set was used as justification for engaging the audience in 'real emotional and moral issues'.
- Commented on music being used to heighten an audience's awareness of a 'real issue'.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Mostly avoided this option, preferring the (a) option on presentation of heroines.

## Question 6 Louis Nowra: General Comments

Texts set for study:

*The Golden Age*

*Summer of the Aliens*

*Sunrise*

*Visions.*

In general, these were longer, more articulate and intelligent responses. The students had a clear grasp of the complexity of the texts and issues. They understood the plays as pieces of theatre. *The Golden Age* and *Summer of the Aliens* were clearly the texts that dominated, though there were examples from all four. Candidates responded using no more than two texts. Slightly more candidates responded to (a).

## 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.

### Strong Candidates

- Were able to discuss the plot as a vehicle for the images to be presented. Noted that the objective was to challenge the audience.
- Understood the question and could form an argument.
- Understood the relationship between plot and theme.
- Could discuss the two texts simultaneously by the summary/conclusion, though most chose to discuss them independently and explain the emblematic nature of style.

### Middle-Range Candidates

- Didn't really grasp the depth of the question.
- Related images, incidents and events from the plays without analysis.
- Could make some comments on audience reaction.
- Did not understand or could not necessarily interpret what might be 'important' in Nowra's plays.
- Tended to generalise and list the images without making clear connections to the intention or purpose of their inclusion.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Did not attempt to answer the question at all.
- Could occasionally retell the story or plotlines, or simply offer a review.

OR

- (b) What happens in the present is a 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.

### **General Comments**

Generally the quote and question made this question more complex. Some students were confused.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Could clearly identify theatrical images in the plays as being used for contrast between an older world and images suggesting a new world.
- Could utilise the quote in a full discussion of the contrasting images.
- Had a detailed knowledge of the two texts to which they referred.
- Discussed the plays as pieces of theatre.
- Understood the plays at their deepest level of meaning, and semiotically.

### **Middle-Range Candidates**

- Got caught up in the quote itself, giving detailed support with some theatrical reference.
- Discussed the plays' references to past and present with little connection to images.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Had difficulty grasping the question and simply retold the stories of the plays.
- Lacked detail on the texts or used one and mentioned the second.
- Did not know or obviously confused the plays.

## Sample of an 'A' response – Question 6 (b)

Louis Nowra's plays 'The Golden Age' and 'Summer of the Aliens' are both plays of social conflict and realisation. Louis Nowra examines these themes through means of his quick sharp scenes, his very powerful images and symbols, and his ability to convey his messages through strong incidents and chains of events. Thus, through the plot, Nowra deftly constructs these two strong plays; 'Summer of the Aliens' examines social conflicts, power, emotional conflicts, power roles and physical power; 'The Golden Age' examines social conflict, the power of language, power over the unknown, fear of the unknown, the blight that civilised man spreads into nature. Thus, Nowra encounters a balance between these two plays and constructs a chain of events and incidences in each to convey his messages and themes.

In 'Summer of the Aliens', Nowra uses much symbolism to portray the essence of power and conflict within society. The idea of Lewis' 'aliens' in the world directly demonstrates to the audience that what is considered normal to Lewis is distorted by a higher power of people. Symbolism and the play's events such as the Cold War that was occurring at the time, the continual conflict between Dulcie, Brian and Lewis, the stereotypical ostracisation of the Dutch girl by Lewis, the establishment of sexual relations between Lewis and Dulcie, the family conflicts between Dulcie and her mother, and Lewis and his father, all correspond to the image and symbol of 'aliens' in Lewis' society. 'The aliens are here.'

Simple gestures such as this directly portray the sequences of Nowra's use of brief scenes, incidents and events – Lewis holds a firm belief that each person is 'infected' by some form of paramount or alien which induces these people to cause conflict. The volatile relationship between Dulcie and Lewis completely complements this idea – in Act Two, the final scene, Nowra conjures a very powerful image of Dulcie and Lewis 'summoning' the aliens. The idea that they are in an angels garb somewhat reflects that they both yearn to be a pure person free from alien inhabitation (which is a paradox, especially in Dulcie's case as she's a half-Aboriginal and thus, is plainly ostracised in society for her 'inferiority'). Nowra also confronts the audience with extreme power roles and images: he examines physical power – especially in the light of Brian and Dulcie, Dulcie's treatment of Lewis, and the subtle suggestions from Nowra that Dulcie's stepfather sexually molests her; Nowra examines social power – for example, the 'threat' that the immigration of Europeans posed upon the Australian society, thus diminishing a promise of sustained anglo-saxon citizens, social power is also contrasted in the essence of the world being caught up in the peak of the Cold War: while that particular incident does not directly verify the themes and issues in Nowra's play, it does, however, provide tension and a reason for the setting to be in the slums of a housing commission. In direct relation to social power and conflict, Nowra also examines emotional conflict – much of this idea is present in the behavioral patterns of Dulcie. The audience is confronted greatly with the pain Dulcie endures in her family. She is continually harassed by her mother, Nowra gives subtle hints that Dulcie experiences 'sexual misconduct' from her stepfather, thus Dulcie suffers severely emotionally, which greatly impacts Lewis and the incidents around them. The chain of events Nowra examines lead to an appreciation of society by Lewis. 'People are just people'.

Nowra portrays the idea that human nature and mankind cannot be altered, no matter what one believes. Social, emotional and physical conflict always will remain a big aspect of society.

In 'The Golden Age', Nowra sheds light on society in a different manner. As a playwright who is fascinated by language, he examines the power roles of the 'norm' over a society seen as uncivilised – hence the tribe in Tasmania. In a series of quick, nimble scenes, Nowra establishes the tribe and directly contrasts them to the 'norm'. In doing so, Nowra is able to promptly display to the audience the fear that civilised society endure when they come in contact with a group of outcasts, and he portrays the immediate effects this has on both sides: civilised man conquers the outcasts and obliterates their last means of existence. Nowra deftly notes this when Doctor William states to Bethsheb: 'I'm going to conquer you'.

In this play, Nowra establishes that civilised man is greedy and fears the unknown – man wants everyone to follow his way of life. The experiments carried out on the surviving tribe by the doctors clearly symbolises the blight man carries and spreads throughout society. Bethsheb in particular can be seen as an image of primeval society. 'Nowt outcastin'!

Thus, in this play, Nowra examines how language can cause so many barriers for clashing cultures. This idea can be tied in with the concept of the more one knows, the less the better. As a last strand of social equality this tribe represents the expression of freedom – Nowra draws parallels between freedom and conformity,

underlining that if one does not conform, that person must be obliterated or transformed. Francis and Peter present a ray of hope that mankind may accept society as it is, not as it's expected to be – 'Perhaps they didn't feel a need to speak'.

Nowra examines that language does not have to be censored and limited, hence, the relationship between Bethsheb and Francis. It is until then that man with extreme knowledge enters the tribes world – that is William – and completely destroys the last existing members of the ancient Tasmanian tribe.

