



ATAR STUDY GUIDE

# DRAMA

YR 12 ATAR COURSE

UNITS 3 & 4

Kirsten Lambert



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# TO THE STUDENT

## WELCOME TO YEAR 12 DRAMA

The purpose of this study guide is to assist you with your preparation for practical and written exams and tasks. It consists of review questions and answers, information on key theorists and a glossary.

This study guide has been written in sections, in accordance with the syllabus. Chapter One examines the key course content for Unit 3. Chapter Two examines the content for Unit 4. Chapter Three deals with the practical exam and is broken into the four sub-sections of the exam: Original Solo Production; Scripted Monologue; Improvisation and Interview. Chapter Four covers the first section in the written exam, the unseen text. Chapter Five gives a description of the major drama theorists and practitioners. Chapter Six provides sample answers to the review questions in each section as well as sample answers. Chapter Seven includes sample exam questions and answers. Each section relates to the key materials in the course and the set text list.

This study guide is designed to cover all areas of the syllabus. You can work through it at your own pace and in any order. Drama is a practical subject with a theoretical basis. This study guide will help you to understand the concepts that underpin the course, as well as teach you how to use drama terminology in practical and written assignments and exam answers.

I wish you all the best with your exam preparation.

Good luck!

Dr Kirsten Lambert.



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# Reinterpretation of Drama for Contemporary Audiences

## SYLLABUS CHECKLIST

### Topics covered in this chapter:

- 1.1 Reinterpreting dramatic texts for contemporary audiences.
- 1.2 Applying theoretical and practitioner approaches.
- 1.3 Physical theatre approaches, such as Jacques Lecoq, Anne Bogart and Tadashi Suzuki
- 1.4 Text-based approaches, such as Theatre of the Absurd, Asian theatre and Poor Theatre.
- 1.5 Subtext
- 1.6 Context
- 1.7 Form
- 1.8 Style

Australian texts for Unit 3	World texts for Unit 3
Wesley Enoch: <i>The Story of Miracles at Cookie's Table</i>	Bertold Brecht: <i>The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui</i>
Louis Nowra: <i>Radiance</i>	Caryl Churchill: <i>Mad Forest</i>
Hannie Rayson: <i>Two Brothers</i>	Eugene Ionesco: <i>Rhinoceros</i>
Stephen Sewell: <i>Myth, Propaganda and Disaster in Nazi German and Contemporary America</i>	William Shakespeare: <i>As You Like It</i>
Alana Valentine: <i>Parramatta Girls</i>	Sophocles: <i>Antigone</i>
Zen Zen Zo: <i>The Tempest</i> (adaptation)	Thornton Wilder: <i>Our Town: A Play in Three Acts</i>



## Terminology

These are some of the terms from Unit 3 and 4 that you should know. Write the meaning of each term giving specific examples in the space provided. The answers are found in Chapter 6.

### VOICE AND MOVEMENT

i. voice techniques

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ii. movement techniques

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iii. physical and text-based approaches

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iv. proximity

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## DRAMA PROCESSES AND THE ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

i. the elements of drama

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ii. improvisation

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iii. rehearsal processes

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## DRAMA FORMS AND STYLES

i. forms

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ii. styles

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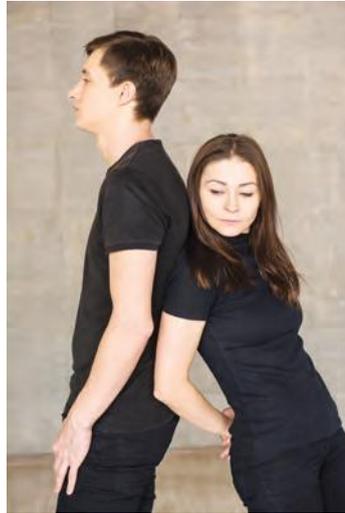
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iii. viewpoints

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## CONTEXTUAL KNOWLEDGE

### Drama conventions

i. conventions of improvisation

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ii. contexts

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iii. conventions of *recording* reinterpreted drama for a contemporary audience

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iv. audience theory

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v. values

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vi. forces

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## PRODUCTION AND PERFORMANCE

### Spaces of performance

i. conventional theatre spaces

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ii. found spaces

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iii. adapted spaces

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iv. purpose-built spaces

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## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGIES

i. principles of design

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ii. visual elements

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## ROLES

1. Director:

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2. Actor:

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3. Dramaturge:

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4. Scenographer:

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5. Costume designer:

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6. Lighting designer:

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7. Sound designer:

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## 1.1 REINTERPRETING DRAMATIC TEXTS FOR CONTEMPORARY AUDIENCES

### KEY IDEAS:

- Dramatic texts can be reinterpreted to suit different audiences, social, historical and political contexts.
- Dramatic texts have lasting value because they have been reinterpreted for contemporary audiences.

### REINTERPRETATION OF DRAMA FOR CONTEMPORARY AUDIENCES

What does it mean to reinterpret a dramatic text for a contemporary audience? Every time a director chooses a play to perform he/she is 'reinterpreting' that text for an audience. That means the director is taking a play that was written for a particular audience in a specific time and place and making it relevant for a new audience. This may mean changing the historical *context* of a classic text such as *Antigone*, thus giving it a fresh application to an entirely new audience, or taking a contemporary play, such as *The Story of Miracles at Cookie's Table* that was first performed in Sydney in 2007 and performing it for a contemporary Western Australian audience. In both instances, the director must make choices about how they will interpret the script to make it appropriate to their audience.

#### EXAMPLE 1



In the case of *Antigone* by Sophocles, the original historical context was Ancient Greece during the rule of Pericles and Sophocles may have been (amongst other things) commenting to his audience about importance of democratic leadership in Athens in 441 BCE. This was the 'golden age' of Athenian culture for ancient Greek democracy and Pericles was widely respected. Pericles is quoted as saying:

Athens' constitution is called a democracy because it respects the interests not of the minority but of the whole people. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law; when it is a question of putting one person before another in positions of public responsibility, what counts is not membership of a particular class, but the actual ability which the man possesses. (Pericles, 431 BCE)

However, Sophocles knew that Greek leaders had not always venerated democracy. Often sole rulers of a state had taken power in an unconstitutional manner, even murdering

their predecessors. For example, Polykrates in Samos (530-522 BCE). Polykrates was remembered as a prototypically cruel tyrant, who murdered his brother in order to take power. For Athenians, tyranny became the exact opposite of democracy. *Antigone* was written at a time of national imperialism. In 441 BCE, after the play was first performed, Sophocles was appointed as one of the ten generals to lead a military expedition against Samos. Antigone exposes the dangers of the absolute ruler, or tyrant, in the person of Creon, a king to whom few will speak freely and openly their true opinions, and who therefore makes the grievous error of condemning Antigone, an act which he pitifully regrets in the play's final lines. Athenians, proud of their democratic tradition, would have identified his error in the many lines of dialogue which emphasize that the people of Thebes believe he is wrong, but have no voice to tell him so. Athenians would identify the folly of tyranny.

A key characteristic of Greek tragedy is the tragic hero. This hero must be neither entirely good or entirely bad, but instead display some good characteristics which are coupled with a tragic flaw. Both Antigone and Creon fit this description and serve as tragic figures in this play.

## EXAMPLE 2

When Jean Anouilh produced his adaptation of *Antigone* in 1944 at the end of WWII the context was the anti-fascist French resistance to the Nazis in occupied France. *Antigone* premiered in Paris in 1944, but Anouilh had reinterpreted this classic story of lone rebellion against the state two years earlier, inspired by an act of resistance during Paris' occupation by the Nazis. In August 1942, a young Frenchman named Paul Collette fired at and wounded a group of directors during a meeting of the collaborationist *Légion des volontaires français*. Collette did not belong to a resistance network or organized political group, but acted entirely alone and in full knowledge of his certain death. For Anouilh, Collette's solitary act – both heroic and futile – was prototypically tragic and inspired him to revitalise the Ancient Greek tragedy of *Antigone*. The Nazis censored *Antigone* immediately upon its release, aware of Anouilh's thinly veiled allusion to the French Vichy government (who collaborated with the Germans). It premiered two years later at the Théâtre de l'Atelier in Paris, a few months before Paris' liberation. Anouilh reinterpreted Sophocles tale of the fated heroine standing up against tyranny for his own political context, and the play has since risen to legendary status in modern French theatre.

Where Anouilh contemporised the original text to suit his context, most directors keep the original text, or at least an edited version of the text, and merely change the social, political or historical context to make the play relevant to their contemporary audiences. Examples of this can be seen in the many reinterpretations of Shakespeare's classic texts today. *Macbeth* has been set in WWII, corporate America, a London restaurant, and a kindergarten bouncy castle to name just a few recent reinterpretations of the Scottish play. The revival of a familiar play can make audiences see relationships in a new light. Indeed the only way that Chekhov, Ibsen, Shakespeare and Sophocles will survive is if we recognise that all dramatic texts are simply a blueprint for a performance, not a template for one that must be slavishly reproduced. Reinterpretations of texts can make them as relevant for contemporary audiences as they once were when they were first produced.

### EXAMPLE 3

*The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, subtitled ‘A parable play’, was written by Bertold Brecht in 1941. It follows the rise of Arturo Ui, a fictitious 1930s Chicago mobster and his attempts to control the cauliflower racket by ruthlessly murdering the opposition. The play is a satirical parable for the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party in Germany prior to World War II. The play also has frequent references to some of Shakespeare’s classic texts. To highlight Ui’s evil and villainous rise to power, he is explicitly compared to Shakespeare’s *Richard III*. Likewise, just as Macbeth was visited by the ghost of dead Banquo, whom he had murdered, Ui experiences a visitation from the ghost of one of his victims. Finally, Hitler’s prowess at rhetoric is referenced when Ui receives lessons from an actor in walking, sitting and orating, which includes his reciting Mark Antony’s famous speech from *Julius Caesar*.



Brecht’s ‘epic’ drama was relevant to his particular historical and political context – Germany under the Nazis. All of the characters and factions in the play had direct counterparts in Nazi Germany: Ui represented Hitler; his henchman Ernesto Roma an obvious link to Ernst Röhm, the head of the Nazi SA; Dogsborough represents General von Hindenburg, a hero of World War I and the President of the Weimar Republic; Emanuele Giri represents Hermann Göring, a World War I flying ace who was a German political and military leader as well as one of the most powerful figures of the Nazi Party and Hitler’s second in command; Giuseppe Givola mirrors the master propagandist Joseph Goebbels; the Cauliflower Trust alludes to the Prussian Junkers and so forth. In addition, every scene in the play is based, albeit sometimes very loosely, on real events, for example the warehouse fire that resembles the Reichstag fire of 1933, and the Dock Aid Scandal that represents the Osthilfeskandal (Eastern Aid) scandal. Just as the play was a cautionary satire on the rise of Hitler, it has been reinterpreted by many theatre companies and directors over the years, to symbolize the unfettered rise of contemporary autocratic leaders and governments. The play begs the question, why do we allow tyrants like Ui to become our leaders? This question is as relevant today, as it was in Brecht’s Germany of 1941.

When Sydney Theatre Company reinterpreted the text in 2018 the subtitle was ‘We Get the Leaders We Deserve’ and the play, starring Hugo Weaving as Arturo Ui, was made relevant to the contemporary Australian political context. Adaptations of classics provide contemporary audiences with thought provoking themes and issues in new and innovative ways that help us to reflect on our own times. Brecht’s great masterwork was a play fable that parallels the rise of Hitler in Germany and outlines how people with extremist values come to power. Sydney Theatre Company probes the psychological depth of a man like Ui. What drives a person to hunger for that kind of power? Director Kip Williams’ adaptation of Brecht’s epic play has resonances to contemporary Australian politics.

#### EXAMPLE 4

Transformations are adaptations of texts that involve a more dramatic change to the text in order to create something new. The transformed text may not have an obvious connection to the original. A transformation might involve challenging the values and ideas expressed in the original text, rather than simply reproducing the same text in a new or contemporary manner. For example, the hit movie *10 Things I Hate About You* is a transformation of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. *Wicked* is a transformation of *The Wizard of Oz*. These texts are so dramatically altered that their audiences may have trouble recognising their relationships to the original at all. Moreover, where *The Taming of the Shrew* is arguably about controlling head-strong women; *10 Things I Hate About You*, can be seen as a pro-feminist text with its gutsy lead female character. Thus the transformation actively challenges the social and cultural values of the original text.

#### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to reinterpret a text for a contemporary audience?

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2. Why do directors reinterpret classic texts and not perform them the way they were 'originally' performed?

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3. Give two examples of classic texts that have been reinterpreted for audiences. What did the reinterpretation bring to the new audience's context?

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4. Give two examples of films that have reinterpreted classic texts?

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5. What is the difference between a reinterpretation and a transformation?

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6. Find examples online of classic texts that have been reinterpreted for audiences in different cultural and political contexts.

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7. How could you, as a director, reinterpret the text you are currently studying in drama for a contemporary audience?

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8. Creon and Arturo Ui are both classic tyrants with unregulated power. Name some current political leaders who could symbolise tyrannical leadership in a contemporary adaptation of these texts?

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9. *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* was set in Chicago's gangland district and *Antigone* is set in front of the palace of Thebes in Greece. What contemporary settings might make ideal backdrops for the reinterpretation of these texts?

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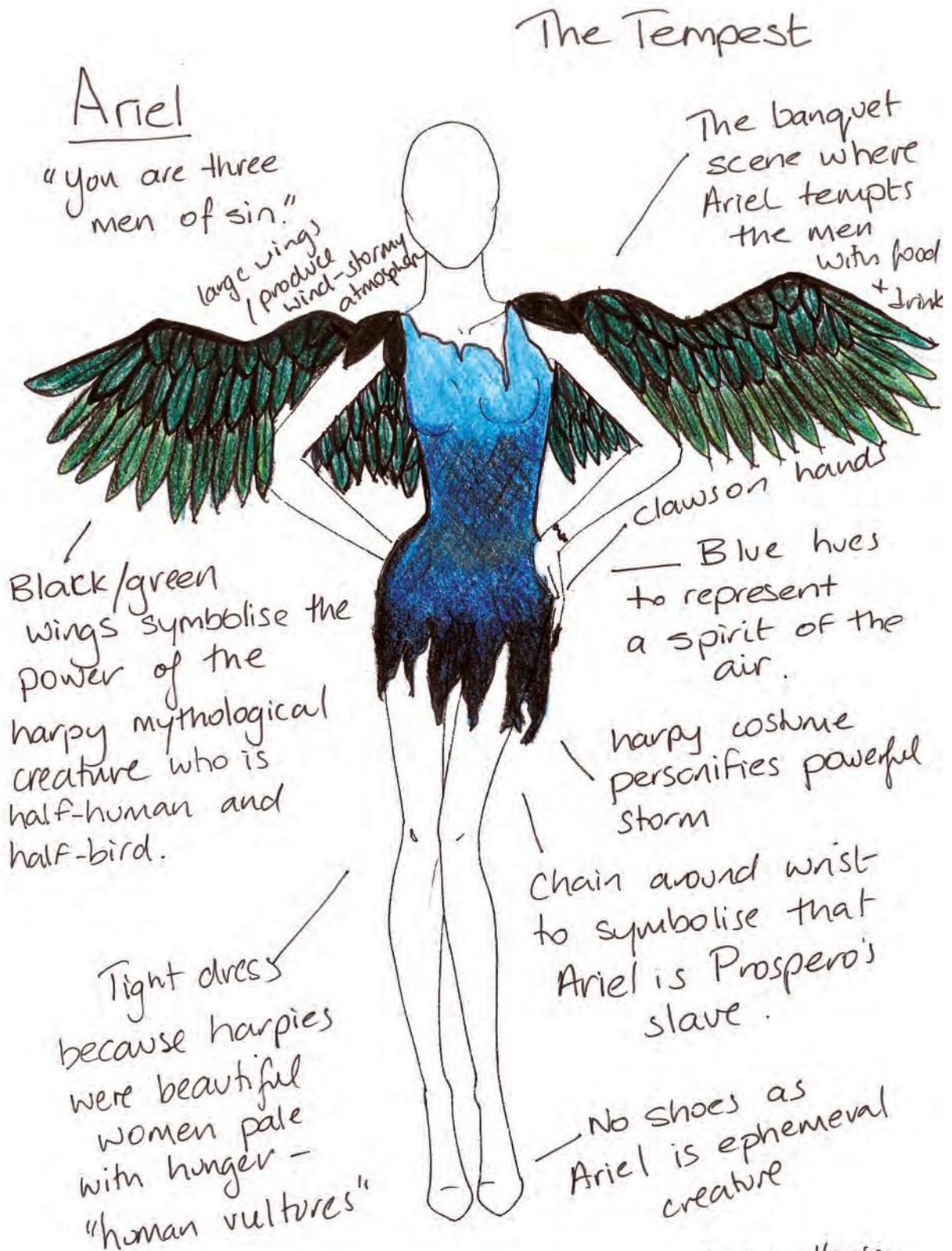
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10. In the space provided below draw a costume and set design for one major scene and character in your reinterpretation of a dramatic text.

Example



Courtney Hanson

Ideas:

