



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

**HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION**

**2000**

**DRAMA**

**2 UNIT**

*(40 Marks)*

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

**DIRECTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

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

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

(20 Marks)

Attempt ONE question.

All questions are of equal value.

**QUESTION 1 Contemporary Aboriginal Theatre**

EITHER

- (a) Discuss how Aboriginal playwrights have used dramatic forms and conventions to present images of the extended family (parents, children, grandparents, uncles, aunts) on the stage.

Include in your response, the effect of presenting these images of the family.

In your answer, refer to at least TWO of the plays set for study.

OR

- (b) Discuss the dramatic forms and performance styles that Aboriginal playwrights have used to comment on racist institutions, attitudes and actions in the contemporary social context.

In your answer, refer to at least TWO of the plays set for study.

Texts set for study:

Roger Bennett, *Funerals and Circuses*  
Jimmy Chi and Kuckles, *Bran Nue Dae*  
Jack Davis, *No Sugar*  
Robert J Merritt, *The Cakeman*

**QUESTION 2 Theatre in Education**

EITHER

- (a) Theatre in Education usually requires the actors to relate with their young audiences in a way that is different from mainstream theatre; they are not only acting but teaching.

To what extent is this true of at least TWO of the plays set for study?

OR

- (b) Theatre in Education is not written for an adult audience; in its content, characters and dramatic style it is clearly targeting children.

Do you agree? Justify your answer, referring to at least TWO of the plays set for study.

Texts set for study:

Manuel Aston, *Fossils*  
Nick Enright, *A Property of the Clan*  
David Holman, *The Small Poppies*  
Peta Murray, *Spitting Chips*

**QUESTION 3 Theatre in Contemporary Australian Society**

EITHER

- (a) 'A theatre company without its classics is like a person without a memory.'

Does this idea reflect the practice of at least TWO of the theatre organisations you have studied?

In your answer, refer to the decisions that these companies have made in an attempt to provide an attractive balance of old and new plays.

OR

- (b) Discuss, for at least TWO theatre companies, the relationship between their artistic aims and the spaces where they choose to perform.

**QUESTION 4 The New Wave in Australian Theatre 1969–1974**

EITHER

- (a) The plays of the New Wave were firmly focussed on Australia. In performance style, as well as content, they were primarily addressing an Australian audience.

What was specifically Australian about the performance style of the New Wave plays?

In your answer, refer to at least TWO of the plays set for study.

OR

- (b) The New Wave theatre explored the actor-audience relationship in new spaces equally as much as it explored new ideas and issues.

Discuss this statement, with reference to the performance conditions and social context in 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*

**QUESTION 5 Australian Puppet Theatre**

EITHER

- (a) Performers breathe life into objects and puppets, creating a magical world of fiction on stage.

With reference to this statement and Figure 1, explain how the idea of animation is central to puppet theatre.



Photo © Handspan Visual Theatre Ltd

FIG. 1

OR

- (b) Puppets magnify and simplify human needs and actions.

Discuss this statement with reference to performances of the companies you have studied.

**QUESTION 6 Louis Nowra**

EITHER

- (a) Nowra's plays often contrast older and newer inhabitants of a country or place.

Discuss how and why these images of traditional and new inhabitants are shown on stage in at least TWO of the plays set for study.

OR

- (b) Characters in Nowra's plays, through their appearance or actions, often draw attention to their bodies.

Discuss the dramatic effect, on stage, of this emphasis on the characters' bodies in at least TWO of the plays set for study.

Texts set for study:

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

**QUESTION 7 Australian Women's Theatre**

EITHER

- (a) Discuss how at least TWO of the plays set for study use dramatic forms and conventions to stage a distinctively female point of view.

OR

- (b) To what extent do women playwrights allow female characters and actors to behave in ways that challenge the audience's expectations of what a woman is and does?

In your answer, refer to at least TWO of the plays set for study.

Texts set for study:

Eva Johnson, *Murras*  
 Dorothy Hewett, *The Chapel Perilous*  
 Tes Lyssiotis, *The Forty Lounge Cafe*  
 Suzanne Spinner, *Running Up a Dress*

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

(20 Marks)

Attempt ONE question.