Nowra does not so much focus on the plot as he does on the themes. Nowra's aim is to clearly identify his play with the audience to teach of such conditions and concepts of society as conflict, power and language. In doing so, he nimbly presents his audience with quick sharp images, scenes and clearly identified characters to express the incidents and events that follow. This is how Nowra successfully constructs his plays while teaching his audiences lessons on social normality and social outcasts.

### **Question 7 Women and Contemporary Theatre: General Comments**

Women performers:

Robyn Archer

Wendy Harmer

Justine Saunders

Ruth Cracknell

Women playwrights:

Linda Aronson, *Dinkum Assorted*

Alma de Groen, *The Rivers of China*

Dorothy Hewitt, *The Chapel Perilous*

Hannie Rayson, *Falling from Grace*

The students who answered this topic typically wrote on Ruth Cracknell or Wendy Harmer with a few responding using Robyn Archer. There was only a handful that mentioned Justine Saunders. The playwrights were Linda Aronson 'Dinkum Assorted', Hewitt's 'The Chapel Perilous' and Rayson's 'Falling from Grace' with very few using 'Rivers of China' by Alma de Groen.

Most candidates chose to respond to question 7(b). When they did choose 7(a) they divided their argument distinctly on the performer and the characters of the play.

Respondents to 7(a) wrote using Ruth Cracknell and 'The Chapel Perilous'.

Many respondents used all the work of the performers even if this included television or film yet the best candidates could distinguish this from theatre and made their reference directly relevant to the questions.

This question was the least attempted of the two options.

## Question 7 Women and Contemporary Theatre

EITHER

- (a) Any woman you bring on to 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.

### Strong Candidates

- Defined to be 'looked' at and discussed the performer and the character equally.
- Had a clear point of view and an opinion.
- Talked about what 'taken seriously' meant in the context of Women and Contemporary Theatre and understood the meaning of 'on stage'.

### Middle-Range Candidates

- Dealt too much with the sociology or historical perspective rather than 'on stage'.
- Lacked detail in one or other of the performer and/or character – or did not come to terms with the character on stage.
- Had a limited line of argument in terms of the question and consequently discussed the social background of performers and characters.

### Weaker Candidates

- Had difficulty constructing a response which dealt with the performer and the characters.
- Recounted the plot of the play and the character's role in the plot.
- Retold the performer biography with little analysis.
- Spoke of the playwright not in context to the work or more specifically the characters.
- Used very little detail or inaccurate points on the characters and/or performer.
- Wrote tributes to performers and playwrights.

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?

### General Comments

Students had some difficulty with the exploring part of the question. This was the most popular of the two options.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Could deal with the term ‘stereotyped images’ and the role of the theatre in exploring these.
- Were capable of being specific with very clear examples of the performer and playwrights’ views, stance or motivation.
- Gave sophisticated analysis of the exploration of stereotyped images of women with direct examples and support from the work of the performer and playwright.
- Were able to connect the two in their argument.

### **Middle-Range Candidates**

- Did not deal equally with the performer and the playwright.
- Showed some discussion of stereotypes but less analysis or rather only an outline.
- Showed some detail on the work with no reference to the question directly – They did not relate well to the question.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Did not understand the question and chose to give a biography or tribute to the artist
- Gave inaccuracies
- Regurgitated known facts and only listed them.



## Sample of an 'A' response – Question 7 (b)

The work of comedienne Wendy Harmer and playwright Alma De Groen, can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. Perhaps the most superficial glance would reveal feminist motives, however a deeper, more thorough look exposes in-depth insights and social comments of women in contemporary society. As two highly influential women on the modern Australian theatre circuit, Harmer and De Groen flavour their work with issues that stem from and reflect personal beliefs. Where Harmer uses comedy in a variety of ways to impact her audience, De Groen takes a more serious approach, utilising theatrical conventions such as juxtaposition. Both women however, use characterisation and dramatic irony to enhance their message and views upon the stereotypical image of women.

Wendy Harmer, as one of the first women on the standup comedy circuit, is sometimes referred to as 'feminist'. While much of her repertoire is centred around women and their roles in society, she realises that in order to fully impact her audience, purely feminist material should not be used. Harmer believes that while it may appeal to a small contingent of her audience, it is more likely to alienate the greater majority. As Harmer sees it, 'comedy is the perfect vessel for relaying a serious message'. In turn, she makes full use of fun and witty repartee to be more attractive to her audience. Much of her material is androgenously based, with tendencies toward women. In acts such as 'The Big Gig', she questions not only political standing of women, but also 'socially-safe' roles of women. By this, she is referring to the traditional, stereotypical role of women in the house as the child-rearer, and 'domestic expert'. However, it would be a futile practice to ignore the male contingent of her audience and their role in conditioning these stereotypes. Her comic routines 'attack' these men in hilarious ways. She also believes 'if I did not appeal to males, then I would not be achieving all I set out to do'. It is clear then that Harmer's aim is to make a social comment and her work is reflective of this. Thus making full use of humour to relay her view upon images of women in society.

Alma De Groen, writer of 'The Rivers of China', can also be interpreted as a feminist writer because of the context of much of her work. However, De Groen's extensive history as a female writer amidst a highly male dominated field, caused her intense exploration of the stereotypical images of women. Not only does she do this in story-line but she exploits time by juxtaposition and enhances her message by questioning the result of a matriarchal society as opposed to the present patriarchal society. While she admits to the current status of women 'becoming more equal', the time when she wrote 'Rivers of China', was an era in which 'politically correct' boundaries were being pushed and challenged. In 'Rivers of China', De Groen places writer Catherine Mansfield in the care of spiritual healer Gurdjieff, while in a juxtaposed scene, she has the man develop in a matriarchal society. Mansfield feels her writing is not being taken seriously, a typical view of the era in which many female writers were forced to adopt male pen-names to gain respect. She hopes to find peace with Gurdjieff, however De Groen has even placed standardised sex roles in Fontainebleu, where Gurdjieff, has 'many women', and in which they cook, peel carrots and are sentenced to silence 'in order to achieve harmony'. De Groen has used this work as an example and contrast to present society. She also succeeds in making a social statement that the over-empowerment of either sex is both morally and ethically disastrous. Through this plot and juxtaposition we witness the slow degradation of the identity less than in a society where females ruled. De Groen's work challenges female stereotypes and provides a contrasting result, proving that her beliefs of equality for the sexes over-rides distinct feminist values. Her suggestion is that neither sex benefits from either matriarchal or patriarchal society, and whilst not agreeing with stereotypes, presents them in a light that questions the female image.

Apart from these techniques, both De Groen and Harmer make full use of characterisation and dramatic irony to further explore female stereotypes. Harmer's 'Barbie' routine is probably the most explicitly direct attack at the restraints placed on females. It is a topic women can easily relate to and present it in a light that we can think about. She also has the famous role of Detective Sergeant Paula Duncan that gives a dig at the female role in the police force and questions the purpose of beauty pageants. Ironically, Harmer had to equal herself with hacks as a journalist before she was taken seriously.