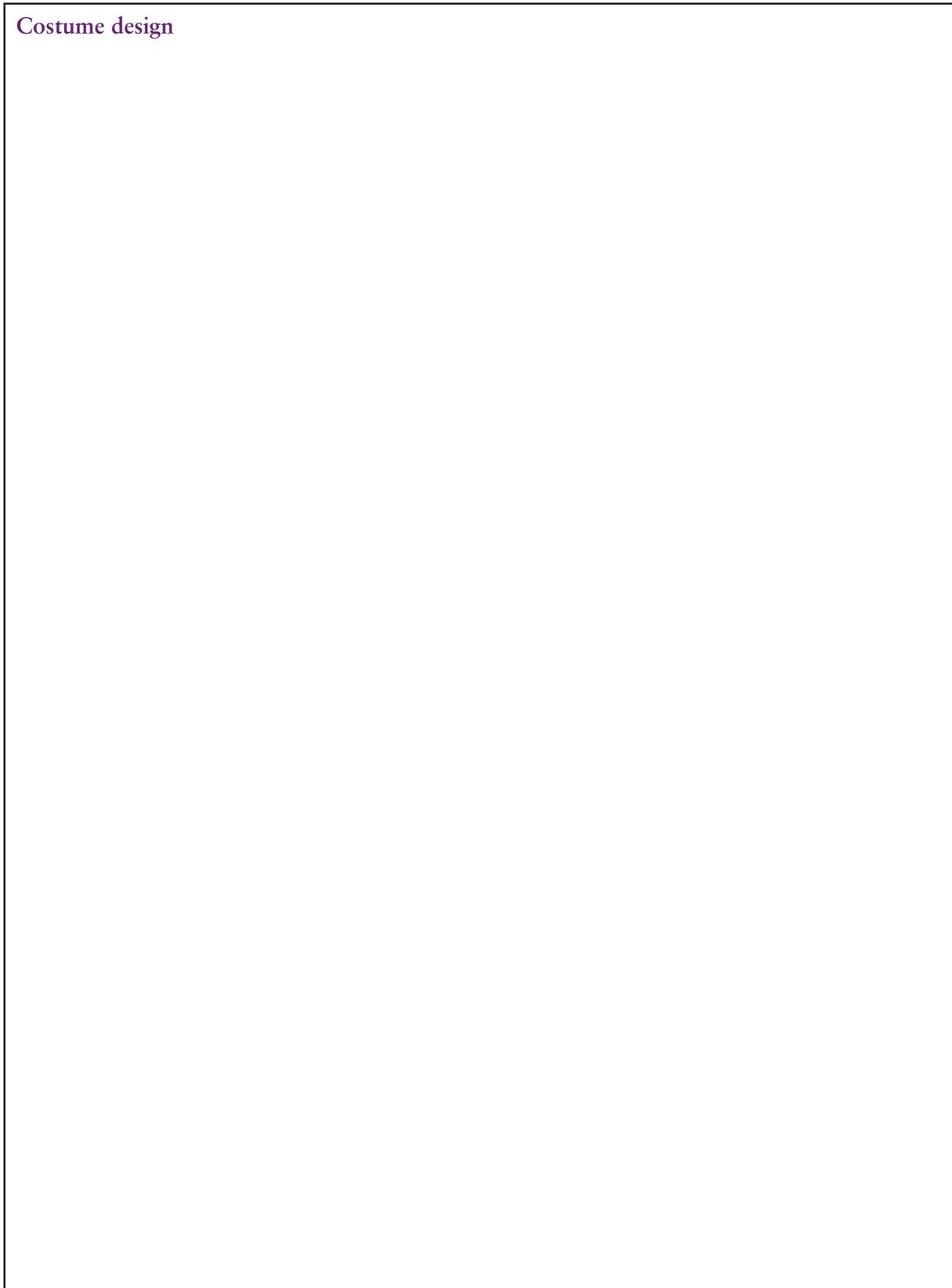
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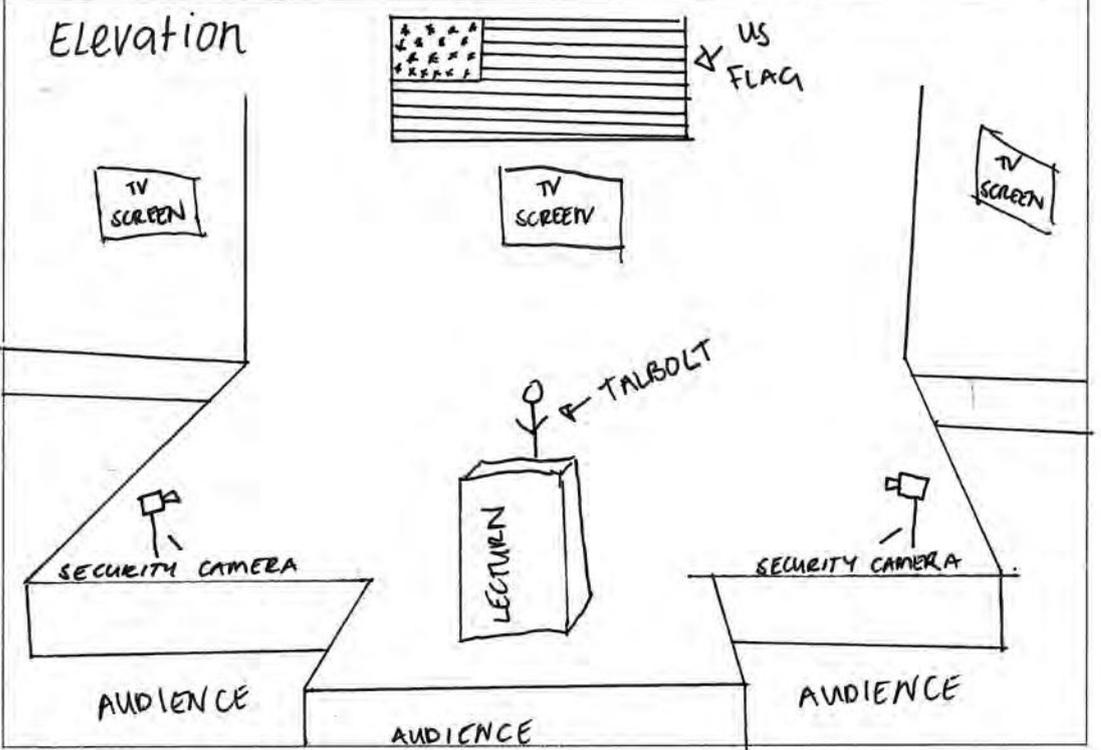
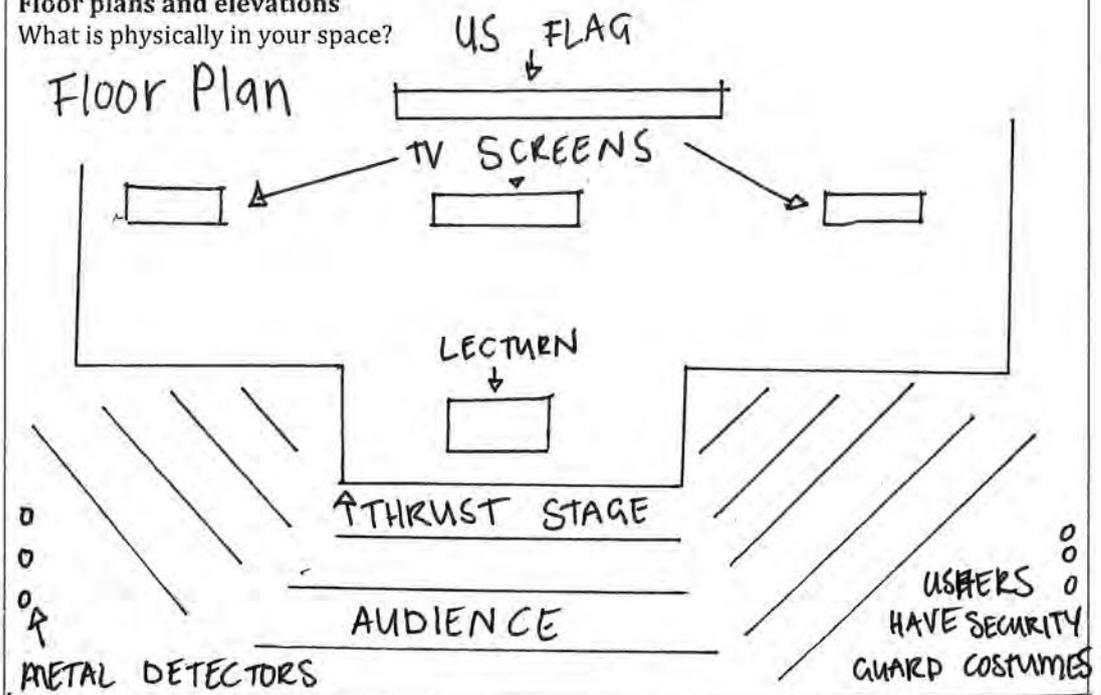
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**Costume design**



**Floor plans and elevations**  
What is physically in your space?



## Floor plans and elevations

What is physically in your space?

## 1.2 APPLYING THEORETICAL AND PRACTITIONER APPROACHES.

What does it mean to apply theoretical and practitioner approaches to the reinterpretation of dramatic texts? What is the difference between a theoretical and a practitioner approach? A theoretical approach is a methodology for interpreting and producing dramatic texts to achieve a particular style and form of performance.

The two major theoretical approaches examined in the ATAR drama syllabus are physical and text-based approaches. To apply one of these approaches to a dramatic text is to use their concepts, ideas and methods when producing or performing in dramatic works. So as an actor performing using a Brechtian approach to performing a role you might try to remain aware that you are acting and make sure the audience is aware that you are acting too. Using a physical theatre approach, such as that of the Suzuki Method of Actor Training, you might start by trying to build an awareness of your body, especially your core, to allow yourself to commit fully to the physical and emotional qualities of the character.

### PHYSICAL THEATRE APPROACHES

Physical theatre approaches are defined in the ATAR Drama syllabus as representing the work of practitioners and companies who favour physical forms of communication to communicate narrative and non-narrative theatre performances. Their work is focused on exploring devised performance and/or original works that challenge traditional approaches to spaces of performance and audience theory. These include the work on Zen Zen Zo, Anne Bogart, Jacque Lecoq and Steven Berkoff.



#### EXAMPLE 1

Physical theatre has its roots in dance and Asian theatre and has a focus on the body and movement. For example, Zen Zen Zo's strikingly physical reinterpretation of *The Tempest* (2009) uses Butoh (a form of Japanese dance theatre) techniques, including a Butoh Caliban. Physical theatre can be separate from the spoken word or united with it to expand and discover its meaning. It may well be devised or contain substantial elements of work beyond the printed script. These elements could be other art forms such as music, dance, and audio-visual technology.

When using a physical theatre approach, you could use a mixture of elements that may also be combined with script. For example, the actor could interact with the audience in a way that challenges the 'fourth wall', making the audience a participant in the action. It is not unusual for physical theatre to actually encourage or demand audience collaboration.

## EXAMPLE 2

Director, Steven Berkoff used a physical theatre approach in *The Trial*, to provide the scene, whether this was furniture for a room or for a busy street. The use of people to create everything allows great opportunities for dynamic impact. In *The Trial*, it was the cast, very simple frames and a rope on an empty performance area that created the whole staging.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to apply theoretical and practitioner approaches to the reinterpretation of dramatic texts?

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2. What is the difference between a theoretical and a practitioner approach?

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3. What is physical theatre?

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4. Give examples of practitioners who use a physical approach to the reinterpretation of dramatic texts?

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5. How do Zen Zen Zo use physical theatre in their reinterpretation of *The Tempest*?

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6. What does 'breaking the fourth wall' mean?

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7. Find two examples of how Berkoff uses a physical approach in his staging of *The Trial*?

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8. How could you as a director use a physical approach to reinterpret the text you are currently studying in drama?

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## TEXT-BASED APPROACHES AND PRACTITIONER APPROACHES

Conversely, a *text-based approach* is a methodology of drama making such as Theatre of the Absurd and Poor Theatre that begins with the construction of a text that has meaning as a stand-alone text. These texts explore ideas, themes and critical theories often experimenting with conventions and relationships between audience and the elements of drama.

Text-based theatre focuses on the text and the playwright's instructions. Classical theatre tends towards the text-based. The division between what is commonly referred to as "text-based" and "devised theatre" is problematic, namely because all theatre is devised by someone or by an ensemble of people. However, "text-based theatre" commonly refers to theatre that foregrounds/prioritises the text. The text or play is written by a playwright with a full set of instructions, to be interpreted by directors and actors. The text then is the primary blueprint for the performance and a basis for interpretation.

### EXAMPLE 3

Certain *practitioners* have recognisable personal styles or approaches to creating dramatic performances, such as Bertolt Brecht, Robert Wilson and Barbara Kielhofer. These practitioners may use text-based approaches such as Brecht's Epic Theatre, or avante-garde physical theatre approaches, such as Robert Wilson's, which relies much more heavily on noise and silence to express language, as well as movement. Robert Wilson states,

The way actors are trained here is wrong. All they think about is interpreting a text. They worry about how to speak words and know nothing about their bodies. You see that by the way they walk. They don't understand the weight of a gesture in space. A good actor can command an audience by moving one finger.

(cited in Holmburg, A. 1996, p.50)

I do movement before we work on the text. Later we'll put text and movement together. I do movement first to make sure it's strong enough to stand on its own two feet without words. The movement must have a rhythm and structure of its own. It must not follow the text. It can reinforce a text without illustrating it. What you hear and what you see are two different layers. When you put them together, you create another texture.  
(cited in Holmburg, A. 1996, p.136)

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between physical and text-based approaches to theatre making?

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2. What is a practitioner approach? Give an example of one text-based practitioner and one physical approach practitioner?

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### EXAMPLE 4

Bertold Brecht is a well-known theatre practitioner. Brecht's Epic Theatre had two aims: firstly, to present a story with social implications in such a way as to encourage the individuals in the audience to pursue those implications; secondly, to present it as well, and as enjoyably, as possible.

Brecht believed that theatre should be a place where audience could critically approach social and political problems, look for solutions, and act upon their decisions. He believed that audience members should have a sense of social responsibility and also a sense of fun.

He strongly believed that too often audience members would become so emotionally involved with the story or characters presented onstage that they would not be able to identify, analyse and search for solutions to the characters' dilemmas, and they would leave the theatre having missed the point of the piece.

So he devised ways of drawing the audience's attention to the fact they were watching a performance. His main methodology was the use of what he termed 'Epic theatre' and

Verfremdungseffekte (loosely translated as The Alienation or Distancing Effect): Epic Theatre was a form of theatre that was episodic with each scene being a separate story, that could be told in any order, with a chorus or narrator interrupting and linking the scenes. The term Verfremdungseffekte, as with many of Brecht's techniques, developed over the years. However this term loosely covered Brecht's intention of distancing the audience from what they were watching on stage so that it was unfamiliar to them, and so they could critically watch and make a judgment rather than absorbing themselves in the plot.

Some of the techniques Brecht used to achieve this are:

- Examination of a political oppression
- Empty space
- Scenes introduced by placard or projection
- Functional rather than decorative props
- Set changes observed by audience
- Lights used to show action, or time passing rather than create atmosphere
- Lanterns and operators in view of audience
- Music used to comment on or juxtapose action
- Songs used to tell story

Episodic Structure

- Each scene and song able to stand alone and deliver its own message
- Scenes inform each other but do not evolve from one another
- Each scene and song displays human nature trope rather than character development
- The actor as a storyteller rather than 'real' person

Acting Techniques

- Re-examination of familiar reactions through rehearsal
- Use of past tense or speaking in the third person
- Vocalising stage directions
- Actors swapping roles. This enabled actors to distance themselves from the characters' emotions and continue to be surprised by the decisions their characters made
- Characters given titles and presented as representations rather than 'real' three-dimensional people
- Presentational acting style: actors demonstrate rather than imitate
- Narrative and historical context as a priority over characterisation
- Address the audience directly (Break the 4th Wall)
- Gestus – mimetic and gestural expressions utilised by ensemble.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who was Brecht and what was his vision for the theatre?

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2. What does 'Epic Theatre' mean?

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3. Find five examples of how Brecht uses Verfremdungseffekte (the 'alienation effect') in his plays to distance his audience from the emotion of the play?

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4. How could you, as an actor, use Brecht's Verfremdungseffekte to reinterpret a section of the text you are currently studying in drama?

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5. What is 'episodic' structure and how does this differ from the Classic Aristotelian structure of a play (i.e. exposition; rising action; climax; falling action; denouement)?

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6. How could you use Brecht's approach to design and scenography for a contemporary production of your set text?

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7. How could you use Brecht's practitioner approach to highlight particular historical, social and/or cultural contexts of the text you are studying in drama?

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8. What acting techniques did Brecht recommend to help the audience focus on the political message of the play rather than become emotionally involved in the action?

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9. Brecht's theory of 'Verfremdungseffekte' or 'distancing effect' or more recently translated as 'estrangement effect' creates an aesthetic distance between the actors and the audience. How does this technique break the 'fourth wall' between the actors and the audience?

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## 1.3 PHYSICAL THEATRE APPROACHES, SUCH AS JACQUES LECOQ, ANNE BOGART AND TADASHI SUZUKI.

### EXAMPLE 1

#### JACQUES LECOQ

The French practitioner Jacques Lecoq (1921-1999) is regarded as one of the twentieth century's most influential teachers of physical theatre. During World War II he began exploring gymnastics, mime, movement and dance with a group who used performance to express their opposition to the German occupation of France. After the war, Lecoq then studied mime with Jean Daste, (a former pupil of the acclaimed teacher of mime, Jacques Copeau) who introduced him to masked performance and Japanese Noh theatre. He left Grenoble and spent six months teaching mask work in Germany, before accepting another teaching position at the University of Padua in Italy. He spent eight years in Italy teaching and working as a creative practitioner and discovered the traditional and popular Italian theatre style of commedia dell'arte as well as the tradition of masked chorus work developed in Ancient Greek tragedy.

Lecoq opened his own school, the Ecole Internationale de Mime et de Theatre, in Paris in 1956. This school attracts large numbers of students from all over the world. Lecoq also toured with demonstrations of his physical art of the actor and periodically conducted classes in Britain that had an enormous impact on the development of British theatre.

Lecoq's book, *The Moving Body* (Translated and published in English posthumously in 2000) outlines a number of his philosophies and approaches. The training is very practical and very specific for each student because every actor's body and mind has accumulated different tensions and conditioned responses.

#### Lecoq's Methods

Lecoq's training methods therefore focus on releasing preconditioned views of acting and bringing an actor's attention back to 'playing.' In his last publication he explained that: "There is a huge difference between actors who express their own lives, and those who can truly be described as players...They have learned not to play themselves but to play using themselves. In this lies all the ambiguity of the actor's work." The strong emphasis on improvisational activity at the school reinforces the central significance of play and students are introduced to physical exercises, masks and popular theatre that reinforce the distinction between playing and being. Lecoq and those who now direct training at the school work on the premise that: "A true understanding and knowledge of theatre inevitably requires a profound experience of play".

Like Konstantin Stanislavsky, Jerzy Grotowski and Eugenio Barba, Lecoq created a place to study and teach what he believed were important principles of acting. Lecoq, like these other figures, described his research into the human body and its movement as his 'passion' and he pursued this work throughout his life. He saw his teaching as 'a path to his own greater knowledge and understanding of movement' and said that his work with students helped him to discover that 'the body knows things about which the mind is ignorant'.

#### Mask

Masked work had a powerful influence on Lecoq's approach to performing and he was intrigued with the simple and direct way masks could amplify the physical aspects of a performer and be used to communicate with all kinds of audiences. His research and analysis of masks, movement, body language and gesture has had a huge impact on the development of contemporary theatre and his work has popularised genres such as the clown, bouffons, commedia dell'arte, tragedy, and melodrama.

## 7 Levels of Tension

Jacques Lecoq developed an approach to acting using seven levels of tension. These changed and developed during his practice and have been further developed by other practitioners.

Jacques Lecoq's 7 Levels of Tension
<p><b>1 Exhausted or catatonic.</b> The Jellyfish. There is no tension in the body at all. Begin in a complete state of relaxation. If you have to move or speak, it is a real effort. See what happens when you try to speak.</p>
<p><b>2 Laid back/Relaxed – the “hippy”</b> Many people live at this level of tension. Everything you say is casual, relaxed, and glib. “Chill man”.</p>
<p><b>3 Neutral or the “Economic” (contemporary dance).</b> It is what it is. There is nothing more; nothing less. The right amount. No past or future. You are totally present and aware. It is the state of tension before something happens. Think of a cat sitting comfortably on a wall, ready to leap up if a bird comes near. You move with no story behind your movement.</p>
<p><b>4 Alert or Curious (farcical).</b> Look at things. Sit down. Stand up. Indecision. Think M. Hulot (Jacques Tati) or Mr Bean. Levels 1–4 are our everyday states.</p>
<p><b>5 Suspense or the Reactive (19th century melodrama).</b> Is there a bomb in the room? The crisis is about to happen. All the tension is in the body, concentrated between the eyes. An in-breath. There's a delay to your reaction. The body reacts. Think John Cleese.</p>
<p><b>6 Passionate (opera).</b> There is a bomb in the room. The tension has exploded out of the body. Anger, fear, hilarity, despair. It's difficult to control. You walk into a room and there is a lion sitting there. There is a snake in the shower.</p>
<p><b>7 Tragic</b> (Imagine the end of Shakespeare's King Lear when Lear is holding Cordelia in his arms). The bomb is about to go off! Body can't move. Petrified. The body is solid tension.</p>



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who was Lecoq and what were his formative influences?

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2. What does 'play' mean for Lecoq?

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3. Find examples of how Lecoq uses mask and improvisation in his actor training to improve actor's physical performances?

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4. How could you use mask as an improvisation technique to explore character from one of the set texts?

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5. How could you as an actor use Lecoq's seven levels of tension to rehearse a section of the text you are currently studying in drama? What effect would these levels of tension have on the audience in performance?

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6. What level of tension do you operate on at different times of the day/week/year? Give examples?

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7. Create a mnemonic to remember the names of the seven levels of tension.

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## EXAMPLE 2

### Anne Bogart

Physical theatre practitioner, Anne Bogart is an American theatre director who has staged almost a hundred plays during her work as a teacher in many universities, academies and conservatories over Europe and the USA. She has published books and essays on theatre. She is co-founder of the SITI Company together with Tadashi Suzuki and has since been its artistic director.

She is most well-known for her Viewpoints method of actor training. The Viewpoints is essentially a method to practice spontaneity. Bogart's system integrates two approaches. She incorporates the Suzuki method of actor training, which is very rigorous and repetitious, similar to doing barré work in ballet. The Viewpoints is inherently more improvisational. There is an emphasis on lightness and quickness, and the ability to respond to other actors on stage in a manner similar to how dancers use kinetic energy.

### THE VIEWPOINTS

The Viewpoints originated from the Post Modern dance movement and was originally created by dance choreographer Mary Overlie who used it for improvisational acting. Overlie conceived of 6 viewpoints: space, shape, time, emotion, movement and story. Anne Bogart and Tina Landau expanded on these viewpoints of improvisation and created 9 viewpoints for stage acting. They focused on different factors relating to space and time, enabling actors to focus on physical acting in an intuitive manner. It also allows ensemble acting to naturally germinate.

Anne Bogart's improvisational yet highly regimented theatre training technique, turns the Method inside out, focusing on the specific interactions and spatial relationships between actors rather than the individual's inner psychological journey. The Viewpoints is an improvisational system that trains an actor to use their body in time and space to create meaning. They are points of awareness that a performer or creator has while working. They provide a vocabulary for thinking about and acting upon movement and gesture. Actors will make offers, accept offers, extend moments (such as repeating a gesture or a shape) and advance the scene. It is through this improvisation that they create dramatic meaning.

The Viewpoints represent not only a physical technique but also a philosophical, and aesthetic approach to many aspects of their work. In Bogart's reinterpretation of *Antigone* (translated by Jocelyn Clarke, 2009) the set is a square table and the actors are dressed in corporate suits minus footwear. They present their monologues cleanly, with little fuss, and then, when conflict intensifies, Kreon (Stephen Duff Webber) pulls his hand back and with an abstract symbolic gesture mimes a slap, which is punctuated with a SFX slap. These mannered, mock-violent gestures are a metaphor for the entire style – deliberate, subtle and kinaesthetic.