All questions are of equal value.

**QUESTION 8 Shakespeare in Performance**

EITHER

- (a) A script is a mere skeleton; performance puts flesh on the bones.

Discuss how a design concept fleshes out a Shakespeare text in performance. Refer to the work of actors, the mise en scène, and the themes and values of the play.

In your answer, refer to TWO of the plays set for study.

OR

- (b) What was socially acceptable in Shakespeare's time is sometimes less acceptable today.

Discuss how modern productions of Shakespeare's plays might deal with controversial themes and values that are difficult for today's audience.

In your answer, refer to TWO of the plays set for study.

Texts set for study:

*The Taming of the Shrew*

*Romeo and Juliet*

*The Merchant of Venice*

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*

**QUESTION 9 Theatre of the Absurd**

EITHER

- (a) 'Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!'

In the absence of conventional dramatic action, what techniques do Absurdist playwrights use to keep their audiences' attention?

In your answer, refer to *Waiting for Godot* and TWO of the other plays set for study.

OR

- (b) 'The world is a mess. To find a form that accommodates that mess is the task of the playwright and actor.'

Discuss, with reference to *Waiting for Godot* and TWO of the other plays set for study.

Texts set for study:

Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

Edward Albee, *Zoo Story*

Eugene Ionesco, *The Bald Prima Donna*

Harold Pinter, *The Dumb Waiter*

Arthur Adamov, *Professor Taranne*



**QUESTION 10 Medieval English Cycle Plays**

EITHER

- (a) Medieval theatre reflects the contributions of the street performer as much as it represents the values of the church.

Discuss how and why stories from the Biblical tradition were adapted for the medieval theatre to make them suitable for performance.

In your answer, refer to the plays set for study.

OR

- (b) Medieval audiences saw the Cycle plays as one continuous sequence during a day.

Discuss how the staging and dramatic forms and conventions of the separate episodes linked them into a single theatrical event.

In your answer, refer to the plays set for study.

Texts set for study:

*The Creation, and the Fall of Lucifer*

*Noah's Flood*

*The Second Shepherd's Play*

*Herod the Great*

*The Crucifixion*

*The Judgement*

**QUESTION 11 Peter Brook**

EITHER

- (a) How are the aims of the Centre International des Recherches Théâtrales reflected in the production of *The Mahabharata*?

In your answer, refer to Brook's selection of this particular subject and its adaptation to the stage.

OR

- (b) Peter Brook's production of *The Mahabharata* reflects his theories of theatre and his personal vision of directing; it was only incidentally a dramatisation of the Indian epic.

Discuss.

**QUESTION 12 Dario Fo**

EITHER

- (a) 'Laughter dismantles power.'

Explain how Fo uses theatre to generate laughter, and how this works as a political weapon to undermine authority.

In your answer, refer to at least TWO of the plays set for study.

OR

- (b) Dario Fo's plays generally construct characters which require Fo's own skills to perform them: clown, political critic, stand-up comedian, quick-change artist, and satirist.

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

Texts set for study:

*Accidental Death of an Anarchist*

*Can't Pay? Won't Pay!*

*Mistero Buffo*

*Trumpets and Raspberries*

**QUESTION 13 Augusto Boal**

EITHER

- (a) Describe how the exercises from Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors* are intended to prepare participants to practise Theatre of the Oppressed.

In your answer, refer to at least SIX specific games or exercises.

OR

- (b) Compare and contrast Image Theatre, Forum Theatre and Cop in the Head as examples of the way Boal seeks to free oppressed people.

**Please turn over**

**QUESTION 14 Commedia dell'arte**

EITHER

- (a) What elements of the sixteenth to eighteenth century commedia dell'arte performance style, staging, and characterisation are revealed in Figure 2? What do they show about the overall nature of commedia dell'arte performance?



Duchartre, P L, *The Italian Comedy*, Dover Publications, New York, 1966, p 57

FIG. 2

OR

- (b) Discuss how the different male-female relationships in the sixteenth to eighteenth century commedia dell'arte gave rise to the physical comic action and drew upon the theatrical skills of the performers.

**End of paper**