De Groen uses a male character The Man without giving him a name, but giving him a female mind. This puts Katherine Mansfield in two different societies, 60 years apart, both times as the oppressed sex. Ironically however, at Fontainebleu, after her 'soul searching', she discovers that he 'guru' believes, that as a woman, 'she will never awaken'. She will always sleep. Similarly 60 years later, the Robert Browning quote, 'A man's reach must exceed his grasp, or what's heaven for', takes on new light exposing De Groen's beliefs on the stereotypical belief of women presently and last generation. Both Harmer and De Groen have used irony and characterisation to enhance their work, aiding the presentation of their beliefs of women in society.

Two women at the forefront of Australian theatre are Alma De Groen and Wendy Harmer. Their exploration into the stereotypes of women and their images and roles in society is clear and defined, each presenting messages and social questions for their audiences to consider.

## Section II

### Drama and Theatre in Australian Societies and Cultures

#### Question 8. Shakespeare in Performance

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.

[ Note: Figure 1 showed an example of Elizabethan staging; Figure 2 showed an example of modern staging.]

#### General Comments

In part (a), many candidates referred only briefly to the pictures, then went straight to the second part of the question.

#### Strong Candidates

- Handled all parts of the question effectively.
- Went beyond technical advancements and realised that Shakespearean text and language could be transplanted into modern expression/idiom.
- Realised that there was something in the immediacy of Shakespeare that is an advantage in itself.
- Could discuss the disadvantages of greater technical resources as sometimes diluting the text.
- Referred in detail to productions of both plays to illustrate their arguments.
- Used the illustrations as a stimulus to their discussion of the possibilities of Elizabethan productions and their effectiveness as theatre, and compared these with the possibilities in modern productions.
- Demonstrated how different productions articulated the meanings of the plays.

#### Middle-range Candidates

- Gave only cursory mention of the illustrations and did not relate them to the question.
- Did not realise there were two parts to the question.
- Retold the story and discussed themes.

- Did not refer to modern performances.
- Did not address any disadvantages in modern performance.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Ignored the illustrations or spent too long describing them without attacking the other part of the question.
- Knew little about Elizabethan performance.
- Answered from their own imagination rather than using examples of technical resources used in actual performances.
- Did not understand performance conventions.

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*

### **General Comments**

Part (a) was the most popular question.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Addressed all elements of the question – the concept of universality, ideas, themes and values and how modern theatrical interpretations make them relevant to a modern audience.
- Risked challenging the sacred Shakespeare cow, maintaining a strong argument that not all Shakespeare's ideas and values were 'universally' accepted.
- Accepted that values changed over time and that there were difficulties in presenting eg. the anti-Semitism in *The Merchant of Venice* and the sexism in *The Taming of the Shrew* or in audiences relating to the fairies in *A Midsummer Nights' Dream*.
- Did not just refer to the changes in modern technical performance, but to the differences in interpretation of the ideas, themes and values in modern performances of Shakespeare's plays.
- Addressed two plays in a balanced and detailed way.

- Showed a depth of understanding of the two plays discussed and the ways in which different performances articulated the concerns of the plays.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- ‘Lumped’ all the plays’ concerns under the word ‘themes’, rather than discussing ‘ideas’ and ‘values’ separately.
- Resembled English literature essays, concentrating on interpreting themes and values without appropriate reference to modern performances.
- Described productions with little reference to ideas, themes or values.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Showed lack of knowledge or understanding of the ideas, themes or values in the plays and became descriptions of films they had seen or read about.
- Had no concept of the idea of theatrical interpretations.

### **Sample of an ‘A’ response – Question 8 (b)**

It is undeniable that performances of Shakespeare’s plays must ‘speak to the idiom of their age’. It is a fact that has been recognised by actors and directors in even the 18th and 19th centuries, shown by their reforms, however it is perhaps not the ‘ideas, themes and values’ that ‘rely on modern theatrical interpretations to make them relevant’ but rather the presentation of the play.

It is in fact the universal nature of Shakespeare’s themes, illusion and reality, love in all its forms, and so on, that allow their continual performance. Rather it has been their presentation that has undergone continual reform in order to make the plays relevant.

It is true that the ‘spirit of the age’ often dictates how directors will present Shakespeare’s plays or modify the text. The 19th century with its spirit of romanticism is a perfect example of this. ‘Romeo and Juliet’ was reformed into more of a tragi-comedy as the humorous aspects of the play were not appreciated to the same degree as in the 16th century. Emphasis was placed on key moments of emotional intensity and actors such as Garrick, Kemble and Kean were applauded for the ‘naturalness’ of their performance. Despite such changes to the next, the theme of tragic young love remained, whilst the scenery changed in accordance with the 19th century emphasis on spectacle.

More recent adaptations of ‘Romeo and Juliet’ have revealed a similar pattern. Franco Zeffirelli won much acclaim for both his film version and his stage production at the Old Vic Theatre. Zeffirelli stripped away many outdated methods of acting, particularly the ‘striking gestures’ of the actors. He continued down the path of spectacle, using beautiful Italian style scenery and furthermore replaced the stereotypical ‘romantic’ costumes with more natural everyday clothing. In all this his aim was to create a natural element that would bring relevance to the audience. Not all his reforms lie around presentation – this included reform of the text. Although he removed most of the poetry of the lines, remarking in rehearsal that ‘verse speakers will be prosecuted’ the romantic and emotional elements remained. The balcony scene in which Romeo tried in vain to reach Juliet was realistic in the closeness but impossibility of the action. Emphasis was therefore placed on key emotional scenes which weren’t necessarily reformed to a great extent due to their universal appeal.

Zeffirelli most notably marked the entrance of Shakespeare’s plays into movie and television. Most recently this new avenue of presentation was exploited by the director Baz Luhrman in his production of Romeo and Juliet. The medium of the stage was reformed to film to make it more relevant as were the costumes and props,

most notably the use of guns in place of swords however the themes and ideas remained untouched. The tragedy of the thwarted love was clearly represented in the traditional awakening of Juliet just as Romeo dies and Shakespeare's concern with reconciliation, 'responsibility learned in adversity' as John Russell Brown describes it, is shown in the newspaper photograph showing Montague and Capulet shaking hands.

This demonstrates strikingly that modern theatrical interpretation is necessary for relevance but the reform tends to be in the presentation rather than the theme.

'Our need in post Brecht theatre is to move forward, back to Shakespeare,' said Peter Brook, which he did in his production of 'A Midsummer Nights' Dream'. Technical revolutions of the current century have 'contributed significantly to the production of this play. The magical elements of the play have found new avenues of expression in many ways such as the revolving stage in Reinhardt's production or the lighting effects in Hall's.