#### The Nine Viewpoints:

##### Viewpoints of Space

1. Spatial Relationships
2. Architecture
3. Floor Pattern

##### Viewpoints of the Body

4. Shape
5. Gesture

##### Viewpoints of Time

6. Kinaesthetic response
7. Repetition
8. Duration
9. Tempo

1. Spatial Relationships
  - The distance between things on stage, between one body and another or between a body and an object or piece of architecture.
  - Consider: groupings  
                  proximity
2. Architecture
  - The physical environment in which you are working and how the awareness of it affects movement.
3. Floor Pattern
  - The pattern created on the floor as the actor moves through the space; determines how the actors get from one place to another.
4. Shape
  - The contour or outline the body (or bodies) make in space.
  - Shapes can be broken into: lines, curves or a combination of lines and curves
  - Shape can be stationary or moving through space
  - Shape can be made:
    - with the body in space
    - the body in relationship to architecture making a shape
    - the body in relation to other bodies making a shape.
5. Gesture
  - A movement involving a part or parts of the body. Gesture generally involves parts of the body (e.g. face or hands) whereas shape generally involves the whole body.
  - Gesture has 3 categories:
    - Daily life (behavioural e.g. scratching/sniffing)
    - Stereotypical (cultural e.g. saluting)
    - Expressive (abstract)
6. Kinaesthetic Response
  - A spontaneous physical reaction to something which occurs outside you; the impulsive movement which occurs from stimulation of the senses.
  - This viewpoint holds the Viewpoints improvisation together
7. Tempo
  - The rate or speed at which a movement occurs; how fast or slow something happens on stage.
8. Duration
  - How long a movement or sequence of movements continues.
9. Repetition
  - Repeating something on stage. It can be an exact copy or it could be a variation.
  - Variations on repetition:
    - Exact Transfer (a movement or gesture is applied to another person or context)
    - Transform (a movement is transformed into something different but from the same source idea e.g. the action of bouncing a ball becomes the action of fingers running through mud)
    - Recycling (repeating a moment, movement or gesture later in the Viewpoints session – serves as a unique vocabulary for the session)

Later Bogart added the Vocal Viewpoints to her theory that include Pitch, Dynamic, and Timbre.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who was Anne Bogart and what were her formative influences?

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2. What is the difference between Bogart's Viewpoints and the Suzuki method?

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3. Find examples of how Bogart uses Viewpoints in her reinterpretation of *Antigone*?

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4. How could you as an actor use Bogart's *Spatial Relationships* to rehearse a section of the text you are currently studying in drama?

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5. How could you use repetition and tempo when rehearsing a scene from the text you are studying in drama at the moment?

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6. How could you, as an actor, use Bogart's *Shape* as a rehearsal process to develop a character from the text you are currently studying in drama?

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7. How could you, as an actor, use Bogart's expressive *Gesture* to develop a critical moment for your character from the text you are currently studying in drama?

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8. How could you, as an actor, use Bogart's *Proximity* to develop tension between characters in a scene from the text you are currently studying in drama?

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9. Create a mnemonic to remember The 9 Viewpoints.

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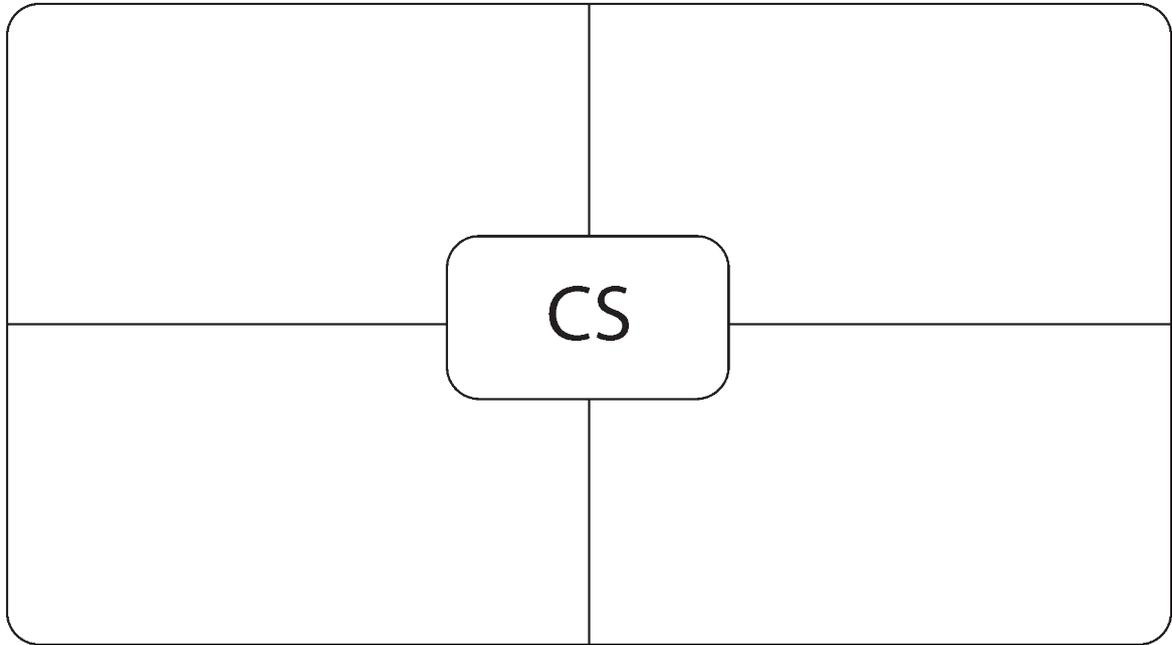
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10. In the space below draw a diagram of the floor pattern your character uses to move through the space in one key scene of section of the text you are studying in drama.



### EXAMPLE 3



Tadashi Suzuki – Japan

Tadashi Suzuki (1939 –) is a physical theatre practitioner working out of Toga, Japan. He co-founded the Saratoga International Theatre Institute in New York with Anne Bogart. He is the creator of the Suzuki Method of Actor Training. Suzuki has outlined his theories in a number of books including *Culture is the Body*. Suzuki writes, ‘a cultured society is one in which the perceptive and expressive abilities of its people are cultivated through the use of their innate animal energy. Such animal energy fosters the sense of security and trust needed for healthy communication in human relationships. Animal energy here refers to the organic physical energy supplied by human beings, horses, oxen and the like; while non-animal energy refers to electricity, petroleum, nuclear power etc.

The Suzuki method of acting, developed by Tadashi Suzuki, is one of the most commonly taught acting methods in the United States. It has been taught at schools such as Julliard

and Columbia and has been gaining popularity with the Royal Shakespeare Company. The Suzuki method works to build an actor's awareness of his body, especially his centre or core. The method uses exercises that are inspired by Greek theatre and martial arts and require great amounts of energy and concentration. They result in actors becoming more aware of their natural expressiveness and allow them to commit more fully to the physical and emotional requirements of acting.

The Suzuki Method of Acting is based on the following three ideas:

1. To act, one must have a point of view.

Acting thus tries to convey a particular point of view, derived from an investigation of human behaviour and relationships. An actor's performance is driven by a desire to make others re-evaluate the world and perceive it anew, both collectively and as individuals. Thus, either for their own sake or on behalf of a particular group, the actor incarnates the written word via a physical and vocal exploration that follows a specific set of rules. If this effort succeeds in sharing a unique point of view on the written text with many people, we call it acting. In this way, performance is based on the presence of the "other", and the higher the actor's need to involve others in achieving his or her goal, the more intense the actor's awareness becomes.

Acting's origins can be traced back to Ancient Greek religious rituals that emphasized commonality. The Ancient Greek and Nô traditions are good examples of this sort of evolution, not unlike what a child experiences as it grows up and separates from its parents, gaining a deeper sense of itself through encountering conflicting social structures and belief systems. Ultimately, acting is derived from a similarly developed evaluation/awareness of society.

2. For acting to begin, one must have an audience.

A heightened awareness of displaying one's body and communicating written language can only be achieved when another person observes it. Even though actors may not be able to see themselves or the others sitting in front of them, they can still be aware of a presence – be it human, animal or god – that is watching their movements and hearing their language. Once actors perceive this presence outside of themselves in space, they quickly form a desire to communicate their point of view, stimulating this presence with a written text made flesh through physical and vocal craft. When the accumulation of these efforts is distilled into a clear, effective form, acting begins. Thus, for performance to take place, the presence of the other is indispensable. Nowadays this other's existence is referred to as "the audience".

3. To sustain acting, an awareness of the invisible body is required.

An actor must learn to consciously control the key physical functions required to achieve one's daily needs, the most important of which are (1) energy production, (2) breath calibration and (3) centre of gravity control. Essentially the same principle can be applied to acting on stage. Through disciplined, integrated development of these three parameters, the body gains strength and agility, the voice acquires range and capacity and an awareness of the "other" grows. Such work develops the expressive potency needed to transmit the actor's point of view. It follows, then, that the core requirements for the art of acting lie in disciplines created to deepen an awareness of these three crucial, interrelated, "invisible" phenomena.

### Suzuki Method of Actor Training Exercises

Tadashi Suzuki came up with this extremely physical regime, which trains actors to work from their core and builds discipline, strength, and focus. The rigorous practice draws on martial arts influences and those of Japanese Noh, Kabuki, and the ancient Greek chorus. Suzuki teaches that acting "begins and ends with the feet"; numerous exercises include controlled (and repetitive) forms of stomping and squatting that create a connected centre and bring the body to the brink of exhaustion.

Suzuki uses four basic centre of gravity movements, sitting and standing statues, slow tenteketen, stomping, Shaku-Hachi and the 10 walks. Many of these exercises have voice layered in to the activity once it is learnt. Stomping is very exhausting and requires correct technique not to injure oneself.

## The Basics

There are four basic centre of gravity movements done in a bent-knee position, which lowers the centre of gravity and creates a tension between the lower body (which is always working) and the upper body (which is calm and serene). Stomping challenges the actor to move their centre of balance left and right with no evidence of strain or bobbing. Basic movement number two is about moving the centre of gravity forward. After stomping the left and right foot, the right slides forward and the centre of gravity should shift with it and so forth. In the third series of movements you start with your feet in a v-position with the toes of the right foot pressed into the arch of the left foot to create slow tense forward movement. The fourth basic centre of gravity activity starts with the back to the audience in a bent knee position. Upon instruction, hearing a stick hit the floor, the actor stands and spins to the right facing the front.

## Slow Tenteketen

The slow tenteketen is a controlled very slow walk across the floor to music.

## Statues

There are two types of statues – sitting and standing. Standing statues involves going from a neutral bent-knee squatting position to a free form full body pose upon command. Sitting statues begins in a neutral sitting foetal position. There are three sitting positions: leaning back and lifting the feet off the floor; leaning back and extending the legs forward together and lastly leaning back and extending the feet forwards apart.

## Shaku-Haci

This is an exercise where the actors spend three minutes stomping and then at a predetermined point in the music everyone must reach a point in the room and fall to the ground at the same time. After a moment pipes sound and each participant rises at their own pace. This enables actors to work as an ensemble.

## 10 Walks

Actors form a line, the music is played and one after another they cross the room doing the following walks:

1. Ashibumi – foot stamping
2. Uchimata – pigeon-toed walk
3. Waniashi – bow-legged walk – called crocodile feet
4. Sotomata – outward walk
5. Tsumasaki – tiptoe
6. Yokoaruki No.1 – side step walk
7. Yokoaruki No.2 – side step walk and foot stamp
8. Ashi o horu – throwing the feet
9. Suriashi – sliding walk
10. Shikko – squat walk

## Voice

Once the actors have harnessed the tension of their lower bodies through the physical activities above and have become competent in the various movement sequences they are called to 'speak'. At certain times in the movements they are required to pause in place and then recite the text in unison as a chorus. In the Suzuki method the voice is not about going into the psychology of the text like Stanislavski, it is about saying the lines with intention.

## Conclusion

Tadashi Suzuki's Method of Acting conforms to non-realism as an acting style and the core of his method stems from the high Japanese acting traditions of Noh and Kabuki and Butoh as well. The training and instruction is notably Japanese, such as with the stick hitting the floor for commands. It is a way for performers to develop skills in expression. Working with a vocabulary of formal exercises helps actors to control their physicality and work as an ensemble. Performers learn to master their centre of gravity and thus develop a strong platform or speech. Concepts like animal energy, focus and maintaining concentration, breathing, stability, the 'grammar of the feet' and the 'mythic in theatre' are key tenants of the technique.



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who was Tadashi Suzuki and what influenced his approach?

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2. Why does the actor have to have a point of view on the text they are performing and a particular audience in mind in the Suzuki method?

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## 1.4 TEXT-BASED APPROACHES, SUCH AS THEATRE OF THE ABSURD, ASIAN THEATRE AND POOR THEATRE

Text-based theatre prioritises the narrative of the written text or play. Physical theatre highlights images, atmosphere and movement as the primary mode of communication. Physical theatre is often less literal and more metaphorical than text-based theatre, however, there is no clear binary distinction between the two in practice.

## 1.5 SUBTEXT

Subtext is defined in the Drama ATAR syllabus as the meaning or narrative that underlies the main action of a drama. It may be evident through the voice or non-verbal communication and/or the design of a drama. The subtext might never be openly stated or revealed.

## 1.6 CONTEXT

In drama we examine a text's context, that is: the history, location, culture, economics, relationships, politics and beliefs, attitudes and values related to a character or text will provide contextual knowledge. You should also be aware of the context of contemporary social and cultural values, in addition to historical and cultural contexts.

## 1.7 FORM

Is a broadly inclusive term: it includes the genres (different types of drama) such as live theatre, radio, television and film drama, opera, puppetry and mime. 'Drama forms' also refers to the structure of drama where aesthetic principles and practical choices shape the drama resulting in a focus on tragedy, comedy, tragic-comedy, farce, melodrama, or history.

Dramatic structure includes the broad categories of representational and presentational or non-realistic drama and their relationship to linear and non-linear narrative structures. Structure, techniques and conventions are relevant to chosen drama forms or styles. This includes approaches to structure as follows:

- **Episodic structure:** the action of a drama is broken into smaller scenes often with the rapid development of narrative elements. These scenes move between settings, groups of characters
- **Well-made Play:** expanding on the work of Aristotle's poetics, this structure featured a careful construction of an exposition, a rising conflict that increases in complexity and dramatic tension, a climax close to the end of the play, a denouement in which key events are 'explained' or unpacked for the audience and conclusion that may include a life ethic or moral for the audience.

## 1.8 STYLE

Style in drama refers to the distinctive identifying elements of particular dramatic texts. There are three dimensions of style: historical, performance and personal style.

- **Historical style:** refers to the distinctive uses of language, approaches to subject matter, themes, characterisation and dramatic action that can be linked to particular times and contexts. For example, Theatre of the Absurd, Theatre of Realism.
- **Performance style:** refers to the ways of approaching dramatic text in performance – two major performance styles are representational and presentational styles.
- **Personal style:** the distinctive use of voice, posture, gesture and body that can be associated with a particular actor or director. Style can be observed in performances, direction, design and the application of conventions to dramatic texts. This includes the work of particular practitioners like Bertolt Brecht, Robert Wilson and Barbara Kielhofer.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

Define the following terms:

1. Subtext

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2. Context

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3. Form

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# Reviewing Live Performances

Assessment type: Response

## CONDITIONS

View two professional performances.

For both performances, take notes on the use of elements of drama (role/ character/ relationships/ situation/ voice/ movement/ space/ time/ language and texts/ symbols and metaphor/ mood/ atmosphere). Your note taking should identify specific examples of how the elements have been used to make meaning (for example, contextual information, selected forces or possible themes) or communicate mood and dramatic tension. Examine how a range of practical and theoretical approaches have been utilised to manipulate the elements of drama to devise and perform original work.

Include references from the production to support your ideas.

Spend time planning and shaping your response before you complete this task at home.

## QUESTIONS

Your analysis is focused on the elements of drama:

- outline the major themes of both productions.
- describe how the voice and movement techniques were used to support the themes in both performances.
- with detailed reference to a key moment in both performances, evaluate how effectively relationships were used in the creation of mood and atmosphere.



# Contemporary and Devised Drama

## SYLLABUS CHECKLIST

### Topics covered in this chapter:

- Interpreting, manipulating and synthesising a range of practical and theoretical approaches to contemporary and devised drama.
- Contemporary theatre approaches, such as Barrie Kosky and Robert Lepage
- Experimental approaches, such as Robert Wilson and VE Meyerhold.
- How a range of practical and theoretical approaches manipulate the elements of drama to devise and perform original work.

## SET TEXT LIST FOR UNIT 4

Australian texts for Unit 4	World texts for Unit 4
Andrew Bovell: <i>When the Rain Stops Falling</i>	Samuel Beckett: <i>Endgame</i>
Matt Cameron and Tim Finn: <i>Poor Boy</i>	Friedrich Durrenmatt: <i>The Visit: A tragic comedy</i>
Michael Fatcher and Helen Howard: <i>A Beautiful Life</i>	Bryony Lavery: <i>Beautiful Burnout</i>
Lally Katz: <i>Return to Earth</i>	Tracy Letts: <i>August: Osage County</i>
Jenny Kemp: <i>Kitten</i>	Yasmina Reza: <i>God of Carnage</i>
Kit Lazaroo: <i>Asylum</i>	Brian Yorkey (writer) and Tom Kitt (composer): <i>Next to Normal</i>



# Interpreting, Manipulating and Synthesising a Range of Practical and Theoretical Approaches to Contemporary and Devised Drama.

In this unit students use the practical and theoretical approaches studied in both units to create their own original solo production and to interpret contemporary drama.

What does it mean to *interpret*, *manipulate* and *synthesise* these text-based and physical approaches we have studied such as Brecht's Epic theatre, Bogart's Viewpoints, and Suzuki's Method of Acting?

The following terms will be helpful when interpreting this statement.

1. Interpreting: this simply means to 'draw meaning from' and in drama this occurs in two main ways:
  - a. Director: decides upon the interpretation or the conceptualisation of the text and works with actors and the creative team to realise the drama event.
  - b. Actor: interprets and presents the text by adopting role or character through action to create the drama event.
2. Manipulating theoretical or experimental approaches to contemporary and self-devised drama means using and controlling these approaches. In drama this relates to the role of the director in the following way:
  - a. The director manipulates the elements of drama and relationships between drama roles through improvisation and other rehearsal processes using theoretical approaches.
3. Synthesise: to synthesise means to draw together and combine the ideas and techniques of the practical and theoretical approaches you have studied. Particularly through the:
  - a. development of new/experimental approaches in the context of contemporary, social and cultural values.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Explain how you could use one drama theorist or practitioner's ideas to interpret a script you are working on in drama this year?

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2. Explain how you manipulated one theorist's techniques to work on a monologue/scene or section this year in drama?

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3. Discuss how the use of a practitioner's approach to movement could enhance your character development in rehearsal?

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4. How could you synthesise and combine various approaches when developing your character's movement or voice for a monologue/scene or section from a play you are studying this year in drama?

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## CONTEMPORARY THEATRE APPROACHES, SUCH AS BARRIE KOSKY AND ROBERT LEPAGE

### EXAMPLE 1

#### Barrie Kosky

Australian director Barrie Kosky's productions have always revealed a surreal, scurrilously confronting, but highly inventive and vivid vision of the world – not for him a realistic or classical approach to opera. This is a director who made a “delicious, erotic satyr panto” out of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and whose controversial *King Lear* was conceived as a blend of “Star Wars with a dash of Nazism and the eerie poetic of William Blake”. Kosky's productions are fast and dirty, gorgeous and grotesque, messy fantasies where high culture collides with low with stimulating friction. Kosky describes himself as a self-styled “gay, Jewish kangaroo”. Handel's Biblical oratorio *Saul* (below) became the surprise hit of 2015, and has now been released on DVD. A riotous 18th century fantasy, it is a mixture of mime and Baroque, with a dash of MTV thrown in for good measure. Gory and gothic, it is also a truthful portrait of a mind in collapse.

Chief Director of the Berlin Komisches Oper, a company celebrated for not playing it safe, Kosky has a particularly European operatic sensibility in its most imaginative and creative sense. In 2014, Kosky was voted ‘Opera Director of the Year’ at the International Opera Awards in London and at the same awards in 2015, the Komische Oper was voted ‘Opera Company of the Year’.

Kosky prefers to do non-repertoire pieces in innovative and ensemble manners. When studying music history at Melbourne University he came across an opera called, *The Nose*, which he eventually premiered at The Royal Opera. The opera is well known for its tap-dancing chorus of noses. *The Nose* is about a man who wakes up one morning to find that he has no nose. His staging is never literal, but more surreal. In the production everyone in the cast has an oversized latex nose except the main character. This develops into a chorus-line of tap-dancing noses lead by a small boy in the smallest nose.