The fairies and magical spectacle present in 'A Midsummer Nights' Dream' makes it ideal for modern reform. The visual effects fulfil the expectations of modern audiences however it is the frolicking youthful spirit of love, integral to the plays thematic concerns that preserves it's relevance. Peter Brook's reforms centred around making theatre more theatrical, more of a celebration – a mode of expression which best suits 'A Midsummer Nights' Dream', and most appropriately brings forward its relevant qualities.

It is an impossible mental task to ask an audience to return to the mindset of the time of Elizabeth the first, therefore the plays must be brought forward and adapted to modern/contemporary mindsets. The fact that even today Shakespeare's work can act as a political mirror to social events represents that the quality of his issues are true to human nature, which many presume doesn't change. The expectations of audiences do change, however, therefore the presentation must, though the themes may remain the same. The tragic aspects of 'Romeo and Juliet' will always lie in their thwarted love, and the humour of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' will always lie with the mechanicals and Puck's mischievous actions, regardless of their presentation.

Even in a production such as the Royal Shakespeare Company's 'Romeo and Juliet' when directed by Terry Hands which focussed so pointedly on violence and brutality the tragic theme remained. It can therefore be concluded that Shakespeare's plays are universal despite the fact that their presentation depends on modern interpretation to make them relevant.

### 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.

### General Comments

This was the least popular question discussed. *Vinegar Tom* and *Cloud Nine* were the plays most commonly referred to followed by *Feu*. *Serious Money* was the least referred to play in response to both the Churchill questions.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Discussed a range of writing processes such as collaboration with other writers, workshopping ideas with actors in the company, use of improvisation, research and use of oral history and actual experiences of people and actors.
- Could make specific connections of the writing processes to the content, style and performances of two of Churchill's plays.
- Were able to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the importance of Churchill's writing process to the forms her plays and performances took, and to show a perceptive understanding of the relationship of the process to the meanings of the texts in performance.
- Described examples of connections between process and the plays, namely the oral history and research into the lives of women in the Feus, the historical research into witchcraft for *Vinegar Tom*, the collaboration with the feminist women's theatre company Monstrous Regiment for *Vinegar Tom*, and the exploration of actors experiences and values in preparation for roles in *Cloud Nine* with the Joint Stock Company.
- Demonstrated an understanding of the concepts of content, style and performances.
- Used examples and quotations effectively to support arguments and points of view.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Showed understanding of Churchill's intent in both plays and the society to which each was directed.
- Listed the issues raised in each play and the effect on the characters.
- Discussed some techniques and were able to explain how they would appear to the audience.
- Used some examples of the techniques to exemplify these points, but were unable to see beyond one or two specific techniques.
- Were unable to 'visualise' the plays in production.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Retold the story, concentrating on plot rather than the characters and the society.
- Became confused about issues and characters (especially when discussing *Cloud Nine*).
- Were unable to discuss techniques.

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.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Addressed the question confidently because of their sound knowledge of the plays and the issues in society that they questioned.
- Were able to 'see' the plays in performance and comment on their effect on the audience as well as the situations they were depicting.
- Discussed all the techniques in both plays studied, realising them as theatrical techniques meant to confront the audience and raise awareness.
- Wrote clearly and concisely, using relevant quotations and examples.
- Discussed the concepts raised in the question and focused on the ways in which Churchill's theatrical techniques explored the impact of society on individual characters.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Named the various theatre companies with which Churchill collaborated and mentioned some other writing processes.
- Discussed the content, style and performance of two of the plays in reasonable detail and demonstrated an understanding of the plays' intentions and concerns.
- Lacked the ability to make specific and appropriate connections between Churchill's writing processes and the ways in which these directly affected the content, style and performance of her plays.
- Were able to discuss 'content and performance' well but were less able to address the concept of 'style'.
- Were able to use some examples and quotations to support their points of view.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Ignored the writing processes altogether or made only generalised reference to collaborations.
- Comprised details of the performances of the plays especially in relation to *Cloud Nine*.
- Concentrated on the 'content' of the plays and did not address 'style' and 'performance'.
- Did not consider two plays in a balanced way.
- Retold the 'stories' of the plays or wrote long descriptions of each of the characters unrelated to the question.

### 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.

### General Comments

Question (a) was answered by a minority of candidates. Students who had studied Greek Theatre experientially and who had explored the performance conventions and staging as part of their exploration of the texts specifically were able to address either question in more appropriate ways.

### Strong Candidates

- Were able to link festival context with the rituals in each play and relate these to the content because of their background knowledge of Greek theatrical conventions.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the conventions of Greek staging and were able to relate this to the content and ritual in each play.
- Could visualise performances and discuss the effect on the audience.
- Used examples and quotations effectively to demonstrate the importance of ritual.
- Were able to link the religious significance of the meanings of the plays with the performance rituals.

### Middle-range Candidates

- Showed a sound knowledge of the content of plays and some of the performance conventions.
- Tended to deal with performance conventions separately and were unable to link these to the specific plays in production.
- Found difficulty in discussing the religious rituals and linking them to the festival context.
- Used some examples and quotations to expand points discussed.

### Weaker Candidates

- Simply retold the stories of the plays.
- Wrote generally about things they had learnt about Greek performance conventions but were unable to relate these to the question.
- Confused religious meanings with rituals.



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*?

### General Comments

This question lent itself to re-telling the stories of the plays.

### Strong Candidates

- Addressed both the ‘destructive consequences of human action’ and the performance conventions in a clear, ordered essay.
- Used examples from both plays effectively to explain the impact of one decision on another, and the consequences of these decisions on other characters in the plays.
- Could debate the different perspectives between the authority of humans and the power of the gods, and what is due to both in human actions.
- Addressed the impact on the audience of performance conventions such as the masks, the mechane, the choral odes and the debating style of ‘stychomythia’ the dancing (movement) of the chorus and costume changes (eg. Plentheus dressed as a woman).

### Middle-range Candidates

- Tended to write two essays, one on the content of each play, another on conventions, but were not able to link them effectively.
- Wrote more about one play than the other, leading to a lack of balance.
- Were unable to use examples to support points of view.
- Could not structure opinions into a cohesive form.

### Weaker Candidates

- Simply retold the stories, often becoming confused about characters and their actions.
- Did not attempt to address performance conventions.

### 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*.

## General Comments

Most students preferred the second question and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* appeared to be the more popular of the two Shakespearean productions.

## Strong Candidates

- Demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the concepts of actual experience and illusion in Brook's productions, and were able to explain how this related to Brook's directorial concepts and processes including the rehearsal process.
- Addressed the use of actual experiences in the theatre space in Brook's productions and could illustrate their effects on the audience.
- Were able to compare the macabre effects in *Marat/Sade* with the playfulness of the circus skills in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, or discuss the similarities of the macabre effects in *Marat/Sade* and *King Lear*.
- Wrote clearly and coherently, using specific examples.
- Were able to integrate their discussion with the actual experiences and illusions and the effects they achieved.