The 20th century's darkest chapters loom over some of Kosky's theatre work. At the Komische Oper in Berlin, where he is artistic director, he has rehabilitated works condemned by the Nazis – because they were written by Jewish composers – as *Entartete Musik*, degenerate music.

They include forgotten operettas such as Paul Abraham's *Ball at the Savoy* and *The Pearls of Cleopatra* by Oscar Straus. In a future season he will stage “the very last operetta of the Weimar Republic”, *Juromir Weinberger's Fruhlingssturme* (Spring Storms), which was a hit in 1933 before the Nazis seized power.

In Sydney, Kosky is about to stage another opera from history's precipice. Shostakovich's comic opera *The Nose* was first performed in concert in 1929, when the composer was just 22. Adapted from a short story by Gogol – about a man who wakes up one morning to find his nose is missing – the opera is youthful, exuberant and has highly inventive orchestration. It was Shostakovich's first opera, and the first to cause him strife with the Soviet regime, via the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians.

After his second opera, *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, was condemned in Pravda as “muddle instead of music” – in an unsigned article sometimes attributed to Joseph Stalin – Shostakovich effectively withdrew from writing opera and endured a queasy, uncertain relationship with the Soviet authorities.

Kosky first came across an old Russian recording of *The Nose* when he was at the University of Melbourne in the late 1980s. Kosky first staged *The Nose* in London –

unlike his recent outing there with *Carmen*, the reviews were enthusiastic – in a co-production with the Royal Opera, Opera Australia and the Komische. After its brief season here of just five performances, it opens in Berlin.

Gogol's story, and Shostakovich's treatment of it, captures a mood that is part satire, part farce, and part grotesque fairytale. The noseless Platon Kuzmitch Kovalev is a regional public servant who fancies himself as a society figure.

As his runaway proboscis takes on a life of its own, Kovalev becomes increasingly desperate to recover it. Kosky notes that the story, which captures a peculiarly Russian strain of black humour, made an impression on later writers such as Kafka and Bulgakov. "It's a satire on authority, it's a satire on corruption, but that's not what gives the piece its energy and interest," he says. "It's like a very strange modern fairy story."

"You can read it as being about sexual loss – as a castration story – or as a nonsense piece. Or you can read it as something much darker and stranger, which is about neurosis, paranoia and fear. I think it's all of those things. In this production, the theatrical form of vaudeville or revue and a sort of dirty Russian cabaret or circus is very appropriate to the music. Always, with my productions, the ideas and images are a personal response to the music. I tend to see things when I hear them ... The impulses must come from the landscape of the musical score, otherwise there's no point in doing opera. The music cannot be a soundtrack to the story, it has to be the motor for everything."

This resonates with Kosky's love of theatrical play. The director introduces a chorus line of giant noses, and has Kovalev made up with a bright red clown's nose.

He notes that Shostakovich and Jewish composers of the Weimar Republic belong to the same chapter of cultural history, when the creative arts were flourishing before being stamped out by oppressive political regimes. In *The Nose*, you can already hear the despair in the music.

In Berlin Kosky has taken enormous pride in bringing back operettas by composers such as Straus, Abraham and Kalman – not, he says, to rub German noses in guilt but to encourage them to rediscover and celebrate music that the Nazis could not silence forever. In 1933, German culture ceased to exist as it was because half of German culture at that time was Jewish. Composers, writers, actors, singers, musicians were removed from that culture and either sent into exile or sent to their death. Kosky's surreal yet playful vibrant operas become a means for bringing Jewish German culture back to life for the 21st Century.



Shostakovich's *The Nose* 2018 (photo courtesy of Opera Australia)

## Key ideas

Ecstatic theatre – Kosky describes his work as ecstatic theatre: a type of performance that can be defined as controlled chaos – tension is high

Phantasmagoria: derived from the 18th and 19th Centuries, where frightening images were projected on to the background by way of a lantern. Kosky uses audio-visual technology to create backgrounds the actors interact with.

Kosky was influenced by Grotowski's poor theatre, Butoh and Suzuki in that he likes to use elements of their ideas

Mozart is a pivotal influence on Kosky

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who is Barrie Kosky and how would you describe his personal style?

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2. What is the difference between Kosky's operas and classical opera?

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3. What is ecstatic theatre?

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4. List Kosky's influences.

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5. As a scenographer, how could you use phantasmagoria for a scene from the text you are studying in drama at the moment?

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6. As a sound designer how could you use Kosky's ideas of music being 'the motor for everything' in a scene from the text you are currently studying in drama?

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7. How could you, as an actor, use Kosky's vaudeville, review or circus to develop your character in rehearsal from the text you are currently studying in drama?

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8. How could you, as a costume designer, use Kosky's sense of the *surreal* in your costume designs for the text you are currently studying in drama?

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## EXAMPLE 2

**Robert Lepage**, (1957 –) is a Canadian writer, director, designer, and actor known for his highly original stage and film productions, which draw together disparate cultural references and unconventional media. His personal style has been described as ‘Metamorphous Scenography’ by Melissa Poll because of his dynamic stage space characterised by a set that shifts position, height, depth and/or composition to represent Lepage’s interpretation of a text. His work is characterised by evocative scenography that produces highly visual interpretations of classic dramatic texts. Lepage’s scenographic dramaturgy is effective at suggesting unconventional readings of classic plays and drawing out their subtext.

After studying in Paris with Swiss director Alain Knapp, Lepage in 1982 joined Théâtre Repère in Quebec. This theatre company, founded by Jacques Lessard, relied on the active involvement of actors to discover the key object or pattern necessary to develop the production. In 1985 Lepage became artistic director of the company.

Lepage was noted for juxtaposing multicultural elements in his plays, often to surprising effect. His *Dragon’s Trilogy* (1985) was staged partly in Chinese. For *Tectonic Plates* (1988; filmed 1992), which dealt with the collision of French Canadian and Scottish cultures, he used two pianos gliding across the stage to symbolize the continents of Europe and North America.

Lepage left Théâtre Repère to become head of the French theatre section of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa in 1989. There he staged *Needles and Opium* (1991), in which French poet and filmmaker Jean Cocteau and American jazz trumpeter Miles Davis, both played by Lepage, exchanged places. Lepage envisioned the men in 1949 travelling between New York and Paris at the same time, both addicted to drugs. In 1992 Lepage sparked controversy at the British National Theatre by setting Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in a mud bath.

Lepage returned to Quebec City in 1994 to found a new theatre company, Ex Machina, having left his position at the National Arts Centre the previous year. The company’s first production, *The Seven Streams of the River Ota* (1994), used the bombing of Hiroshima as a metaphor for contemporary problems such as AIDS. The play, set in the home of a Jewish Czech photographer living in Japan, revealed the story line through a series of flashbacks.

Many of the plays staged by Ex Machina were written and directed by Lepage, sometimes in collaboration with other members of the company. The abstracted *Zulu Time* (1999) put Lepage’s trademark ability with lighting and intricately composed video projections on full display to tell the stories of a cast of characters ranging from flight attendants to terrorists. *The Andersen Project* (2005), in which Lepage also appeared, wove together several Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales. Always intrigued by straining the boundaries of convention, Lepage staged *Lipsynch*, a nine-hour production, in 2007.

While working in the theatre, Lepage also was involved with a number of opera productions. Lepage also worked in film, first appearing in *Jesus of Montreal* (1988) as an actor playing Pontius Pilate in a Passion play. *Le Confessionnal* (1995), which Lepage wrote and directed, created parallels between the events surrounding the filming of Alfred Hitchcock’s *I Confess* (1952) and the lives of his contemporary characters. Based on Lepage’s 1987 play, *Le Polygraphe* (1996) was a metaphysical detective story sparked by the murder of one of his friends.

*Possible Worlds* (2000), based on a John Mighton play, plotted several permutations of the existence of one couple, played by Tilda Swinton and Tom McCamus. Lepage wrote

and directed *La Face cachée de la lune* (2003; *The Far Side of the Moon*), which also featured him in the roles of the two main characters; it was based on his play of the same name (2000).

Lepage applied his theatrical abilities to a multitude of other endeavours. He staged tours for British rock singer Peter Gabriel in 1993 and 2002 and, in 2005, premiered KÀ, a Cirque du Soleil production that he had designed, in Las Vegas. In 2008 he designed a massive light installation, *The Image Mill*, that projected scenes of Quebec's history onto the side of a building in Quebec City.

### Lepage's Key Concepts:

#### 1. The RSVP cycles:

- Resources
- Scores
- Value-action
- Performance

The RSVP Cycles are founded in dance and performance where they are space, objects and the body, placing improvisation at the core of the creative process.

#### 2. Lepage's devising process

Lepage says he is attracted "to plays in which the characters are transformed, but also to plays in which the sets are transformed and matter is transcendent. It's incredible to be able to travel through time and place, to infinity, all on a single stage. It's the metamorphosis brought about on stage that makes this kind of travel possible." (Charest, 1997, p.135)

"I consider myself a stage author, understanding the *mise-en-scène* as a way of writing. For example, in this work, the ideas from the *mise-en-scène* alternate with the actors' lines, one leads to the other ... What fascinates me about the act of creation is that you fill a space with objects that have no relation to each other, and because they are there, 'all piled up in the same box', there is a secret logic, a way of organising them. Each piece of the puzzle ends up finding its place." (Lepage, 2002)

Lepage points out that "directing is not the sole property of the director. With our approach, it comes out of a collective effort. When we rehearse with actors, we discover and uncover the play. When I direct, my approach is closer to that of a student than that of a teacher. I think this is what makes the play continue to evolve right until opening night and even beyond it." (Charest, 1997, p. 167)

#### 3. Multi media and performance art

Lepage's creative use of different forms such as video, moving stage-sets, puppetry, projections and music allows him to advance the narrative in all sorts of ways, with flash-forwards, jump-cuts and multiple points of view.

Some of the key characteristics of his performance-theatre personal style are:

- non-text based and event-driven action
- dependency on specific space/location and time, which structures performed events
- subjectivity and an autobiographical approach
- non-conceptual

- absence of pre-conceived ideas
- independence (they are single events created as improvisation and through accidents)
- communication with the audience through a plurality of media, regardless of the audience's verbal language
- the inclusion of the audience in the creative process

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who is Robert Lepage and how would you describe his personal style?

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2. What is Metamorphous Scenography?

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3. What is ecstatic theatre?

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4. What is Lepage's RSVP cycle?

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5. Describe Lepage's devising process?

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6. What are the key characteristics of Lepage's performance art?

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## EXPERIMENTAL APPROACHES, SUCH AS ROBERT WILSON AND VE MEYERHOLD.

### EXAMPLE 3

#### ROBERT WILSON

Robert Wilson is renowned as one of the great American experimental theatre-makers, valorised as a director, writer, performer, painter, choreographer, sculptor, video artist, scenographer and sound and lighting designer.

Born in Waco, Texas in 1941, he originally trained as an architect and that understanding of light, space and structure is the conceptual foundation of all of his work. He is well-known for his slow-motion tempo and silences. This emphasis on silence is fully explored in some of his works. *Deafman Glance* is a play without words, and his adaptation of Heiner Müller's play *Quartet (de)* contained a fifteen-minute wordless prologue. This silence onstage may be unnerving to audience members but serves a purpose of showing how important language is by its absence. It is Wilson's means of answering his own question: "Why is it no one looks? Why is it no one knows how to look? Why does no one see anything on stage?"

His way of approaching a work from its conception as an interrelated structure of planes, space and light, enables him to explore these spaces between perception, memory, observation and analysis. His famous work *Einstein on the Beach*, a collaboration with composer Philip Glass, was ground breaking when it premiered in 1976.

The opera was staggering in the scope and detail of its unique design and presentation. Wilson could see the whole work as a "time/space construction" from first discussions.



## Movement

Movement is another key element in Wilson's work. As a dancer, he sees the importance of the way an actor moves onstage and knows the weight their movement bears. When speaking of his "play without words" rendition of Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken*, Wilson says:

I do movement before we work on the text. Later we'll put text and movement together. I do movement first to make sure it's strong enough to stand on its own two feet without words. The movement must have a rhythm and structure of its own. It must not follow the text. It can reinforce a text without illustrating it. What you hear and what you see are two different layers. When you put them together, you create another texture.

With such an emphasis on movement, Wilson even tailors his auditions around the necessity of it. In his auditions, "Wilson often does an elaborate movement sequence" and "asks the actor to repeat it". Thomas Derrah, an actor in *the CIVIL warS*, found the audition process to be baffling: "When I went in, [Wilson] asked me to walk across the room on a count of 31, sit down on a count of 7, put my hand to my forehead on a count of 59. I was mystified by the whole process". To further cement the importance of movement in Wilson's works, Seth Goldstein, another actor in *the CIVIL warS*, stated "every movement from the moment I walked onto the platform until I left was choreographed to the second. During the scene at table all I did was count movements. All I thought about was timing".

## Text

When it comes time to add the text in with movement, Wilson pays close attention to the text and still makes sure there is enough "space around a text" in order for the audience to soak it up. At this point, the actors know their movements and the time in which they are executed, allowing Wilson to tack the actions onto specific pieces of text. His overall goal is to have the rhythm of the text differ from that of the movement so his audience can see them as two completely different pieces, seeing each as what it is. When in the text/movement stage, Wilson often interrupts the rehearsal, saying things like "Something is wrong. We have to check your scripts to see if you put the numbers in the right place". He goes on to explain the importance of this:

I know its hell to separate text and movement and maintain two different rhythms. It takes time to train yourself to keep tongue and body working against each other. But things happen with the body that have nothing to do with what we say. It's more interesting if the mind and the body are in two different places, occupying different zones of reality.

These rhythms keep the mind on its toes, consciously and subconsciously taking in the meanings behind the movement and how it is matching up with the language.

## Silence and Stillness

Similar to Wilson's use of the lack of language in his works, he also sees the importance that a lack of movement can have. In his production of *Medea*, Wilson arranged a scene in which the lead singer stood still during her entire song while many others moved around her. Wilson recalls that "she complained that if I didn't give her any movements, no one would notice her. I told her if she knew how to stand, everyone would watch her. I told her to stand like a marble statue of a goddess who had been standing in the same spot for a thousand years". Allowing an actor to have such stage presence without ever saying a word is very provocative, which is precisely what Wilson means to accomplish with any sense of movement he puts on the stage.

## Lighting

Wilson believes that, “The most important part of theatre” is light. He is concerned with how images are defined onstage, and this is related to the light of an object or tableau. He feels that the lighting design can really bring the production to life. The set designer for Wilson’s *the CIVIL warS*, Tom Kamm, describes his philosophy: “a set for Wilson is a canvas for the light to hit like paint”. He explains, “If you know how to light, you can make shit look like gold. I paint, I build, I compose with light. Light is a magic wand”.

Wilson is “the only major director to get billing as a lighting designer” and is recognized by some as “the greatest light artist of our time”. He designs with light to be flowing rather than an off-and-on pattern, thus making his lighting “like a musical score”. Wilson’s lighting designs feature “dense, palpable textures” and allow “people and objects to leap out from the background”. In his design for *Quartett*, Wilson used four hundred light cues in a span of only ninety minutes.

He is a perfectionist, persisting to achieve every aspect of his vision. A fifteen-minute monologue in *Quartett* took two days for him to light while a single hand gesture took nearly three hours. This attention to detail expresses his conviction that, “light is the most important actor on stage”.

## Props

Wilson’s interest in design extends to the props in his productions, which he designs and sometimes participates in constructing. Whether it is furniture, a light bulb, or a giant crocodile, Wilson treats each as a work of art in its own right. He demands that a full-scale model of each prop be constructed before the final one is made, in order, to check proportion, balance, and visual relationships on stage. Once he has approved the model, the crew builds the prop, and Wilson is renowned for sending them back again and again until they satisfy him. He is so strict in his attention to detail that when Jeff Muscovin, his tech director for *Quartett*, suggested they use an aluminum chair with a wood skin rather than a completely wooden chair, Wilson replied:

“No, Jeff, I want wood chairs. If we make them out of aluminum, they won’t sound right when they fall over and hit the floor. They’ll sound like metal, not wood. It will sound false. Just make sure you get strong wood. And no knots.”

Such attention to detail and perfectionism usually resulted in an expensive collection of props. Curators regard them as sculptures, and the props have been sold for prices ranging from \$4,500 to \$80,000.

(from Holmberg, Arthur [1996] *The Theatre Of Robert Wilson*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP ISBN 978-0-52136-492-8)

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who is Robert Wilson and how would you describe his personal style?

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2. How could you use Wilson's unique approach to movement in rehearsal?

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3. How does Wilson use silence and stillness and what effect does it have on the audience?

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4. How would a lighting designer work in collaboration with Wilson on a production?

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5. Describe Wilson's process of designing, selecting and constructing props with the technical director?

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6. How could you use Wilson's approach to scenography if you had an unlimited budget for a production of the text you are studying in drama?

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Berliner Ensemble: Faust 1 and Goethe (Wilson, 2015) Photo courtesy of Pinterest

#### EXAMPLE 4

##### Meyerhold: Biomechanics

Meyerhold (1874-1940) is recognised as an important theatrical innovator of the twentieth century. Born in Russia, he studied at the Moscow Philharmonic Society's theatre school and joined the Moscow Art Theatre's (MAT) acting company in 1898. As an actor in the company, he was influenced by the acting methods being developed by the influential director, actor and writer Stanislavsky, one of the founders of the company.

Although his early work was strongly influenced by Stanislavski's emphasis on realism, like many other theatre workers of his time, he eventually rejected the naturalistic forms of theatre that developed from this aesthetic approach. He left the MAT in 1905 and, in the years leading up to the Russian Revolution, he held a prestigious position as artistic head of the Imperial Theatres in St Petersburg. During this time he also staged experimental plays in various unofficial studios, held classes and edited a journal called *The Love of Three Oranges* under the pseudonym Dr Dapertutto.

After the Russian Revolution, Meyerhold was appointed as head of the theatrical section of the Commissariat of Education and Enlightenment. Unfortunately, his ideas and approaches conflicted with official party policies and he and his work were increasingly subjected to censorship and public criticism. As personal persecutions and cultural repression intensified in Russia during the oppressive Stalinist regime, he was arrested as a dissident in 1939 and was secretly executed in prison the following year.

Meyerhold did not write about his approaches to theatre production and acting, but information about his activities, ideas and interests has been recovered and re-examined since 1955 when his name and contributions were officially rehabilitated in Russia. We now know that his work examined and utilised more popular forms of theatre that were based on non-realistic and highly physical styles of performance such as mime and commedia dell'arte. He explored these methods over the course of his life and eventually formulated a new approach to acting based on physical training and acrobatic movement called **Biomechanics**.

## Biomechanics

### Acting

- Movement, space, rhythm and gesture are primary elements in the language of theatre
- Look for ways to create 'truthful' performances without imitating or trying to copy the reality evident in everyday life.
- Rhythm should be the base of all theatrical activity and actors should be encouraged to refine their art until they could reach the precision of machines
- The stylised forms of acting Meyerhold admired required the development of physical stamina and skill. He focused on developing a series of exercises that could enable actors to perform highly 'theatricalised' dramatic forms
- His work focused on developing the energy and rhythms
- Non-representational performance styles
- Actors should learn to present their character without trying to become their character.
- Actors are encouraged to comment on their characters, to directly address spectators from positions downstage or to improvise and banter with audiences

### Scenography

- Strong emphasis on the theatre's need for simplicity and the power of a bare stage
- In the 1920s he began to use a mode of set design called constructivism.
- Scenery and multi-levelled sets with ramps leading between platforms were constructed according to their utility and their ability to enhance biomechanical acting rather than for any decorative purpose
- He rarely used front curtains
- Often kept the house lights on so that the actors and spectators could clearly see each other
- His productions explored a variety of non-representational approaches to set design and acting
- Music was also used to support the physical and emotional rhythms he wished to accentuate in productions and he sometimes composed his own scores.

Meyerhold, like a number of theorists, suggested that theatre has its own language. But, unlike many of his contemporaries, he rejected the view that art somehow transcended the everyday concerns of life. He saw theatre as a social art and a social act and argued that the concerns and issues of all classes of people should be represented in art forms like theatre. Sadly, his refusal to adopt official ideals of social realism and naturalistic forms of theatre eventually cost him his life. However, his approaches and innovations have left a lasting impression on the theatre world and his influence is clearly evident in the work of the celebrated director and playwright, Bertolt Brecht.

Biomechanics' purpose was to widen the emotional potential of a theatre piece and express thoughts and ideas that could not be easily presented through the naturalistic theatre of the period.

The techniques of Biomechanics were developed during the rehearsals of a series of plays directed by Meyerhold in the 1920s and 1930s when Socialist Realism was at its height in Russia. Biomechanics is a precursor to and influence on much of the 20th Century's physical theatre.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who is Meyerhold and how would you describe his historical and political context?

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2. How could you use Meyerhold's biomechanics when developing a character's movement in rehearsal?

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3. How does Meyerhold's biomechanics differ from the Socialist Realism that was popular in its day?

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4. In sport, *biomechanics* examines forces acting on the body, and the effects of these forces. How could this relate to acting and Meyerhold's system?

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5. Describe the ultimate purpose of Meyerhold's biomechanics?

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6. How could you use Meyerhold's approach to scenography for a production of the text you are studying in drama?

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7. Meyerhold's ideas had a strong influence on Brecht. How are they similar?

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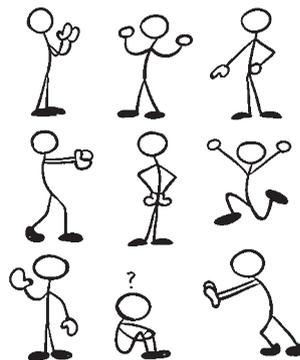
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# HOW A RANGE OF PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES MANIPULATE THE ELEMENTS OF DRAMA TO DEVISE AND PERFORM ORIGINAL WORK.

## ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

1. Role/Character
  - a. Role – Two dimensional, highly stereotyped, represents an abstract concept, displays a specific human trait (emotions etc.) as with expressionism, Epic theatre, and presentational theatre.
  - b. Three Dimensional – multi-layered, inner life and well rounded as in realism/naturalism and representational theatre.
2. Relationships – how characters interact with each other. This differs in various practical and theoretical approaches. Relationships may change or may not over the course of the play.
  - a. Cooperative – Positive, warm, caring
  - b. Adversarial – negative, cold or provoking
  - c. Neutral – indifferent
  - d. Non-existent – unknown
  - e. Identify what type of relationship your role/character has.
3. Situation – The set of circumstances a character/role experiences.
4. Voice – How you use your voice to create meaning and create role/character.
5. Movement – how you create physicality to express meaning to create character/role.



6. Space and time:
  - a. Space – How you use your space to create setting, locations, geographical (country or city).
  - b. Time – The year, month, date, day, hour of the inner world of the play. Time could be forward in a regular, linear manner or it can move in a non-realistic way, leaps in time, flashback or cyclical techniques could be used.
7. Symbol and metaphor:
  - a. Symbol – an object or person, activity or event that represents something else.
  - b. Metaphor – The naming of, or indication that, one object, person, activity or event is another (the curtain of night).
8. Language and text – Prose or verse. Prose follows the patterns of everyday natural speech – associated with representational drama styles. Verse is more rhythmic in its flow, combining stressed and unstressed syllables. Text is simply written material.
  - a. Language examples: verse, prose, direct address, narration, aside, reported speech, monologue and duologue.

9. Mood and atmosphere –
- a. Mood – the emotional states and attitudes of the character and roles during performance as the dramatic action unfolds.
  - b. Atmosphere – the impact and interaction of the performance made on the audience.
10. Dramatic tension: the emotional or psychological pressure that builds during the performance as the dramatic action unfolds.



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Give an example of both a two-dimensional and three dimensional character from plays you have studied or seen. What form and style were these plays performed in?

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2. How do character's relationships change throughout the course of a critical scene in one play and how could this be shown using proxemics?

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3. How would you describe your character's vocal qualities in a play your are interpreting in drama?

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4. Describe your character's movement using animals and adjectives.

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5. Describe a symbol and a metaphor from a famous play or a play you are studying in drama. What is the difference between a symbol and a metaphor?

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6. How can you manipulate mood using colour as a lighting designer?

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7. How could you manipulate atmosphere using sound design for a production of the text you are studying in drama?

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8. How can you build dramatic tension using tempo and rhythm in a scene from a text you are studying in drama?

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## Practical (Performance) Examination

### *Time allocated*

- a. Examination: 20 minutes

### *Provided by the candidate*

- b. A signed Declaration of authenticity
- c. Two copies of the Original solo performance script with completed cover pages
- d. Two copies of the Scripted monologue with completed cover pages
- e. Sound equipment (if required), including CD player, MP3 player and dock or laptop
- f. Props or costumes (if required) that the candidate can carry into the room unassisted

### *Provided by the supervisor*

- g. One school desk and two chairs
- h. A warm-up space

### *Additional information*

- i. The candidate will be attired in plain 'theatre blacks' and/or costume
- j. The candidate is to work within the marked performance area
- k. The time allocated includes transition time
- l. The markers will stop the preparation or performance after the maximum allocated time has elapsed for that component

Section	Supporting information
<b>Part 1</b> <b>Original solo performance</b> 40% of the practical examination Preparation: 60 seconds Performance duration: 4 minutes–6 minutes 15 seconds	The candidate performs an original solo performance portraying a character journey of one or more characters.  The candidate can bring scenery, props and costume limited to what they alone can carry and set-up in 60 seconds.  The candidate can use an audio recording to support their performance and have a technical assistant to operate sound.
<b>Part 2</b> <b>Scripted monologue</b> 30% of the practical examination Preparation: 60 seconds Duration: 2 minutes–3 minutes 15 seconds	The candidate has 60 seconds to prepare for the Scripted monologue.  The preparation time can be used to organise the space, props and/or costume.  The candidate performs their choice of a scripted monologue from a published play text.

Section	Supporting information
<b>Part 3</b> <b>Spontaneous improvisation</b> 20% of the practical examination Preparation: 60 seconds Performance duration: 1 minute–2 minutes 15 seconds	The candidate is given an improvisation based on the Original solo performance or the Scripted monologue of a character located from either a different time or situation.  The preparation time can be used to plan the improvisation and/or organise the space, props and costume.
<b>Part 4</b> <b>Interview</b> 10% of the practical examination Duration: 2 minutes–3 minutes 30 seconds	The candidate is asked three questions relating to Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the practical (performance) examination.  Through their answers the candidate explains and critically analyses intentions, drama processes and theory relevant to their examination performances.  The candidate is required to answer in clear, well-structured ways using appropriate terminology and drama language addressing specific techniques, elements, conventions and principles.

### Characterisation

*'I've always remembered something Sanford Meisner, my acting teacher, told us. When you create a character, it's like making a chair, except instead of making something out of wood; you make it out of yourself. That's the actor's craft – using your body to create a character.'*

Robert Duvall

Have you read and *researched* the entire play? Yes?  No?

### The Given Circumstances

#### WHO AM I?

Character Background

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Super (life) Objective

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WHERE AM I? (be specific)

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WHEN IS IT? (be specific)

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*The Scene*

WHO/ WHAT IS THE SUBJECT?

What is my relationship to the subject? (be specific)

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WHAT HAS HAPPENED BEFORE THIS MOMENT?

What details from the character's life are relevant to this scene?

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What has occurred immediately before the scene?

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WHAT DO I WANT THE SUBJECT TO DO? (Scenic objective)

I want to make the subject do or say something

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WHY DO I WANT THIS? (Motivation)

I want to feel different in this way

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HOW WILL I ACHIEVE THIS? (Tactics/ Actions)

Consider as many different tactics as possible you can play to achieve your objective.

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WHAT IS THE CONFLICT IN THE SCENE? (Obstacle)

Conflict is that which makes theatre interesting.

What is in the way of my character achieving his/ her objective? This is the obstacle. Fighting to overcome the obstacle causes conflict.

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WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Ask yourself: What are my absolute hopes versus my absolute fears for the scene? In other words: What is the best outcome versus the worst outcome for my character? This will inform the actor how important it is for them to achieve their objective.

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*The Most Important Elements – describe using a single word*

1. **Objective**      What you character wants

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2. **Motivation**      Why your character wants it

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3. **Tactic**              The psychological means of achieving it

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4. **Action**              The physical means of achieving it

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5. **Obstacle**          What stands in your way?

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6. **Subject**            That which you are focused on changing in some way – usually another character.
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### The Space

*“When you stand on the stage you must have a sense that you are addressing the whole world, and that what you say is so important the whole world must listen.”*

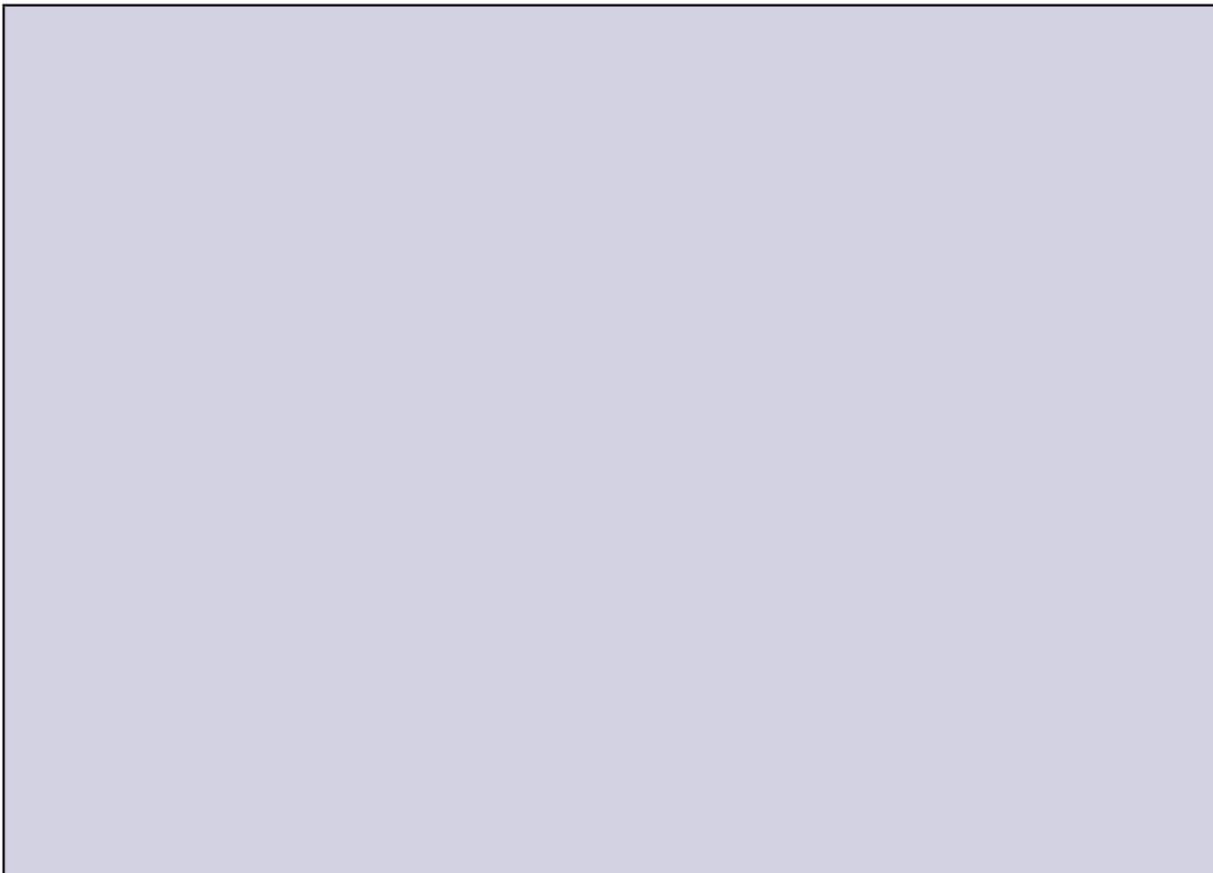
Stella Adler

When you enter the performance space, remember this is your space, your time – seek to control it. Fill the space with your energy. Breathe deeply to calm your nerves.

1. Space considerations: do you want to begin on or off stage? Why? What position on stage best suits your performance? Why?
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Point of Focus: position whoever you are talking to in your OSP downstage with their backs to the audience. This allows you to focus your attention to the audience/markers. Don't introduce other characters at right angles to where you are standing as this causes the actor to be in profile. Place all imaginary characters at 45 degree angle to you so that your imaginary character approaches you from downstage left or right. This enables the audience to clearly see your face and expressions.

2. Block out and map where each part of your OSP will take place below:





### *Symbolic Props and Costumes*

Symbolic props and costumes can add an effective dimension to your performance but don't overdo it. They can also be used several times throughout the performance. For example, you could have an oversized compass that represents being lost, or a telescope that you use as a telescope, a walking cane and a pen.

Symbolic Prop	What does it represent and how will you use it?



### *Character qualities and the impact of context?*

- Voice?
  - Accents etc. (See also language)
  - Voice – find your way into your character through your choice of voice. Animal? (Andy Serkis based his voice for Gollum in *Lord of the Rings* on a cat coughing up a fur ball; and the voice for Smeagol on his 4 year old son).
- Body?
  - Movement techniques and physical elements
  - Incorporating physical theatre techniques:
    - o **Mime** – This usually means stylised movement but can be comparatively realistic.

- o **Gesture** – A gesture may be something small but can have emotional impact or it can be a particular movement that defines a character.
- o **Status** – This may be executed by use of levels or by posture and facial expressions, or a combination of all of these with voice work.
- o **Proximity** – How close or far you are from your audience can be a source of very powerful impact. For example, the threatening gangster who speaks to his “victim” DSC as close to the audience as possible given the space.
- o **Stance** – This is associated with strength as the body could radiate assertion and authority or weakness by stance, incorporating posture.
- o **Harshness and tenderness** – Used here as umbrella terms to focus on the fact that in physical work the gestures and bigger movements come together to express the emotions of the piece.
- o **Movement** – Every movement needs to be rehearsed with precision.
- o **Not moving** – If the stage has been full of character movement, immobility can have a powerful effect.
- o **Mask work** – The impact of a mask is visual and without the facial features to show action, movement becomes an even more central performance instrument.
- o **Dance work** – Don’t be afraid to include dance in your work; you don’t have to be an experienced dancer. ‘Dad dancing’ can work well in a comedy for instance!
- o **Motif** – This is repeated use of a movement pattern which has meaning and reminds us of the central theme of the work.

### *Other qualities*

**Psychological** – what is the character’s distinct psychology?

- **Psychological Gesture?**

Psychological Gesture is a physical expression of the thoughts, feelings and desires of the character, incorporated into one movement. It awakens the essence of the character in you thus aligning your thoughts, feelings and will (objective) with that of the character. When this happens, your walk, your expressive mannerisms, your voice and line delivery are all inspired by one moving image. You can perform the gesture prior to your monologue to trigger your artistic nature. While in the monologue, if your inspiration weakens, you simply envision the gesture in your imagination as you are acting and it will revitalize you.



**How do you find the right Psychological Gesture?**

For example: if you are playing a villain, you might begin by asking what it is your character desires.

Power?

Okay, how do you go about getting power?

By dominating?

Okay, what is a physical movement that dominates?

Pressing down.

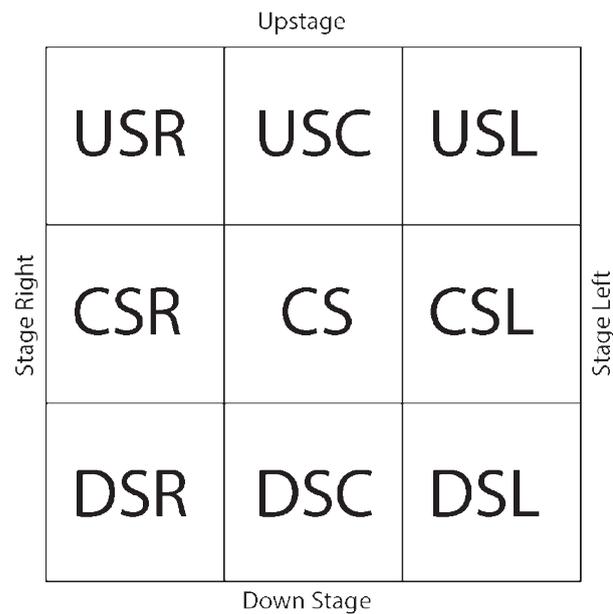
*Design and work out your interaction with:*

- Audience (within monologue) position
- Spatial elements and props
- Costumes and props: are they practical? Are they allowed?



*Blocking as appropriate to situation, space and action?*

- Imaginative?
- Sensitive?



*Language:*

- Pronunciation is there for a reason – do you keep it or shift it? Why?

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*How do I end it?*

- Where is your character now in their journey?

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- How have they developed or what has changed as a result of the scene? What has been revealed about the sub-text?

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- Has their voice/physical/inner qualities shifted or changed?

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- Final moment?

- Hold the end moment. Ensure you have time allowance to hold that end moment for a few seconds then break from the scene.

- o How is the final line/word/gesture etc delivered?

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- o What do you want to leave your audience with?

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- Energy of scene: Is it a climatic or anti-climatic ending how do you address this?

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## REHEARSAL TECHNIQUE:

“strategies and approaches to rehearsing and directing, including use of planning ...”

Be able to map out your process of preparation and rehearsal.

- Rehearse with someone else acting as the other person/s in the scene
- Lines and emotion run
  - Play alternative and exaggerated emotions
  - Over-the-top gesture runs
- Improvise it – run once you have the idea of the motivations, shifts etc.
- Find the light and shade, variations in pace, delivery vocally and physically.
- Have you watched yourself? Record and watch.
- Play with emotion, pace, dynamics etc.
- Play it doing alternative actions, or actions you might find in this space or situation. Watch what others do.
- Rehearse whilst doing everyday tasks, e.g. washing up or making a bed – **BUT** don't just make it a line run.
- Hot seating.
- Block your movement in the space – note: remember the space is three dimensional,
  - Remember to motivate your movements.
  - Remember to consider what is in the space.
  - Actually plan your blocking showing the shifts in the scene/character.
  - Rehearse in the space.
- Have sets of rules:
  - e.g. The door is always there. When I'm angry this is my place of retreat. The other character in the space is always this height. The character who calls from off stage always calls from this side of the space.
- What do I do with my hands, arms? Control them! Use a prop.
- Punctuation – it's important, the playwright has included it for a reason.
- Rehearse the transitions in and out of the monologue.
- Run vocally – record your sound and listen to it carefully. Ask someone who doesn't know the text to listen to it, and tell you what it was about. Are there any parts that were unclear?

1. If I wanted to create a domineering angry character and a shy, submissive character, how would I do this using posture, gesture and facial expressions?

Character	Posture	Gestures	Facial Expressions
Domineering & Angry			
Shy & Submissive			

### *Costume designs*



# The Man

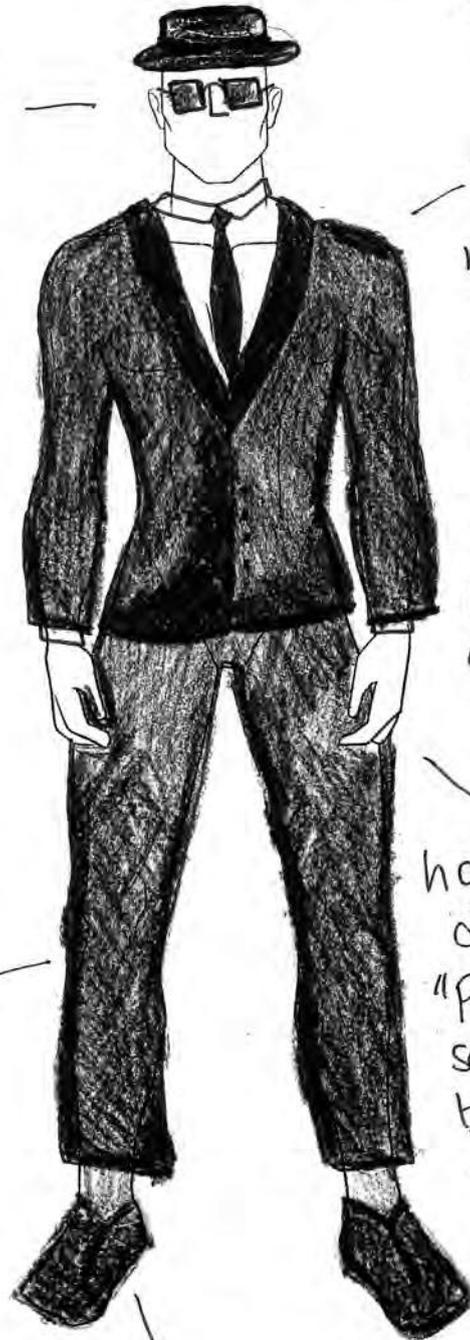
C.I.A style hat.

Myth, Propaganda + Disaster

Dark sunglasses hide his eyes as he is an undercover, spy type character and appears out of nowhere

Black suit and tie like a Homeland Security or C.I.A. agent - we never find out exactly who he is.

TORTURER  
In scene 26 The Man tortures Talbot in a cell which then becomes an art installation that the other characters are watching like Guantanamo Bay.