## Middle-range Candidates

- Had a good understanding of Brook's productions, but found difficulty linking these to 'experiences and illusions'.
- Discussed Brook's drawing upon experiences and illusions but could not articulate their specific effects.
- Described the productions without direct linkage to the question.

## Weaker Candidates

- Simply retold the story of the plays without relating to experiences or illusions.
- Appeared to be writing prepared responses which did not refer to the question.
- Included long discussions about influences on Brook, eg. Artaud and Brecht, which were not relevant to the question.

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*.

### Strong Candidates

- Wrote sophisticated responses linking the two productions with Brook's philosophies and concepts.
- Challenged the fact that some of the 'theatrical means' were by no means simple, eg. requiring actors to learn complicated circus skills in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- Were able to explain the depth of impact of the theatrical experiences on the audience.
- Used detailed and perceptive examples to support opinions.

### Middle-range Candidates

- Concentrated on describing the productions rather than explaining how the 'theatrical means' led to 'rich theatrical experiences'.
- Were unable to integrate their knowledge of such things as the influence of Artaud and Brecht on Brook's theatrical techniques into a discussion question.
- Focused on one play more than the other limiting their answers.
- Were able to use some examples to illustrate opinions.

### Weaker Candidates

- Described some moments from the productions, without reference to the question.

### Sample of an 'A' response – Question 11 (b)

As a director, Peter Brook had discovered the fundamental question 'Why theatre at all?'. He believed the world had become desensitised and, therefore, aimed to provide them with rich theatrical experiences that brought back the reason for theatre. This reason was not the effects but, through simple theatrical means and understanding, the importance of the actor, he created productions that spoke to the audience on a level above words and engaged them entirely. Such productions include his 1964 production of the 'Marat/Sade' and 1962 performance of 'King Lear'.

In his production of Peter Weiss' play, 'The Marat/Sade', Peter Brook engaged audiences through his simplistic use of theatrical techniques.

His stage was not filled with elaborate sets. The set, designed by Sally Jacobs, of the bathhouse of the 1808 Asylum of Charenton, was simple, yet enhanced his production to create a rich theatrical experience. Complete with steam, flowing water, bars, chains, benches, 'the dance of the white sheets (and) white walls that dwarfed the human figure' (Reeves), her set design was engaging. Along with this simple setting was the effective, yet simple lighting design. Flooding the entire theatre with bright lights gave the effect of the gas chambers and stripped the audience of their dignity as they were used to the safety of the darkened auditorium. In Act Two (and in complete contrast), the theatre was left in total darkness, lit only by gas burners on stage.

The simple theatrical device was more engaging and created, for the audience, a far more rich theatrical experience.

Instead of focussing on effects to engage the audience and shock them – '(shocks) wear off' (Brook) – Brook worked only with highly skilled and trained actors. Many of Brook's theatrical techniques (that created tension, focus, mystery, etc) were created by his actors that played mumbling, slobbering patients (some in straight jackets and chains). Such actors/characters engaged the audience as they witnessed them being beaten by male nurses and nuns – 'Angels of Brutality' – thus making them question their beliefs in theatre, 'patients rehabilitation' and themselves. Through such images he forced them to 'pull (themselves) up by (their) own

hair, turn (themselves) inside out and see the whole world with fresh eyes’.

The actors/patients created tension through the rioting where the audience feared for their safety. They brought focus to the argument between Marat and the Marquis de Sade when the repeated movements or sounds (an example is through their clicking and finger guillotines – a powerful and effective image and technique) and, similarly, created tension also, as in ‘De Sade is whipped’ through their whistling and expelling of air – images that enhance the theatre experience.

Although Weiss’ script was well-written and engaging on its own, Brook felt the incorporation of song and bright coloured characters – the four singers – would only add to the theatrical experience for the audience.

This incorporation of song and movement is another device Brook used as a simple way of speaking to the audience. The contrast of ‘lively marching tunes’ against the horrific words – ‘Charlotte smell the deads gangrene and the singing guillotine’ – added humor, but also was quite offensive and shocking for the audience.

Another effective and engaging use of contrast was the clown-like, aristocrat imitators – (4 singers) to the dirty patients who acted out scenes from the French Revolution of 1793. This device, along with the interruption of the death of Marat by Corday (played by a patient with melancholia) using placards and a song about the ‘Fifteen glorious years’ of rape, murder and ‘shortage of wheat’ was also engaging and humorous adding to Brook’s rich theatrical experience through his 1964 production of ‘The Marat/Sade’.

Using the same techniques, but with a more famous script, is Brook’s 1962 production of Shakespeare’s ‘King Lear’.

As in ‘The Marat/Sade’, Brook did not use elaborate settings as he wanted the ‘audience to work for themselves’. The setting of ‘King Lear’ was a ‘flat white setting incorporating Brecht and Oriental theatre, from which ponderous objects dangle’ as described by Kenneth Tynan.

Similarly, too, was the lighting. Described as using ‘bright white even during the storm’ (Tynan) Brook kept it simple even leaving on the stage lights throughout interval through which the action continued – newly-blinded Gloucester gropes his way off stage, as servants tidied and rearranged the furniture.

This setting and effective use of lights was different and quite shocking for the audience but only enhancing their experience.

Using (again) only highly-skilled actors to create violence and powerful images on stage, Brook enriched these theatre productions.

The brutal and violent deaths of Goneril, Regan and Oswald were engaging for the image they left on the stage and the brutality and barbaricness of the deaths. Yet for Brook it was the hanging of Cordelia that impacted him – ‘There are no words... just that great howl.’ Such images left by the actors were more effective for the audience than any technical effects could ever be.

Other such images are when Lear and Gloucester cling to each other in the wastelands, the image of Naked Tom as the ‘unaccommodated man’ and Tom and Lear on the Clifftop – providing more richness to the theatrical experiences through Brook’s very simple theatrical techniques.

Brook once stated ‘In a good play there are many messages sent out (of information or feeling) while in a poor play the impressions are well spaced out’.

It is through his engaging and effective use of simple theatrical devices, such as the actor, that makes him one of the most influential and important directors of today’. (Reeves/Hunt)

## 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.

### General Comments

The majority of candidates chose the first question. It would appear that the reference to 'the Italian Theatre tradition' in the second question deterred students from attacking the question. The majority of candidates had studied 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist' and 'Can't Pay! Won't Pay!' rather than 'Mistero Buffo' and 'Trumpets and Raspberries'.

### Strong Candidates

- Demonstrated a detailed understanding of the plays and Fo's intent and were able to use these to expand and explain the statement and the question.
- Discussed the issue of character and situation and their importance in Fo's theatre.
- Used pertinent examples to explain and illustrate political and comic effects and were able to relate these to the characters in the situations.
- Used examples, like the Maniac as an unconventional character who triggered the conventional characters into unusual situations.
- Worked all of the elements of the question into a cohesive, well structured response that read fluently.