Black suit made from synthetic material to make it look like cashmere. He needs to look slick, expensive + dangerous.

gun in his holster. He is dangerous / deadly  
"Professor... what say I start blowing your fingers off one by one."

Black shoes - he moves silently - the torturer

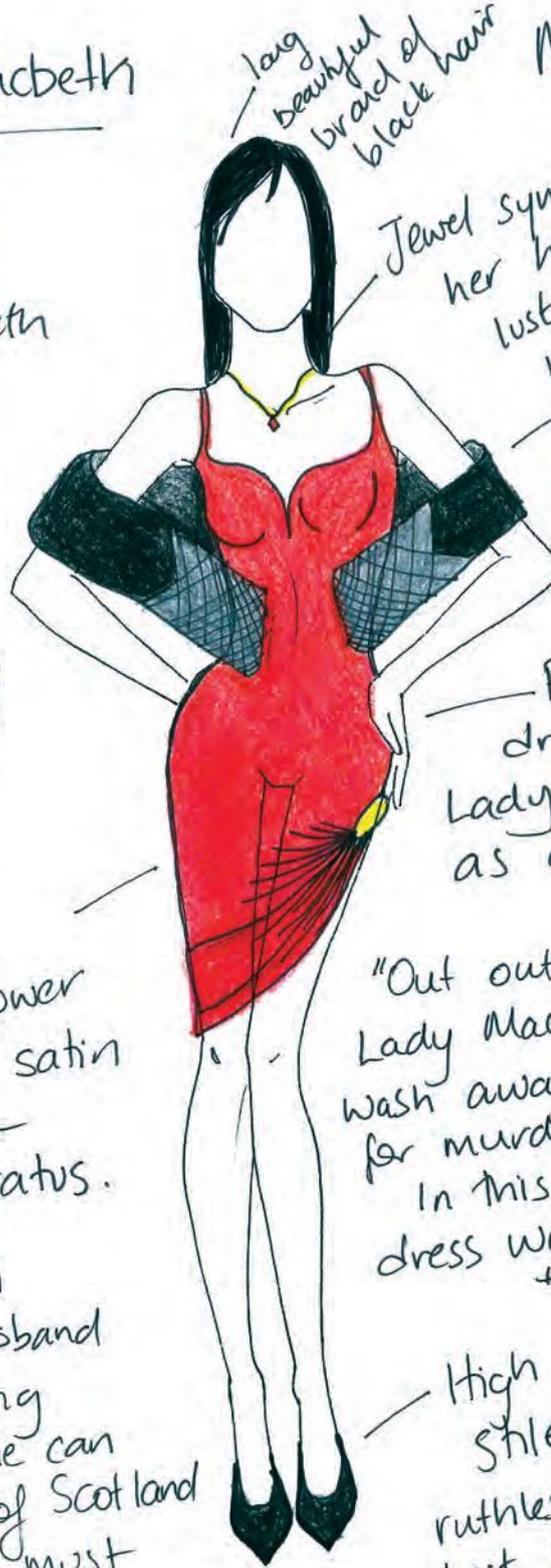
Courtney Hansen

# Lady Macbeth

Contemporary  
Lady Macbeth  
- corporate  
woman  
but still  
ruthless,  
scheming,  
power-hungry  
- fur shawl

Red  
lust for power  
velvet or satin  
material -  
high status.

Lady Macbeth  
goads her husband  
into committing  
regicide so she can  
become queen of Scotland  
so the costume must  
reflect her corrupt evil  
personality.



long  
beautiful  
strand of  
black hair

# Macbeth

Jewel symbolising  
her high status and  
lust for power + position  
wealth.

Black - death  
"Unsex me here"  
- stripped of  
feminine "weatness"  
"divorcetvelty"

Red "sexy"  
dress to symbolise  
Lady Macbeth  
as a temptress.

"Out out damned spot"  
Lady Macbeth cannot  
wash away her guilt  
for murdering Duncan.  
In this scene her  
dress would be torn  
+ disheveled.

High black  
stilettos - ambition  
ruthless ambition +  
lust for power

Courtney Hansen

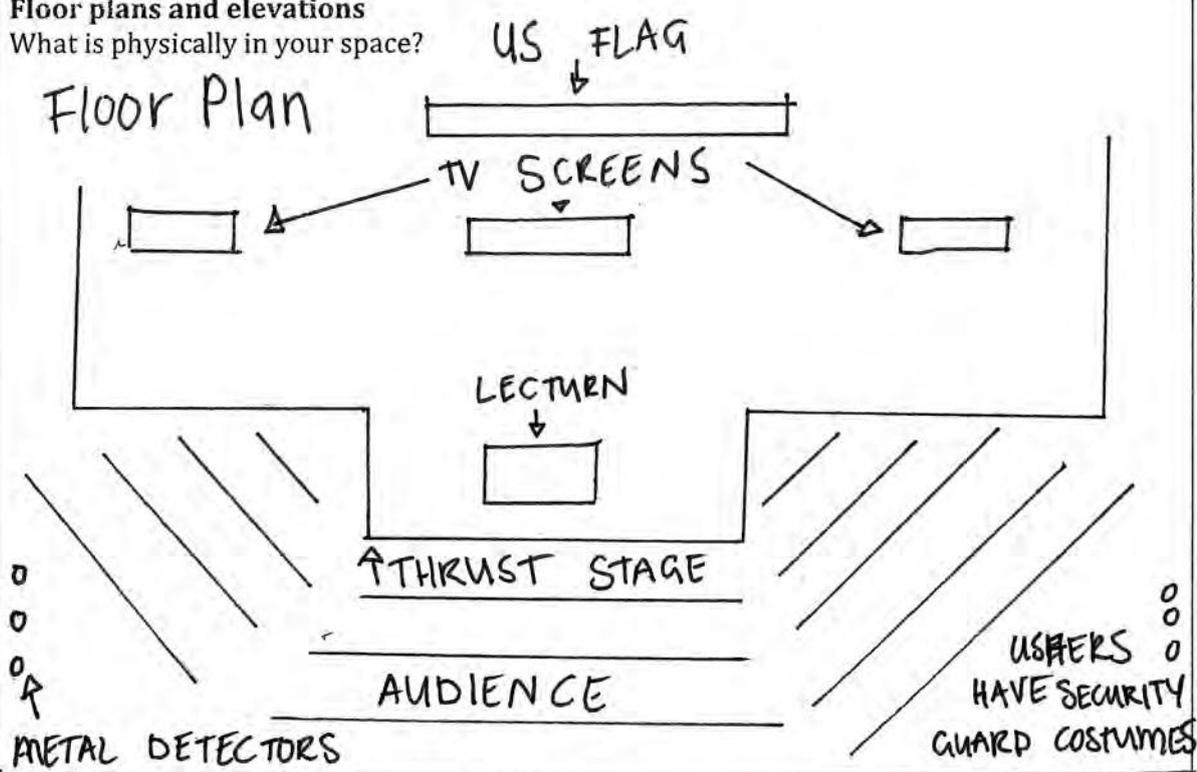
Costume design

**Floor plans and elevations** (see following page for example)

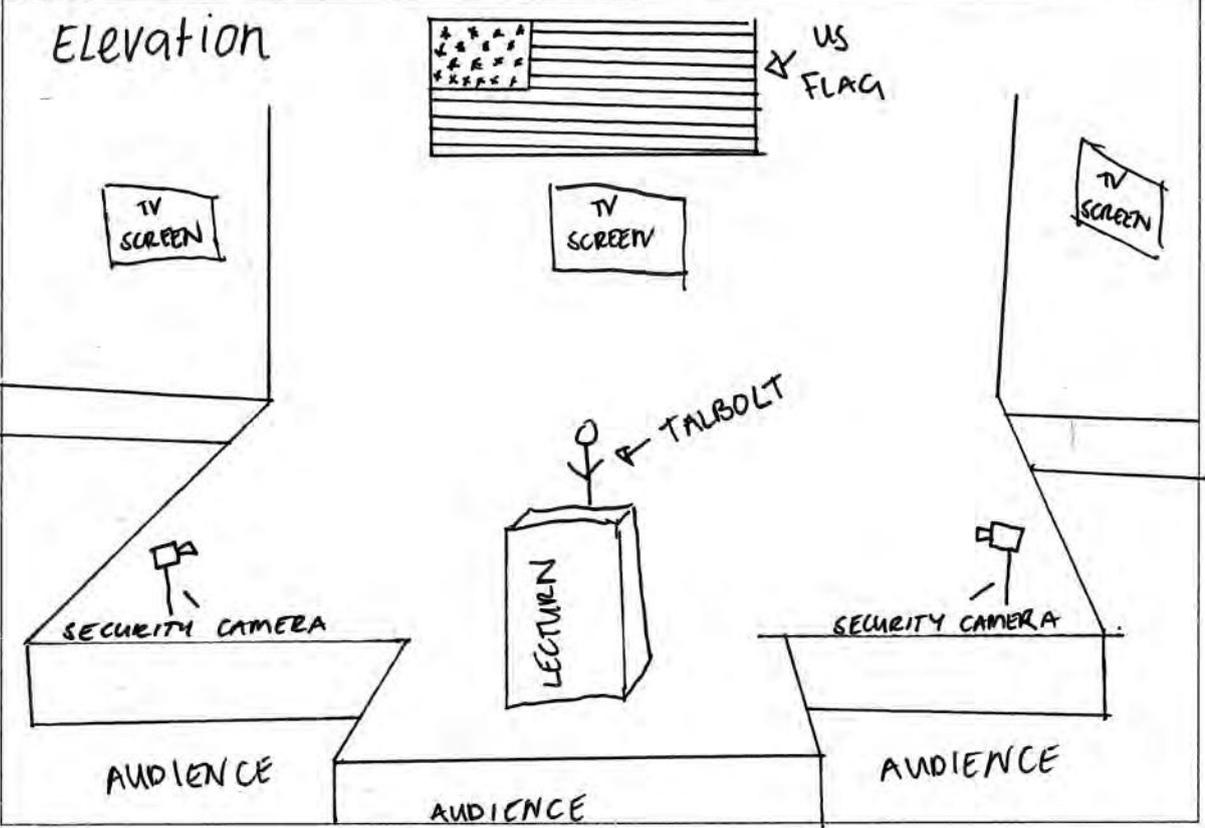
What is physically in your space?

Floor plans and elevations  
What is physically in your space?

### Floor Plan



### Elevation



## Monologue Marking Key

What is in the Marking key? To find the latest marking key look on the SCSA website at: [https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/479121/Drama-ATAR-course-Practical-performance-marking-key-2018.pdf](https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/479121/Drama-ATAR-course-Practical-performance-marking-key-2018.pdf)

Familiarise yourself with the marking key.

Know how you are being marked and apply it to your monologue.

### Scripted Monologue

Voice Technique

Movement Technique

Role/Character

Elements, conventions and forms and styles of drama

Designs and technologies.

What's essential in a scripted monologue?

- Your monologue must come from a published play that is of appropriate complexity for a year 12 ATAR exam. Read the entire script so that you understand the character, context, form and style and the character's journey.
- You need to effectively and creatively integrate vocal and movement techniques to maximise dramatic meaning
- You must perform a highly credible role/characterisation
- You need to communicate an effective and complete dramatic journey – so make sure the monologue you choose has a character arc.
- Effectively and creatively integrate the elements of drama and the drama forms and styles into your monologue to maximise dramatic meaning and audience impact
- Use appropriate drama conventions for your form and style
- Creatively integrate design and technology to maximise dramatic meaning and audience impact – use soundscapes, costumes, props, sets that you can carry on and off the stage if it suits the piece.

### Advice for candidates

- If you use soundscapes or voice-overs in the Original Solo Performance ensure that they actually enhance the performance.
- Do not use props that are inappropriate and/or deemed a hazard such as glass, ceramics, liquids (including nail polish), knives and food in the examination.
- Use the time before the commencement of the Original Solo Performance to check your voice with the acoustics of the performance space.
- Wear footwear that is appropriate for your role/s and/or character/s in the examination.
- Listen carefully to the improvisation details provided by the marker so you can determine the requirements in terms of change in mood/character, situation and energy level.

## Scripted monologue

### Uta Hagen's NINE Questions

The famous theatre practitioner Uta Hagen, who died in March of 2004 is noted for her work as a profoundly truthful actress and outstanding teacher/coach of some of the most respected actors of today. Her book *Respect for Acting* is essential reading for all serious actors and students of

the theatre. Knowing the answers to her “NINE QUESTIONS” is an important tool to use for scene and monologue work.

Many actors used these questions only.

### Hagen’s Nine Questions

1. Who am I?  
Who is your character? Identify all the details: name/age, physical traits, relatives, education, personal opinions, likes, dislikes, hobbies, fears, ethics, and beliefs.

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2. What time is it?  
The year, the season, the day, the minute. What is the significance of time?

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3. Where am I?  
Identify the country, the city/town, the neighborhood, the building, the room, the specific area of the room.

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4. What surrounds me?  
What is happening in the environment around you? Weather, landscape, people, animate/inanimate objects.

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5. What are the given circumstances?  
Identify events in the past, present, future. What has happened, what is happening, what is going to happen?

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6. What are my relationships?  
This is more than your relationship to other people. Think about your relationship to objects, characters, and events.

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7. What do I want?  
What do you want immediately? What does the character want overall?

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8. What is in my way?  
What are the obstacles to getting what you want?

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9. What do I do to get what I want?  
What actions do you take (both physically and verbally)? What tactics?

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## *Voice Terminology*

- voice techniques (posture, breathing techniques, voice production, articulation, pace, pause, pitch, projection, phrasing, tone and accent as appropriate and dynamics) for clarity, control and flexibility of voice in performance appropriate to text, forms and styles.

## *Posture*

Effective posture is required to assist in creating an effective voice. Effective posture means freeing your body of tension and having relatively straight posture. (Neutral position is helpful)

1. Pace – the speed at which we talk. How can we use pace effectively?
2. Pitch – is the level of how high or how low we speak? How can we vary our pitch in performance? What are some ways we can vary pitch?
3. Pause – the break or gap in vocal sound. Examples of how pause can be used is to demonstrate, thought, or hesitation
4. Projection – increasing volume.
5. Phrasing – the grouping of words spoken together.
6. Tone – emotion.

### **Notes:**


*Movement Terminology*

**A picture tells a thousand words:**



*Images created through movement: describe the following for your monologue*

- Facial expression – can reflect inner thoughts, emotion, and reactions to other characters or situations

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- Eye-line – can be used as point of focus to draw audience attention to an object, a person or create tension.

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- Posture – how can you position your body to show character, relationship and situation? How are we using posture in movement and in stillness?

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- Physical nuances – how can we utilise nuance, to create credible characters?

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*Gestures – Gesture is typically used in three ways:*

- To explain and support dialogue
- To explain something that cannot be easily explained without verbalisation
- Are involuntary actions that reveal feelings, thoughts and attitudes. This type of gesture is either a reaction to something or someone: Someone tells you a sad story and you cry; someone puts pepper under your nose and you sneeze.

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- Gait – How does your character walk or move in the space?



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- Weight – How do you demonstrate the character's body and size?

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- Space – How do you use your space? Consider levels, space above you, props, desk, chairs and how you move in the space.

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- Time – move at different speeds, stillness, time to move from one place to the next or how long before you move. How long does it take you to walk, run, dance?

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- Energy – vitality and vibrancy that is expressed. What type of energy does your character require? If your character has a lower energy level how do you show that and maintain your internal energy?

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- Proxemics – the distance between two roles or characters and how this demonstrates feelings or relationships towards each other.

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- Consider the control of movement in performance appropriate to text, forms and styles.

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- Focus and spatial awareness.

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### LABAN'S MOVEMENT EFFORTS

Describe your character's movement using Laban's 8 movement efforts below:

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Effort	Pace	Weight	Direction
<b>Flick</b>	Fast	Light	Indirect
<b>Dab</b>	Fast	Light	Direct
<b>Press</b>	Slow	Heavy	Direct
<b>Wring</b>	Slow	Heavy	Indirect
<b>Slash</b>	Fast	Heavy	Indirect
<b>Punch</b>	Fast	Heavy	Direct
<b>Float</b>	Slow	Light	Indirect
<b>Glide</b>	Slow	Light	Direct

### Elements of Drama – Reminder

#### 1. Role/Character and Relationships

- Role – Two-dimensional, highly stereotyped, represents an abstract concept, displays a specific human trait (emotions etc.)
- Three Dimensional – multi-layered, inner life and well rounded.
- Relationships – how characters interact with each other. Relationships may change or may not over the course of the play.
- Cooperative – Positive, warm, caring
- Adversarial – negative, cold or provoking
- Neutral – indifferent
- Non-existent – unknown
- Identify what type of relationship your role/character has.

2. **Situation** – The set of circumstances a character/role experiences.

3. **Voice** – How you use your voice to create meaning and create role/character.

4. **Movement** – how you create physicality to express meaning to create character/role.

#### 5. Space and time:

- Space** – How you use your space to create setting, locations, geographical (country or city)
- Time** – The year, month, date, day, hour of the inner world of the play. Time could be forward in a regular, linear way, or it can move in a non-realistic way, i.e. leaps in time, flashback or cyclical.

6. **Symbol and metaphor**

- a. Symbol – an object or person, activity or event that represents something else.
- b. Metaphor – The naming of or indication that one object, person, activity or event is another. (The curtain of night)

7. **Language and text** – Prose or verse. Prose follows the patterns of everyday natural speech – associated with representational drama styles. Verse is more rhythmic in its flow, combining stressed and unstressed syllables. Text is simply written material.

- a. Language examples: verse, prose, direct address, narration, aside, reported speech, monologue and duologue.

8. **Mood and atmosphere** –

- a. **Mood** – the emotional states and attitudes of the character and roles during performance as the dramatic action unfolds.
- b. **Atmosphere** – the impact and interaction of the performance made on the audience

9. **Dramatic tension:** the emotional or psychological pressure that builds during performance as the dramatic action unfolds.

Design and technologies

How are you creatively using your space, defining character and using the elements of drama to create a performance that has audience impact and dramatic meaning.

Two chairs and a table, how can you creatively use them?



Notes:


*Have you established and how will you show the following:*

- **The influence of the Forces in the play.**

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The various influences, pressures and stimuli in a period or era that brought about change or maintained continuity. These forces may include *political, economic, social, cultural, conflict, religious, environmental, group pressure and identity*. The relative impact of forces refers not only to the forces themselves, but also the degree, scale or pace of change or the continuity of the status quo during the period.

- Language of the text:

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- Dramatic conventions of the piece/period:

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- **Have you established the inner context of the scene/play?**

- Application of the form and style to the dramatic elements:

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- Units of action/beats: physically and vocally marked

— How do you mark them?

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— Units of action?

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- Audience?
  - Who is your character addressing? What is your relationship with the different levels of audience? (Those watching the monologue and those within the monologue.)

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**Transition 1:**

OSP to Monologue: *(Remember the one minute limit!)*

- How is your character/style different from your OSP?
- Have you a simple/easy way to achieve costume change or amendment?
- Have you an easily achievable space/props/set change for the time allowed?
- How are you going to shift character and style?
  - Do you have a shift mechanism?
    - o Energy?
    - o Character rhythm etc? –
    - o Physicalisation? – *Physical poses – transitions between*
    - o Entrance: Position/ pace/ purpose? *Having alternative entry/starting points – what is your purpose?*
    - o Starting mid action?
  - The starting moment! Don't slide into character or the scene.

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## Interview

Practise answering the following practical exam questions:

Remember: if you don't understand the question ask the markers to repeat it and look for key words like 'dramatic tension' or 'critical framework'.

### IMPROVISATION

1. Explain how you created dramatic tension in your improvisation

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2. Explain how you created character using voice in your improvisation

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3. Explain how you created mood and atmosphere in your improvisation

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4. Explain how you established situation in your improvisation

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### SCRIPTED MONOLOGUE

1. Discuss how you used a particular practitioner's approach in your rehearsal of your scripted monologue

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2. Discuss how you created a sense of place in your scripted monologue

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3. Discuss how you showed subtext in your scripted monologue

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4. Discuss the form and style of your scripted monologue

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5. Discuss the forces that impacted on the characters in your scripted monologue

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## ORIGINAL SOLO PERFORMANCE

1. Explain how you manipulated the elements of drama in your original solo production

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2. Explain how you used theoretical or practitioner approaches in your construction of your original solo production

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3. Explain how you established audience responses to your original solo production

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4. Explain how you used improvisation techniques to develop your character/s for your original solo production

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5. Explain how you used movement and voice to create character/s for your original solo production

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# Written Examination

## Time allowed

Reading time before commencing work: ten minutes

Working time for paper: two and a half hours

## Permissible items

Standard items: pens (blue/black preferred), pencils (including coloured), sharpener, correction fluid/tape, eraser, ruler, highlighters

Section	Supporting information
<b>Section One</b> <b>Analysis and interpretation of a drama text</b> <b>Short answer</b> 60% of the written examination Two questions Suggested working time: 90 minutes	<p>The candidate is required to analyse and interpret a short unseen drama text from the point of view of an actor, director, lighting designer, sound designer, costume designer, scenographer and/or dramaturge.</p> <p>The drama text includes a script excerpt and other information about the script which can include character lists, director's or designer's notes, images, background and contextual information.</p> <p>The candidate can use lists, summaries, annotated sketches or diagrams, tables and graphic organisers where appropriate.</p>
<b>Section Two</b> <b>Australian drama and world drama</b> <b>Extended answer</b> 40% of the written examination One question from a choice of five Suggested working time: 60 minutes	<p>The candidate is required to analyse and explain how they would perform or stage one Australian play and one world play from the Set Text lists. The response is from the point of view of one role for both set texts. That is, actor, director, scenographer, lighting designer, sound designer, costume designer or dramaturge.</p> <p>The response requires candidates to explain and justify how they would select and apply drama processes to perform or stage both set texts using conventions, elements, principles and/or techniques of drama.</p> <p>Candidates are required to use extended answer formats drawn from drama practice where they develop their ideas, analysis, discussions and arguments using, as appropriate to the question, the following: sequenced and structured paragraphs with topic sentences supported by evidence, lists, tables, annotated diagrams, graphic organisers, text references and/or justifications.</p>

## Section 1.

### *Sample responses*

Section One: Analysis and interpretation of a drama text using extended answer forms including sequenced and structured paragraphs with topic sentences supported by evidence, lists, tables, annotated diagrams, graphic organisers, text references and/or justifications.

### Examples: charts

Clearly and persuasively explains why and how the main features of the play will attract a broad, general audience.

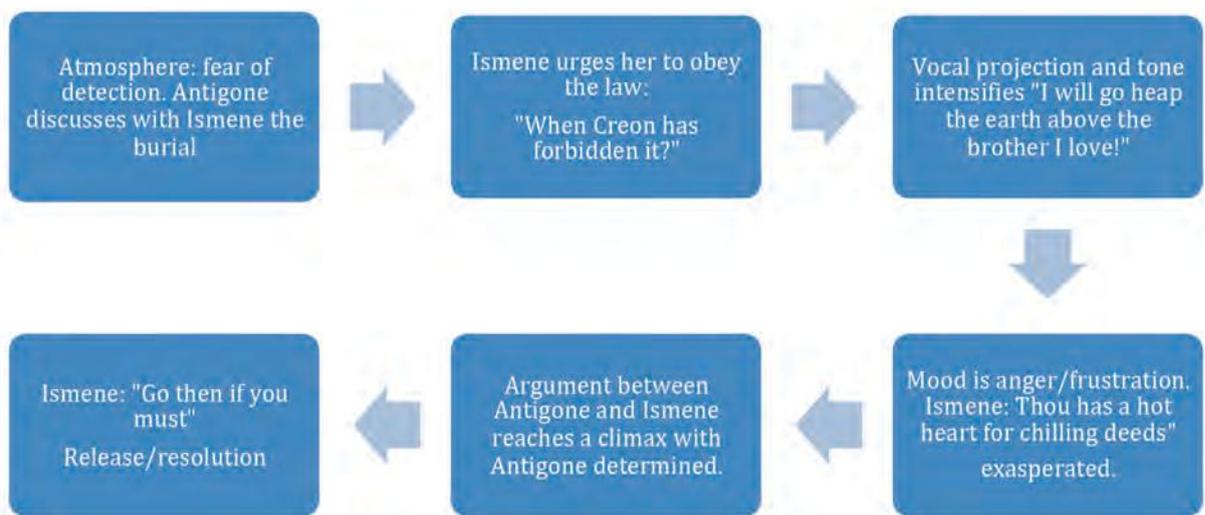
Includes quote from the play to support notes.

Main Feature of the Play	Reasons for choosing stage space
<p>Form and Style:</p> <p>Magical realism and representational performance style</p> <p>Proscenium stage</p>	<p>A contemporary audience likes an intimate space to connect to their own personal experience. Representational performance style evokes emotions and sympathy/empathy for the character.</p> <p>The proscenium stage allows the audience to be near the actors whilst still maintaining the fourth wall.</p>
<p>Set in different time periods over a 100 year time span.</p>	<p>The set needs to switch from one time period to another quickly using lighting and costume. The table DSC will be the one set piece that does not move.</p>
<p>The play begins with the opening stage directions, "Let us begin with a steady fall of rain"</p>	<p>When the Rain Stops Falling is a dystopic play set in the future following environmental disaster. The proscenium stage allows for a fish "And a fish falls from the sky and lands at Gabriel's feet" to be lowered from the fly system and for rain to be projected onto the back cyclorama.</p>

### Response examples: flow charts and dot points

This answer uses a flow chart that details the development of one scene from the text in relation to shifts in voice, mood and atmosphere.

The answer also effectively uses quotes from the play in the annotations to pinpoint shifts in mood and atmosphere appropriate to the point of view of a director.



### Outline a rehearsal process

- As a director I would utilize the rehearsal process 'emotion memory' by Stanislavski for Act 1 Scene 1 in Antigone when Antigone and Ismene are discussing Antigone burying her brother. Ismene doesn't want Antigone to do it because Creon has forbidden it.
- I would have actors think of a time when they felt annoyed, and due to a non-verbal focus, get them to display this feeling through their posture and energy.
- Then work on proxemics, gait and use of space to further express the idea of frustration.
- I would then get the actors to repeat this movement activity by recalling a time when they were angry and frustrated about a situation.
- By calling out words like "frustration", "annoyance" and "anger" at random intervals I hope as a director that the actors would respond physically.
- Then we would run the scene with the dialogue. For example, in the climax of the scene when Antigone refuses to relent and decides that she would rather die than disobey the gods, I would have Ismene repeat the dialogue from the scene with Antigone with these movements and memories.















- (c) Provide a diagram, with appropriate annotations to support each explanation given in part (b).





## Section 2: Australian drama and world drama

Worth 40% (30 marks)

- This section has five (5) questions.
- Answer one (1) question only.
- Your response must be from the point of view of one (1) role and must refer to one (1) Australian drama set text and one (1) world drama set text.
- Candidates are required to use extended answer formats: sequenced and structured paragraphs with topic sentences supported by evidence, lists, tables, annotated diagrams, graphic organisers, text references and/or justifications.

### *Roles*

- (a) **Director:** decides upon the interpretation or the conceptualisation of the text and works with actors and the creative team to realise the drama event.
- (b) **Actor:** interprets and presents the text by adopting role or character through action to create the drama event.
- (c) **Dramaturge:** assists directors, actors, scenographers and designers through contextual research and textual analysis in the process of 'making meaning' in the drama event.
- (d) **Scenographer:** provides design for the stage setting to create the sensory environment and layout of a performance space for a drama event.



- (e) **Costume designer:** provides design for the appearance of characters on stage including accessories, footwear, make-up, and plans costume changes during a drama event.
- (f) **Lighting designer:** provides design for illumination, focus, mood and atmosphere through lighting technologies in a drama event.
- (g) **Sound designer:** provides design for aural support for mood, action, context and transitions in a drama event.

## Sample Extended Answer:

### Character

- Values: The Man vs Talbot and Antigone vs Creon
- Space: proximity and distance – hip to hip activity
- Rehearsal exercise; showing the characters' relationships
- Character relationship
- Form and style

### 1. INTRODUCTION

As a director of a production of two plays, *Myth, Propaganda and Disaster in Nazi Germany* and *Contemporary America* by Stephen Sewell and *Antigone* by Sophocles, I have used the dramatic element of Space to show the conflict of values between characters in each text. With the use of the rehearsal process I learned in a Zen Zen Zo physical theatre workshop called "hip to hip" I can explore how space shows the relationship between by characters and their conflicting values within the plays. In *Myth* Talbot values the truth and democracy, whereas *The Man* values obedience to the state. Likewise, in *Antigone*, Antigone values obeying the gods (or in a contemporary version you could say she values family and doing 'what's right'; whereas Creon values obedience to the state.

### 2. values

Antigone	Creon	Talbot	The Man
<p>Wants to honour the gods and bury her brother.</p> <p>I shall rest, a loved one with him whom I have loved, sinless in my crime; for I owe a longer allegiance to the dead than to the living: in that world I shall abide for ever. But if thou wilt, be guilty of dishonouring laws which the gods have established in honour.</p>	<p>Wants Antigone to be obedient to the State (him) by obeying his command not to "bury the traitor"</p>	<p>Talbot believes in democracy and reason and thinks that America should treat everyone with respect.</p> <p>"How can you stand there with a gun in your hand, threatening me, and talk about Democracy?"</p>	<p>The Man is a racist who believes in the myth of American supremacy and that immigrants are all terrorists. Right action is obedience to the State.</p> <p>"Obedience, Professor!"</p>

### 3. Proximity and Relationships

#### Hip-hip activity.

- Run through the scene where Antigone and Creon are arguing about whether or not to bury their brother and vary the proximity between the characters. In the first rehearsal they have to do the entire scene hip-to-hip and express it in an intimate manner.
- As they move from being hip to hip to within touching distance, see if this changes the dynamics of the scene.

- By the end of the activity the actors have utilized the entire space until they have found the perfect proximity for each line that reflects the tone, mood and atmosphere of the scene.
- With Scene 6 in Talbot's rooms in *Myth* do the same hip-to-hip activity only in this case, the Man always is moving towards Talbot in a threatening manner.
- Talbot is stuck 'hip-to-hip' with this intimidating menacing agent.
- Play the entire scene with this close proximity. For example, when Talbot says, "So that's how you've achieved the great heights you've scaled" and gets pistol whipped by The Man, what difference does it make to the scene if he has to remain in a submissive yet connected proximity to The Man?
- When Man is throwing out Talbot's books he could remain in close contact with him, maybe with his hand on Talbot's head which makes him even more menacing.



### SET TEXT LIST FOR UNIT 3 & 4

Reminder: the texts below are the complete list of year 12 ATAR Set Texts for 2018. You must write about one Australian and one World text in your section 2 answer.

Australian texts for Unit 3	World texts for Unit 3
Wesley Enoch: <i>The Story of Miracles at Cookie's Table</i>	Bertold Brecht: <i>The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui</i>
Louis Nowra: <i>Radiance</i>	Caryl Churchill: <i>Mad Forest</i>
Hannie Rayson: <i>Two Brothers</i>	Eugene Ionesco: <i>Rhinoceros</i>
Stephen Sewell: <i>Myth, Propaganda and Disaster in Nazi German and Contemporary America</i>	William Shakespeare: <i>As You Like It</i>
Alana Valentine: <i>Parramatta Girls</i>	Sophocles: <i>Antigone</i>
Zen Zen Zo: <i>The Tempest</i> (adaptation)	Thornton Wilder: <i>Our Town: A Play in Three Acts</i>

Australian texts for Unit 4	World texts for Unit 4
Andrew Bovell: <i>When the Rain Stops Falling</i>	Samuel Beckett: <i>Endgame</i>
Matt Cameron and Tim Finn: <i>Poor Boy</i>	Friedrich Durrenmatt: <i>The Visit: A tragic comedy</i>
Michael Fatcher and Helen Howard: <i>A Beautiful Life</i>	Bryony Lavery: <i>Beautiful Burnout</i>
Lally Katz: <i>Return to Earth</i>	Tracy Letts: <i>August: Osage County</i>
Jenny Kemp: <i>Kitten</i>	Yasmina Reza: <i>God of Carnage</i>
Kit Lazaroo: <i>Asylum</i>	Brian Yorkey (writer) and Tom Kitt (composer): <i>Next to Normal</i>

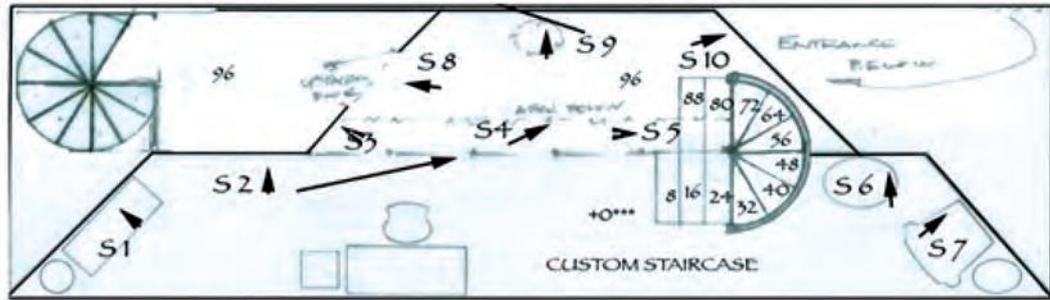






# Floor plan and elevation

## Floor Plan



CHAISE

SOFA

OTTO



MUNY 2008

1/4" Front Elevation

SLG Design  
slgdesign@att.net

## Elevation

## ELEMENTS OF DRAMA MNEMONIC

“Rotten cabbages stink very much – they smell like maggots sucking mouldy dummies”

R: Role

C: Character and Relationships

S: Situation

V: Voice

M: Movement

S: Space and Time

L: Language and Texts

M: Mood & Atmosphere

S: Symbol & Metaphor

D: Dramatic Action

*Form/style*

Form, style, technique or convention	Example	Audience Impact
<p><b>Example</b>                      Ruby Moon                      Theatre of the Absurd                      Presentational with some representational elements</p>	<p>Ray and Sylvie’s disconnected dialogue in the Prologue</p> <p>The image of Ray and Sylvie, existentially trapped by their lack of knowing of Ruby’s fate, is a powerful element within the play. Their world is an absurd one where nothing makes sense and their waiting provides no answers. The narrative’s cyclic structure, moments of repetition or disconnected dialogue between Ray and Sylvie, and the frequent black comedy from interactions with neighbours such as Sid, Sonny Jim and Dawn all reflect this relevant Absurdist influence.</p>	<p>Creates tension and immediate awareness that the relationship is based on an illusion of normality.</p> <p>The use of this fractured fairy-tale element evokes both the world of childhood innocence and the darker fears of contemporary suburbia, of the dangers of “woods and wolves”. Other iconic childhood experiences, such as buying ice-creams from Mr Whippy, are similarly blended with darker overtones to make the familiar threatening, creating tension and provoking questions for the audience.</p> <p>Audience questions absurdity of suburban life and relationships</p>

Form, style, technique or convention	Example	Audience Impact
<b>Your Australian Text</b>		
<b>Your World Text</b>		

## GATHERING EVIDENCE FROM THE TEXT

You need to gather evidence/quotes from your texts that express the main ideas and themes.

### Example

*Myth Propaganda and Disaster in Nazi Germany and Contemporary America*  
*Stephen Sewell*

### Main ideas & Lines of Dialogue

#### VALUES:

Talbot: I heard a student today tell me she wanted to be the voice of her generation.

Eve: Was she pretty?

Margarite: And that's what I want to do, Professor! I want to think! And read! And write! I want to write great books, like these books, and I want to change people's lives...I want to be the voice of my generation.

#### HYPER-SURVEILLANCE

Talbot: I'm sorry, Miss Lee, we've got a lock-down drill in five minutes – I really can't talk...

Security: (voice over) Would all staff and students go immediately to their muster-points. This is a lock down. Would all staff and students go immediately to their muster-points.

Talbot: How did you get in? Normally you have to go through security...

#### VIOLENCE

Man: It must give you a great sense of security working in a place like this – panelled walls – what's that? Walnut? Heritage, that's what it is, isn't it? Tradition.

*The Man pistol whips Talbot*

Man: Why don't you just shut the f### up?

Talbot: owwwww

...

Man: Shut up! You dead a### or you'll suck this bullet into your c###-sucking brain. You like reading, do you? I like reading too. I like Jackie Collins. Who are these deadshits? Adorno-Hegel-f### throw these out. The next time I come here I want to see nothing but Jackie Collins-Deadly Embrace is a good one. Have you read Deadly Embrace? Hollywood Wives is pretty good too.

Talbot: Help help!

Text 1: Main Ideas/Themes	Lines Of Dialogue
Text 2: Main Ideas/Themes	Lines Of Dialogue

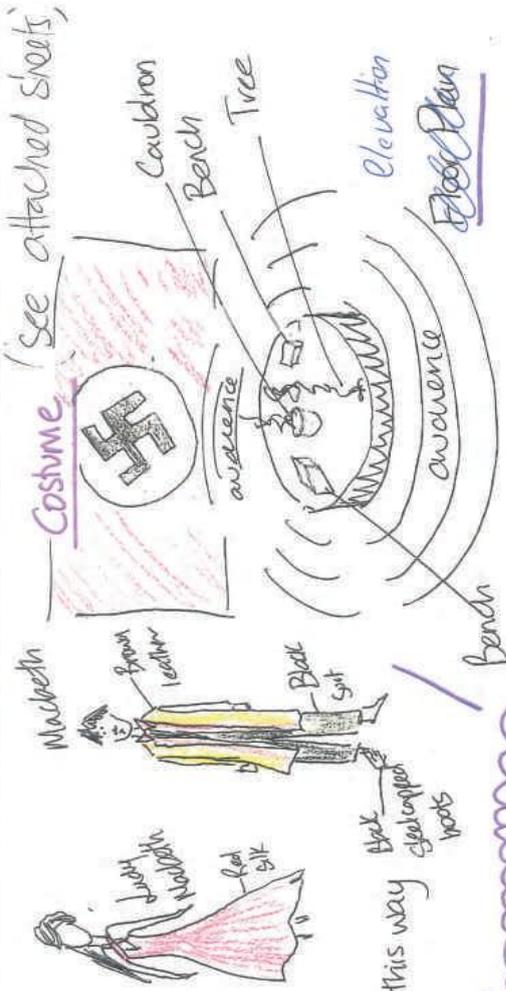






SFX

- To achieve a dark + surreal  
Kafkaesque atmosphere I would use
- SFX - owls screeching
  - violins at fast pace
  - bombs exploding, war noises
  - screaming (for mental institution)
  - radio crackling
  - fingernails on blackboard
  - echo on witches "something wicked this way comes"



Projections

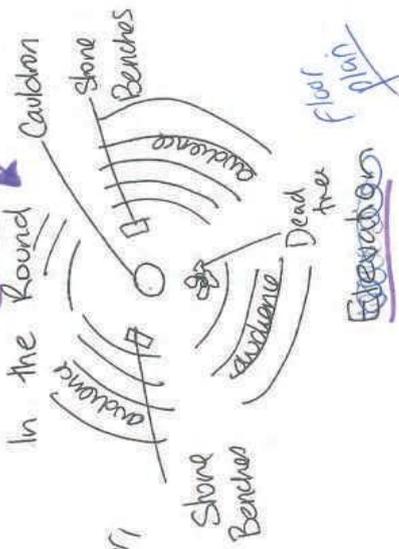
- Insane asylum
- padded cell
- 17th torture instruments
- Holocaust survivors
- Nazi flags
- Pictures of dictators - Hitler, Mussolini, Pol Pot, Mao, Stalin
- Straight Jacket

Lighting

To achieve a surreal horror  
dark atmosphere (Artaud)  
for my physical theatre  
piece (like Zen Zen Zo)  
I would use red LEDs,  
white stage lights, blue  
fresnels. Scrim back lit.  
Fog and dry ice in  
cauldron.

The scene where  
Lady Macbeth is washing  
her hands + the doctor is  
commenting she is in a  
padded cell in the insane  
asylum. Lots of red LEDs + fog.

Staging



## MARKING KEYS – HOW THEY WORK

### EXAMPLE

As dramaturge, you are focusing on forces and values for the reinterpretation of drama.

- Describe a force that contributes to the reinterpretation of each set text. (You may use the same force for each set text or different forces.) (6 marks)
- Explain how this force can be realised in one key scene or section of each set text. (10 marks)
- Discuss how you would use an element of drama to highlight a value in each reinterpreted set text. (10 marks)

Your response should use appropriate communication forms and skills. (4 marks)

Describe a force that contributes to the reinterpretation of each set text. For each of the two texts:

- (a) Describes, in **detail**, a force that contributes to the reinterpretation of the set text.
- (b) Makes **some relevant comments** about a force that contributes to the reinterpretation of the set text.
- (c) **Identifies** a force that makes some contribution to the reinterpretation of the set text.

Explain how this force can be realised in one key scene or section of each set text.

For each of the two texts:

- (a) Explains **insightfully**, how a force can be realised in one key scene/section.
- (b) Explains **effectively**, how a force can be realised in one key scene/section.
- (c) **Outlines** how a force can be realised in one key scene/section.
- (d) Provides **some details** about a force in relation to one key scene/section.
- (e) Makes **superficial** comments about a force in relation to a key scene/section

Discuss how you would use an element of drama to highlight a value in each reinterpreted set text.