### Middle-range Candidates

- Addressed the question successfully using some examples and quotations to support opinions.
- Concentrated on either political or comic effects, but were not able to refer to both effectively in framing their responses.
- Had some understanding of Fo's practices and techniques, and attempted to relate this to the juxtaposition of 'characters' and 'situations'.
- Sometimes concentrated on descriptions of the characters rather than the 'characters in situations'.

### Weaker Candidates

- Described the situations or the characters but were unable to link them or relate them to the question.
- Became entangled in descriptions of situations that became re-telling of the plot.

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.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Were informed about the background to the Italian theatre tradition, tracing its history through classical Roman theatre, Medieval theatre and the role of the ‘guillare’ (‘jongleur’), Commedia dell’arte and masque, down to the work of the playwrights such as Pirandello, and the tradition of Italian theatre reflecting subversion and rebellion – and were able to use this to discuss the statement.
- Discussed and evaluated the importance of the role of the performer versus the role of the writer of the text in the work of Dario Fo.
- Cited the processes that Fo used in the development of his works, concentrating on his role as a performer and improviser.
- Were able to discuss Fo as a writer for performers by using examples such as his language and pace and its effect upon performer and audience.
- Discussed Fo’s continual updating and changing of his plays in performance.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Had a sound knowledge of the plays but found it difficult to manipulate the material they had studied to answer the question.
- Discussed Fo’s philosophies and techniques in detail, but did not use sufficient reference to the plays, or link this to the issue of the question.
- Did not address the first part of the statement (ie, the Italian theatre tradition).
- Were unable to structure their responses to answer the question.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Did not understand the links demanded by the question.
- Resorted to retelling the story or describing particular scenes.

## Sample of an 'A' response – Question 12 (b)

Dario Fo uses situations to create comedy and reveal his political convictions, but the characters he creates can be just as integral to the purpose of the play. This is so for 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist' and 'Trumpets and Raspberries', where the use of the characters of the maniac and Agnelli respectively, the comedy and political undertones are effectively conveyed. Quite a major component of these plays, however does rely on situations and situational comedy for its momentum.

In 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist', the maniac is the chief device of farce and satire, and even slapstick. The maniac was created from classical origins from the template of the Jongleur. This character would hide behind the farcical, nonsensical mask of a fool and proceed to make scathing, satirical attacks on authority figures, with this mask as his protection. The projection of the mask makes him a device of comedy, while he is also able to reveal Fo's political convictions.

Through the maniac, Fo satirises the police. In the opening scene, the maniac burns papers in a police station which is suggestive of the reputation of the Italian Police for burning files and manipulating or destroying evidence. The combination of farce and satire in this character again reveals a great degree of incompetence in the police structure, and again the manipulation, when he convinces the police to rewrite their statement again. The re-enactment of the events surrounding the anarchist's death brought out huge discrepancies, showing the dishonesty which is present in the system.

The system is also revealed to be violent through slapstick, a situational form of comedy which is largely driven on by the maniac. The maniac slaps and kicks the police and has them falling over each other on numerous occasions, and despite being ridiculous, this stage violence echoes the violence inherent in the system. Through the case of the anarchist, the police justify their violent actions by stating that 'its just one of the tricks of the trade we police use to get our prisoner to confess', as though it were acceptable. The maniac then acts as the social voice saying 'that these methods' are cruel and unjust. Through the maniac this form of comedy and political expression is achieved, through a character both of Fo's ambitious are satisfied.

Finally in 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist', the maniac, through another situational device, mistaken identity. Fo creates the dramatic irony that he uses to satirise the class system. The dramatic irony comes when the audience knows that the judge to whom the police are cowering is really the maniac, which creates the humour. Through this mistaken identity, someone, who comes of a class lower than the police officials in both wealth and status is able to adopt a power position on stage and by manipulating and ridiculing his social superior, creates a great shift in the power dynamics of the scene. This shift shows the audience how ludicrous the class system is, that it is built on ignorance and can be infiltrated by a man who is 'certified' as crazy.

The class system is ridiculed again in 'Trumpets and Raspberries' again through a character, Agnelli, who, rather than rise through the class system because of mistaken identity, falls right to the bottom of it. Agnelli is a business tycoon and profiteer of the oppressed working class and therefore capitalism, is suddenly swallowed up by it when he is given the name and face of the production line worker who saved his life, Antonio. Despite all of his business power, without his face and his memory he cannot be believed to be Agnelli. Fo uses a shift in power plays as well in that Antonio is aware of what is transpiring and in turn has the power of knowledge, and Agnelli who is mystified as to recent events is powerless. Through this situational humour, Fo creates the irony that Antonio's class, the working class is founded on ignorance, with the bourgeois claiming that if they don't educate the working class, they will not challenge authority. Fo has placed this character in a situation such that he can ridicule the capitalist regimes that he hates.

Fo also ridicules the police as well as doctors in 'Trumpets and Raspberries', which he does through situation, independent of character involvement. These characters are based entirely on farce, with the intention of revealing incompetence within power structures. Fo writes the doctor obsessed with suppositories, with Agnelli having suppositories for his coffee. The doctors with the medical capabilities to identify Agnelli through blood and tissue testing rely on the work of an insane spouse, who would claim any man as her husband so she could have one again. They then proceed after this identification to reconstruct the face of Antonio on Agnelli destroying the usual equation of plastic surgery with a rise in social status (which Fo also believes ridicules and so satirises).

Finally the doctor is able to be quoted to say 'Amputation is my favourite', which subtly introduces the idea of institutionalised violence with authority figures suggested to be sadists.

The police are to be seen in quite the same way, with police brutality explored again in 'Trumpets and Raspberries', when they suggest that they would like to 'have one of these gadgets down at the nick', in reference to the meat grinder. They use the meat grinder as an implement of torture to persuade Antonio to confess to terrorism. This highly confronting image echoes the police brutality that actually exists when they suggest they have not so 'sophisticated methods' at the police station as the meat grinder for interrogation.

Fo uses both conventional characters, such as Agnelli and unconventional characters, the maniac, in unusual situations to create humour and reveal his political convictions. While often it is these situations which drive the comedy and politics, as in 'Trumpets and Raspberries', the character can be the primary driving force also as in *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*. Both characters and situations together create farce, satire and slapstick which reveals Fo's loathing of capitalism, power structures and the class system.

### **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.

### **General Comments**

The majority of candidates preferred the second question. Responses to part (a) showed some confusion between Boal's games and exercises and the forms of Theatre of the Oppressed.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Were able to integrate both games and exercises along with forms of Theatre of the Oppressed in a lucid argument which demonstrated a thorough understanding of all components of Boal's work.
- Used the quotation to inform their discussion of the games and exercises.
- Showed their understanding of the games and exercises in preparing participants, both actors and non-actors, to engage in forms of Theatre of the Oppressed.
- Were able to link the 'games and exercises' to the 'theory' and the 'practice' of the Theatre of the Oppressed, using specific examples.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Addressed the theory and practice of Theatre of the Oppressed without referring to games and exercises.
- Appeared to write prepared essays on the forms of Theatre of the Oppressed, thus limiting their discussion of the question.
- Made little or no reference to the quotation in framing their response.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Recounted large amounts of information without being able to relate it to the question.
- Had only basic understanding of either the games or the theory and practice of 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?

### **Strong Candidates**

- Presented a logical, coherent discussion of the similarities and differences in Boal's ways of dealing with political and personal oppression, using detailed and relevant examples.
- Demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the philosophies underpinning Boal's work, and were able to use this effectively in presenting their opinions.
- Identified forms of political oppression that were serious and universal, such as political tyranny and economic corruption, and balanced these with reference to examples of personal oppressions such as those in family relationships.
- Used the quotation to inform their response, particularly with reference to the concept of theatre's role as a force for change.
- Challenged the simplistic division between 'personal' and 'political' and could reason some dimensions of personal oppression as political.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Discussed Boal's philosophy in general.
- Tended to discuss political oppression in detail, with little reference to personal oppression or vice versa.
- Addressed similarities but could not discuss differences in Boal's approach to political and personal oppression.
- Were unable to use the material they had learnt about forms of Theatre of the Oppressed to deal with the wording of the question.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Merely recalled some information about forms of Theatre of the Oppressed.
- Listed some of Boal's practices without relating them to the question.
- Had no grasp of Boal's philosophy.

## Sample of an 'A' response – Question 13 (b)

Augusto Boal's revolutionary theatrical style 'Theatre of the Oppressed' is fundamentally rooted in the belief that 'theatre can be a weapon for social change'.

Boal's liberating theatrical style was born from his own experiences of oppression and injustice under the military ruling authorities in Brazil. Boal observed that theatre played a very poor role in emancipating the peasants from the physical and emotional oppression that was created as a result of living under dictatorship. Boal, thus, created 'Theatre of the Oppressed' which was an antimodel to the conventional Aristotelian theatrical structure established in the 5th century BC. Within this model, theatre was a cathartic experience and the fundamental role of theatre was to pursue antisocial behaviour. Boal viewed the model as oppressed and created his antimodel as fundamentally rooted in the tradition of theatre and ritual as being created for and by the people.

Theatre of the Oppressed is essentially a collection of exercises and ideologies that have the power to charge oppressed peasants with the power to control their oppression and awaken to the fact that 'oppression only exists because the individual allows it to sustain and manifest'.

Political and personal oppression are pivotal to Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed and many similarities and differences exist in the way in which he deals with the alleviation of these oppressions. Personal and political are two quite different. Whilst they may be inextricably linked, Boal addresses both with the same amount of vigour and tenacity.

Personal oppression is what Boal terms as 'cop in the head' whereby 'authoritarianism has the power to penetrate the unconscious. This oppression is not only limited to oppressed countries, but countries such as France, England wherein unemployment can compel individuals to fear the consequences of this challenge. Boal addresses 'cop in the head' through his forum and image theatre styles which enable the individual to objectively debate and construct positive steps towards avoiding unemployment or oppression or tolerating the consequences.

Through image and forum theatre Boal enables political and personal oppression to be addressed and alleviated. Whilst solutions may not always be obtained, Boal believes in the enlightening effect of debate and believes that 'a debate is more important than solution'. The power of Boal's liberating style lies in its power to not only alleviate oppression, but also in its capacity to acquaint the oppressors with the injustice of their opinions and ideals. This was most notably revealed in an image theatre experience Boal experienced revolving around the issue of ageism. The real image presented was one of inactivity, waiting to die. In the ideal image, the spect-actors presenting the old as being similarly in a state of inactivity, but being helped by others to be dressed and bathed. In the image of possible transition the spect-actors realised the oppressive nature of their ideas and changed the ideal image to one that presented the aged in a state of activity. This also initiates the notion of metaxes, holding two worlds in one same time.

Thus, this image theatre experience when revolving around the fundamental issue of politics could have the same effect and result in the transformation of society. In 13 instances Boal has been successful, making the needs of the oppressed legislation.

The success of Boal's liberating style is rooted in the fundamental belief in humanity's ability to change. Boal achieves this on a personal level through the games and exercises. This differs from his approach to political oppression which requires group therapy and active group involvement. In the games and exercises Boal 'resensitises' the five senses which he believes are desensitised through oppression. The five senses are inextricably linked and Boal focuses on alleviating the oppression of desensitised senses through his 'gamercises' which connects the individual holistically to body, mind and spirit, as Boal believes that the body is an important expression and emitter of emotions. These exercises also lead to forum theatre experiences. The gamercises are important warm ups to forum theatre experiences.

In contrast, forum theatre is an important style through which Boal addresses political oppression. As with image theatre, the oppressor can be awakened to the oppressive nature of their ideals. Forum theatre is a verbal experience, contrasting image which is based upon body sculpting and silent communication. The spect-actor is an important participant in forum theatre and is encouraged to participate actively in developing and creating solutions.

On a personal level, the spect-actor is a most important means through which Boal addresses personal oppression as he enables the individual to be responsible for their own theatre experience and in charge of their own liberating process. The individual is transformed from the spectator to the spect-actor and given the power to change personal and political oppression.

In both personal and political oppression, Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed' successfully changes the way in which individuals perceive the barriers these forces pose on the individual. Whether it be through gamercises, image or forum theatre change evolves. It is sympathy for the plight of others and belief in humanities ability to change that has ensured 'Theatre of the Oppressed' exists worldwide and has become a universal language.

### **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.

### **General Comments**

This was the most popular topic in Section II, with even preference for both questions. The questions allowed the stronger candidates to demonstrate their more sophisticated understanding of Commedia dell'arte and to take a position on the statements.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Showed a sophisticated knowledge of the conventions of Commedia dell'arte and the way each of these contributes to the life of the performance.
- Substantiated their position with detailed and relevant examples.
- Could discuss different uses of 'lazzi' and could define the nature of 'lazzi'.
- Covered a wide variety of conventions such as mask, physicalisation of characters, costumes, stock characters, regional differences, the function of scenario, actor/audience interaction.
- Considered the meaning of the word 'flawed' in the statement and took a position which they substantiated throughout the essay.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Discussed conventions without taking a position based on the word 'flawed' used in the statement.
- Used some examples of 'lazzi' and other conventions and how they were used in performance.
- Described the stock characters often using unnecessary and irrelevant detail.

### **Weaker Candidates:**

- Did not know the meaning of the word 'lazzi' or confused it with 'zanni'.
- Appeared to use prepared descriptions of stock characters that they were not able to relate to the question.

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*.

### **Strong Candidates**

- Presented well informed discussions of the range of stock elements and were able to indicate the balance between 'prepared' and 'improvised' elements in each, eg. described the stock 'zanni' character types then explained how they could improvise according to the situation in interacting with another character or in response to interaction from the audience.
- Discussed the ways in which performances were tailored to particular audiences and specific regional contexts, and were able to relate this to the 'stock' and 'improvised' elements.
- Discussed the nature and makeup of the companies, citing roles and the traditional handing on of roles.
- Structured their responses using arguments and examples that followed coherently and cohesively.

### **Middle-range Candidates**

- Discussed the stock elements and the use of improvisation but were not able to address the balance between them.
- Described the stock characters in irrelevant detail that confused the position that they had taken.
- Described a limited selection of stock elements restricting the range of their response.
- Did not address the phrase in the statement 'give the impression of on stage improvisation'.

### **Weaker Candidates**

- Merely described stock characters.
- Appeared to use prepared answers which did not address the question.
- Confused characters and terms.

## Sample of an 'A' response Question 14 (a)

The use of 'lazzi' in Commedia dell'arte gave life and spontaneity to each performance, creating humour in its crudity and ridiculousness however does not suggest that the other conventions of commedia dell'arte were flawed. Such conventions as exaggerated and unusual masks, corresponding costumes exaggerated movements, all contributed to the characters being easily identifiable as a comical representation of a particular type of personality within society. The fact that scenarios were only skeletally scripted also added spontaneity, and the themes and issues such as greed, lust and betrayal, as well as master/servant relationships and father/child relationship exhibit the fact that Commedia dell'arte conventions were in no way flawed.

Lazzi were inserted into the main action of the scenarios to recapture the audiences attention if it was waning, were inserted if they held a special significance for the audience of a particular town. The lazzi were popular and audiences sometimes came to watch a commedia performance just for the lazzi. Crude lazzis such as the 'Lazzi of the Chamber Pot' and 'Lazzi of the Enema' were favourites because there were varieties of these. Lazzi of the Enema could involve Arlecchino giving an enema to his master's horse whilst his master was on it, or a doctor could perform an enema leaving Arlecchino pregnant. Other lazzi such as 'Lazzi of Nightfall' involved the situational ridiculous – characters stumbling around in the dark bumping into each other, objects, putting their hands down peoples pants or blouses and mistaken conversations. Acrobatic lazzi such as 'Lazzi of the Statue' involved Arlecchino playing tricks on other characters and pretending to be a statue when they turned around to see who did the trick. Therefore lazzi were important because they added situational, sexual and sadistic and acrobatic humour to the scenarios and appealed to the audiences of the 16th and 17th centuries who came to view performances of Commedia dell'arte.

Although lazzi were an integral part of the commedia conventions, other conventions such as characteristic and unusual masks and costumes were used to create highly entertaining characters and represent types of personalities within society. The masks especially held vital clues to the type of characters in the scenarios. Pantalone – the epitomy of greed, lust and lechery was characterised by a long hooked nose and deep dark shadows in the eye sockets to show his shifty untrustworthy personality. Il Dottore's half mask exhibiting reddened cheeks beneath it showed the characters fondness for the bottle thus adding to his character's personality – a self important bore who talks of nothing but trivialities and 'baloney'. The Lover's masks were makeup as they did not wear masks as such. Characterised by fashionable dress, thickly painted faces, mascara and beauty spots, their makeup and costume signified to the masses of lower class audiences that they were self absorbed, flighty, vain and in love with themselves primarily. Thus an important convention in Commedia dell'arte was that of mask use and corresponding costume.

Movement, another vital convention kept the audience amused and entertained as zanni moved in exaggerated and comical fashion, the lovers glided in balletic, flighty ways and characters such as Pantalone who fell on his back like a beetle and could not right himself, and Il Dottore who walked in figures-of-eight, all created a stronger characterisation through movement.

Thus relationships in Commedia dell'arte were made stronger through strong characterisation of significant types of people in society – the master, the lover and the servant.

Relationships between master and servant appealed to the masses of audiences as Commedia's prime audience were the oppressed lower class who felt an affiliation with the servants and delighted in the humiliation and cruelty towards the masters. In the scenario of 'The Dentist' the audience would have felt anger towards Pantalone for beating Pedrolino and would have delighted in Pedrolino's plan to trick Pantalone. In 'The Dentist' Pantalone receives his due punishment by having four perfectly good teeth – which he has been told are rotten, causing bad breath – plucked out by a dentist – who is Arlecchino in disguise. Thus relationship between master/servant appealed to the masses and formed a vital convention. Similarly the father/child relationship would have appealed to the masses as the audiences were oppressed and felt the authority of their masters/patriarchal figures harshly and therefore would have sympathised with Oratio in 'The Dentist' who had no choice and was forced to do as his father Pantalone insisted on – to go away on a ship. Thus relationships form an important convention of Commedia dell'arte and show that other conventions besides the lazzi, were not flawed.

Thematic concerns such as greed, love and betrayal were universal and would have been an important convention of Commedia. Greed – epitomised by Pantalone and Il Dottore, love epitomised by Isabella,

Flaminia and Oratio, and betrayal and trickery performed by zanni such as Pedrolino, Pantalone and Arlecchino all engaged the audiences who were easily able to relate to such emotions and issues.

Another important convention in Commedia dell'arte was its adaptability and staging.

Performed in town squares and markets as well as courts, the stages of Commedia dell'arte performances had to be simple and easily adaptable and mobile in order to cater to the style of theatre commedia presented.

As a touring style of theatre, props were minimal, staging simple and easily erected and all materials were able to be packed away for touring. This meant that commedia was adaptable to almost any locale – indoors or outdoors. Thus the adaptability added to the success for Commedia dell'arte, proving an important convention.

Scenarios although mapped out in plot beginning and plot ending were for the most part improvised as actors – who were the essential part of commedia dell'arte – had to be alert and quick witted. 'Actors had to marry their dialogue to that of another actors.' This quote exhibits the fact that the action and dialogue was primarily improvised and spontaneous (apart from the inserts of poetry of the Lovers and the 'Genericci' – themes and speeches familiar and significant to a certain character). Thus Commedia dell'arte's scenarios formed another important convention.

Although lazzi were very popular, and amused and entertained Commedia dell'artes audiences with crude sexual and sadistic situational and acrobatic humour, lazzi were not the only successful conventions of Commedia dell'arte.

Conventions such as mask use, costume, exaggerated movements, thematic concerns, skeletally scripted scenarios, relationships between characters and adaptability of the staging proves that these conventions were not flawed but in fact contributed largely to the success and vitality of Commedia dell'arte performances.

## **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 from two schools and the State Drama Company 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 and included in this report.

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.

For the first time in 1998 a team of two markers was appointed to observe that parity across all areas of the HSC Drama Examination process was ensured. A report was prepared by these markers which helped in the preparation of the HSC Examination Report for Drama in 1998.

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. Students from the groups presenting in the pilot marking process volunteered to be marked following similar procedure as the group presentation pilot marking. Criteria for the marking of individual project performance has also been included.

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.

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