For each of the two texts:

- (a) Discusses **insightfully**, how an element of drama can be used to highlight a value in the set text.
- (b) Discusses **effectively**, how an element of drama can be used to highlight a value in the set text.
- (c) **Explains** how an element of drama can be used to highlight a value in the set text.
- (d) Provides **some details** as to how an element of drama can be used to highlight a value in the set text.
- (e) Makes **superficial** comments about an element of drama in relation to a value in the set text.

Uses communication forms and skills.

- (a) Uses **effectively**, extended answer form/s. Uses pertinent drama terminology and language specific to role.
- (b) Uses **appropriate** extended answer form/s. Uses correct drama terminology consistently and language appropriate for role.
- (c) Uses extended answer form/s.
- (d) Uses **some relevant** drama terminology and language that relates to role.
- (e) Uses in a **limited** way extended answer form/s. If drama terminology is used it is used **infrequently** and/or **incorrectly** and/or **loosely** relates to role

YOUR MIND-MAP

# Drama Theorists & Practitioners

## 1. CONSTANTIN STANISLAVSKI – REALISM

1863–1938 Russian



### Forces:

Russian revolution

Science – Origin of Species

Psychology – Freud

Naturalism

Key ideas
The theatre of realism – created from acting techniques
Characters built from within the actor so that a ‘theatre of living experience’ is created
Very high physical and mental concentration e.g. Circles of attention – i.e. complete self-discipline
Strong, wide range of verbal skills required: diction, projection, resonance and expressiveness of the voice to be used by actors
Physical dexterity required: exercises, mime and dance used to make actors supple, graceful and strong.
The strongest human feeling is signalled by small, natural movements – therefore actors must have sophisticated control of their bodies.
Every physical movement has some reason for it or is caused by some effect.
Emotions of the character must be experienced by the actor; or a parallel experience must be recalled by the actor – this creates emotional empathy between the actor and the character.
Characters built from observation to learn about people and their behaviour required: watch, listen with real concentration.
Therefore research, from observation, physical and emotional required to build a character

Although the Russian actor and director Constantin Stanislavski died in 1938, his theories are explained in his three books: “An Actor Prepares”, “Building a Character” and “Creating a Role”, and are still one of the greatest influences in the world of performance today.

*“The more an actor has observed and known, the greater his experience the clearer his perception of the inner and outer circumstances of the life in his play and in his part”*

*“This work is not done by the intellect alone but by all your creative forces, all the elements, of your inner creative state on the stage together with your real life in the sense of the play”*

The most fundamental principle of Stanislavski’s teaching is that the actor must live the life of the character that s/he is portraying, s/he must learn to think like the character and behave as the character would, therefore the portrayal is not confined to the performance but will, to some degree, begin to overlap into the actor’s own life. This, he asserts, is the only way to achieve total realism and, to reinforce this, the actor must also extend this exercise of imagination to encompass the costumes that he wears, the articles that comprise the set and the props that are used. If there is a mirror on the wall, s/he must invent a history of where it was bought, by whom and how it has come to be in this particular location, thus completing the elaborate imaginary world that will lend conviction to her/his performance.

It is therefore necessary for the actor to approach the role from two levels, the external level being the more obvious. The way in which the character moves, speaks and behaves must be studied and practised, but this performance will become mechanical unless it is guided by the inner belief in the character’s feelings and emotions, which, although unseen by the audience, is the added factor which will ultimately lend conviction to the part that is being played.

The actor should draw on her/his own experiences, wherever possible, to understand and interpret the emotions and events that the character will experience, and the wider the actor’s experience of life then the greater her/his insight and comprehension will be. However, although drawing on personal experiences is often the only way to achieve complete empathy with the role, it is essential that these emotions and reactions become absorbed in the fictitious world of the character itself, and are not just reproduced mechanically, otherwise the illusion of reality will be lost.

Therefore, to follow the teachings of Stanislavski it is necessary for actors to totally immerse themselves, body, soul and mind, in the part they are playing.

Before the realistic drama of the late 1800s, no one had devised a method for achieving this kind of believability. Through their own talent and genius, individual actresses and actors had achieved it, but no one had developed a system whereby it could be taught and passed on to future generations. The person who did this the most successfully was Stanislavski.

A cofounder of the Moscow Art Theater in Russia and the director of Anton Chekhov’s most important plays, Stanislavski was also an actor. He was involved in both traditional theatre (using stylized, non-realistic techniques) and the emergence of the modern realistic approach. By closely observing the work of great performers of his day, and by drawing on his own acting experience, Stanislavski identified and described what these gifted performers did naturally and intuitively. From his observations he compiled a series of principles and techniques which today are regarded as fundamental to both the training and the performance of actors and actresses who want to create believable characters onstage. Stanislavski discovered first of all that acting realistically onstage is extremely artificial and difficult. He wrote:

*All of our acts, even the simplest, which are so familiar to us in everyday life, become strained when we appear behind the footlights before a public of a thousand people. That is why it is necessary to correct ourselves and learn again how to walk, sit, or lie down. It is essential to re-educate ourselves to look and see, on the stage, to listen and to hear.*

To achieve this “re-education”, Stanislavski said, “the actor must first of all believe in everything that takes place onstage, and most all, he must believe what he himself is doing. And one can only believe in the truth.” To give substance to his ideas, Stanislavski studied how people act in everyday life and how they communicated feelings and emotions; and then he found a way to accomplish the same things onstage. He developed a series of exercises and techniques for the performer that had the following broad aims:

1. To make the outward behaviour of the performer – gestures, voice, and the rhythm of movements – natural and convincing.
2. To have the actor or actress convey the goals and objectives – the inner needs of a character. Even if all the visible manifestations of a character are mastered, a performance will appear superficial and mechanical without a deep sense of conviction and belief.
3. To make the life of the character onstage not only dynamic but continuous. Some performers tend to emphasize only the high points of a part; in between, the life of the character stops. In real life, however, people do not stop living.
4. To develop a strong sense of ensemble playing with other performers in a scene.

Stanislavski's techniques:
<p><b>FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS</b></p> <p>Who am I?          Where am I?          What are my relationships?          What time is it?          What is my objective?          What is my obstacle?          What are my surroundings?</p>
<p><b>Key terms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration</li> <li>• Emotion memory</li> <li>• Observation</li> <li>• Harmony</li> <li>• Analysis</li> <li>• Creativity</li> <li>• Personalisation</li> </ul>

### Relaxation

When he observed the great actors and actresses of his day, Stanislavski noticed how fluid and lifelike their movements were. They seemed to be in a state of complete freedom and relaxation, letting the behaviour of the character come through effortlessly. He concluded that unwanted tension has to be eliminated and that the performer at all times attain a state of physical and vocal relaxation.

### Concentration and Observation

Stanislavski also discovered that gifted performers always appear fully concentrated on some object, person, or event while onstage. Stanislavski referred to the extent or range of concentration as a circle of attention. This circle of attention can be compared to a circle of light on a darkened stage. The performer should begin with the idea that it is a small, tight, circle including only himself or herself and perhaps one other person or one piece of furniture. When the performer has established a strong circle of attention, he or she can enlarge the circle

outward to include the entire stage area. In this way performers will stop worrying about the audience and lose their self-consciousness.

### **Importance of Specifics**

One of Stanislavski's techniques was an emphasis on concrete details. A performer should never try to act in general, he said, and should never try to convey a feeling such as fear or love in some vague, amorphous way. In life, Stanislavski said, we express emotions in terms of specifics: an anxious woman twists a handkerchief, an angry boy throws a rock at a trash can, a nervous businessman jangles his keys. Performers must find similar activities.

The performer must also conceive of the situation in which a character exists (which Stanislavski referred to as the given circumstances) in terms of specifics. In what kind of space does an event take place: formal, informal, public, domestic? How does it feel? What is the temperature? The lighting? What has gone on just before? What is expected in the moments ahead? These questions must be answered in concrete terms.

### **Inner Truth**

An innovative aspect of Stanislavski's work has to do with inner truth, which deals with the internal or subjective world of characters – that is, their thoughts and emotions. The early phases of Stanislavski's research took place while he was also directing the major dramas of Anton Chekhov. Plays like *The Seagull* and *The Cherry Orchard* have less to do with external action or what the characters say than what the characters are feeling and thinking but often do not verbalize. It becomes apparent that Stanislavski's approach would be very beneficial in realizing the inner life of such characters.

Stanislavski had several ideas about how to achieve a sense of inner truth. For example – Magic If: “If I suddenly became wealthy...” “If I were vacationing on a Caribbean Island...” “If I had great talent...” “If that person who insulted me comes near me again...”

### **Action Onstage**

What? Why? How? An important principle of Stanislavski's system is that all action onstage must have a purpose. This means that the performer's attention must always be focused on a series of physical actions linked together by the circumstances of the play. Stanislavski determined these actions by asking three essential questions: What? Why? How? An action is performed, such as opening a letter (the what). The letter is opened because someone has said that it contains extremely damaging information about the character (the why). The letter is opened anxiously, fearfully (the how), because of the calamitous effect it might have on the character. These physical actions, which occur from moment to moment in a performance, are in turn governed by the character's overall objective in the play.

### **Through Line of a Role**

According to Stanislavski, in order to develop continuity in a part, the actor or actress should find the super-objective of a character. What is it, above all else, that the character wants during the course of a play? What is the character's driving force? If a goal can be established toward which the character strives; it will give the performer an overall objective. From this objective can be developed a through line that can be grasped, as a skier on a ski lift grabs a towline and is carried to the top. Another term for through line is spine.

To help develop the through line, Stanislavski urged performers to divide scenes into units (sometimes called beats). In each unit there is an objective, and the intermediate objectives running through a play lead ultimately to the overall objective.

## Ensemble Playing

Except in one-person shows, performers do not act alone; they interact with other people. Stanislavski was aware that many performers tend to “stop acting,” or lose their concentration, when they are not the main characters in a scene or when someone else is talking. Such performers make a great effort when they are speaking but not when they are listening. This tendency destroys the through line and causes the performer to move into and out of a role. That, in turn, weakens the sense of the ensemble – the playing together of all the performers.

## Stanislavski and Psychophysical Action

*A character's actions will lead to his/her emotions.*

Stanislavski began to develop his techniques in the early part of the twentieth century, and at first he emphasized the inner aspects of training: for example, various ways of getting in touch with the performer's unconscious. Beginning around 1917, however, he began to look more and more at purposeful action, or what he called psychophysical action. (An action which has a purpose, and leads to feelings about the action taken.) A student at one of his lectures that year took a note and noticed the change: “Whereas action previously had been taught as the expression of a previously-established ‘emotional state,’ it is now action itself which predominates and is the key to the psychological.” Rather than seeing emotions as leading to action, Stanislavski came to believe that it was the other way around: purposeful action undertaken to fulfill a character's goals was the most direct route to the emotions.



## 2. MEYERHOLD: BIOMECHANICS

Russian 1874–1940



Meyerhold is recognised as an important theatrical innovator of the twentieth century. Born in Russia, he studied at the Moscow Philharmonic Society's theatre school and joined the Moscow Art Theatre's (MAT) acting company in 1898. As an actor in the company, he was influenced by the acting methods being developed by the influential director, actor and writer Stanislavsky, one of the founders of the company.

Although his early work was strongly influenced by Stanislavski's emphasis on realism, like many other theatre workers of his time, he eventually rejected the naturalistic forms of theatre that developed from this aesthetic approach. He left the MAT in 1905 and, in the years leading up to the Russian Revolution, he held a prestigious position as artistic head of the Imperial Theatres in St Petersburg. During this time he also staged experimental plays in various unofficial studios, held classes and edited a journal called *The Love of Three Oranges* under the pseudonym Dr Dapertutto. After the Russian Revolution, Meyerhold was appointed as head of the theatrical section of the Commissariat of Education and Enlightenment. Unfortunately, his ideas and approaches conflicted with official party policies and he and his work were increasingly subjected to censorship and public criticism. As personal persecutions and cultural repression intensified in Russia during the oppressive Stalinist regime, he was arrested as a dissident in 1939 and was secretly executed in prison the following year.

Meyerhold did not write about his approaches to theatre production and acting, but information about his activities, ideas and interests has been recovered and re-examined since 1955 when his name and contributions were officially rehabilitated in Russia. We now know that his work examined and utilised more popular forms of theatre that were based on non-realistic and highly physical styles of performance such as mime and commedia dell'arte. He explored these methods over the course of his life and eventually formulated a new approach to acting based on physical training and acrobatic movement called Biomechanics.

## Biomechanics

The idea of Biomechanics grew from Meyerhold's belief that there were basic laws of theatre that could be studied and perfected. He regarded movement, space, rhythm and gesture as primary elements in the language of theatre and looked for ways to create 'truthful' performances without imitating or trying to copy the reality evident in everyday life. He believed that rhythm should be the base of all theatrical activity and that actors should be encouraged to refine their art until they could reach the precision of machines. Recognising that the stylised forms of acting he admired required the development of physical stamina and skill he focused on developing a series of exercises that could enable actors to perform highly 'theatricalised' dramatic forms. His work focused on developing the energy and rhythms available through non-representational performance styles and he believed that actors should learn to present their character without trying to become their character. Actors in his productions were therefore encouraged to comment on their characters, to directly address spectators from positions downstage or to improvise and banter with audiences.

Strongly emphasising the theatre's need for simplicity and the power of a bare stage, in the 1920s he began to use a mode of set design called constructivism. This approach focused on the function of scenery and multi-levelled sets with ramps leading between platforms were constructed according to their utility and their ability to enhance biomechanical acting rather than for any decorative purpose. He rarely used front curtains, often kept the house lights on so that the actors and spectators could clearly see each other and his productions explored a variety of non-representational approaches to set design and acting. Music was also used to support the physical and emotional rhythms he wished to accentuate in productions and he sometimes composed his own scores.

Meyerhold, like a number of theorists, suggested that theatre has its own language. But, unlike many of his contemporaries, he rejected the view that art somehow transcended the everyday concerns of life. He saw theatre as a social art and a social act and argued that the concerns and issues of all classes of people should be represented in art forms like theatre. Sadly, his refusal to adopt official ideals of social realism and naturalistic forms of theatre eventually cost him his life. However, his approaches and innovations have left a lasting impression on the theatre world and his influence is clearly evident in the work of the celebrated director and playwright, Bertolt Brecht.

Biomechanics's purpose was to widen the emotional potential of a theatre piece and express thoughts and ideas that could not be easily presented through the naturalistic theatre of the period.

The techniques of Biomechanics were developed during the rehearsals of a series of plays directed by Meyerhold in the 1920s and 1930s when Socialist Realism was at its height in Russia. Biomechanics is a precursor to and influence on much of the 20th Century's physical theatre.

### 3. MICHAEL CHEKHOV

Russian-American 1891–1955



#### Psychological gesture

Psychological Gesture is a physical expression of the thoughts, feelings and desires of the character, incorporated into one movement. It awakens the essence of the character in you thus aligning your thoughts, feelings and will (objective) with that of the character. When this happens, your walk, your expressive mannerisms, your voice and line delivery are all inspired by one moving image. You can perform the gesture prior to your monologue to trigger your artistic nature. While in the monologue, if your inspiration weakens, you simply envision the gesture in your imagination as you are acting and it will revitalize you.

“Michael” Chekhov (1891–1955) was a Russian-American actor, director, author, and theatre practitioner. His acting technique has been used by actors such as Clint Eastwood, Marilyn Monroe, Yul Brynner, and Robert Stack. Constantin Stanislavski referred to him as his most brilliant student. He was a nephew of the playwright Anton Chekhov.

Chekhov was considered by the Russian theatre practitioner Constantin Stanislavski to be one of his brightest students. He studied under Stanislavski at the First Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre, where he acted, directed, and studied Stanislavski’s ‘system’. When Chekhov experimented with affective memory and had a nervous breakdown, this aided Stanislavski in seeing the limitations of his early concepts of emotional memory. He later led the company of the studio under the name the Second Moscow Art Theatre. Stanislavski came to regard Chekhov’s work as a betrayal of his principles.

After the October Revolution, Chekhov split with Stanislavski and toured with his own company. He thought that Stanislavski’s techniques led too readily to a naturalistic style of performance. He demonstrated his own theories in parts as Senator Ableukhov in the stage version of Andrei Bely’s *Petersburg*. In the late 1920s, Chekhov emigrated to Germany and set up his own studio, teaching a physical and imagination-based system of actor training. He developed the use of the “Psychological Gesture,” a concept derived from the Symbolist theories of Bely. In this technique, the actor physicalises a character’s need or internal dynamic in the form of an external gesture. Subsequently, the outward gesture is suppressed and incorporated internally, allowing the physical memory to inform the performance on an unconscious level.

Following Stanislavski’s approach, much of what Chekhov explored addressed the question of how to access the unconscious creative self through indirect non-analytical means. Chekhov

taught a range of movement dynamics such as molding, floating, flying, and radiating which actors use to find the physical core of a character. His techniques, though seemingly external, were meant to lead the actor to a rich internal life. In spite of his brilliance as an actor and his first-hand experience in the development of Stanislavski's groundbreaking work, Chekhov as a teacher was overshadowed by his American counterparts in the 1940s and 1950s and their interpretations of Stanislavski's 'system,' which became known as Method acting.

Interest in Chekhov's work has grown, however, with a new generation of teachers. Chekhov's own students included Marilyn Monroe, Anthony Quinn, Clint Eastwood, Mala Powers, Yul Brynner, Patricia Neal, Sterling Hayden, Jack Palance, Elia Kazan, Paula Strasberg, Lloyd Bridges and his wife, Dorothy Bridges. In the television programme *Inside the Actors Studio*, noted actors such as Johnny Depp and Anthony Hopkins have cited Chekhov's book as highly influential on their acting. Chekhov's description of his acting technique, *On the Technique of Acting*, was written in 1912.

*“When you really concentrate, you will get a sense of expansion. You will feel that you are a larger person than you are physically, as if you become a person two or three sizes bigger than your ordinary physical self, and that you are flowing with all your being toward the object of your concentration. Whether it is a physical thing or an image that you are concentrating on, your whole invisible person will be in movement.”*

*“In every well-written play the battle rages between the primary powers of Good and Evil, and it is this battle which constitutes the life impulse of the play, its driving force, and is basic to all plot structures...In any true piece of art...the beginning and the end are, or should be, polar in principle. All the main qualities of the first section should transform themselves into their opposites in the last section.”*

*“Real inspired acting is never DOING, it is always HAPPENING”*

*Michael Chekhov, 1912*

## 4. STELLA ADLER

American 1901–1992



Stella Adler was the only American actor to study with Stanislavski himself, and developed her own “method” built on the work of Stanislavski and Lee Strasberg. Adler’s technique differs from Strasberg’s in that it emphasizes imagination in addition to emotional recall. She famously said, “Drawing on the emotions I experienced – for example, when my mother died – to create a role is sick and schizophrenic. If that is acting, I don’t want to do it.” Though Marlon Brando’s lifelike acting style is often attributed to Strasberg’s Method, he was actually trained by Stella Adler; his devotion to Adler and her work was so strong that he wrote the preface to her manual *The Art of Acting*.

Other famous Adler students include: Robert DeNiro, Benecio Del Toro, Mark Ruffalo, and Melanie Griffith.

### The Stella Adler Technique

1. The Actor’s Goal: get rid of self, begin with outside awareness, body, speech, mind, emotions, discipline
2. Beginning the technique: energy, be heard, eliminate tension, physical control, speech control, animal movement, muscle memory
3. Imagination: collective consciousness, seeing imaginatively
4. Circumstances: the truth of the place, building the wider circumstances
5. Actions: do-able VERB form. Action is something you do, it is justified
6. Justification: first comes the action, then the reason
7. Working the stage: props, symmetry, personalisation, planning for accidents
8. Character: start with given circumstances from the playwright
9. Working on the text: verbing, units, study script, tell the story, actions first – words second; words come from actions

## 5. SANFORD MEISNER – MEISNER TECHNIQUE

American 1905–1997



The Meisner technique is an acting technique developed by the American theatre practitioner Sanford Meisner. Meisner developed this technique after working with Lee Strasberg and Stella Adler at the Group Theatre and as head of the acting program at New York City's Neighborhood Playhouse. He continued its refinement for fifty years.

Meisner Training is an inter-dependent series of training exercises that build on one another. The more complex work supports a command of dramatic text. Students work on a series of progressively complex exercises to develop an ability to improvise, to access an emotional life, and finally to bring the spontaneity of improvisation and the richness of personal response to textual work. The technique develops the behavioral strand of Stanislavski's 'system' (specifically developing his concepts of communication and adaptation). The technique emphasizes "moment-to-moment" spontaneity through communication with other actors in order to generate behavior that is truthful within imagined, fictional circumstances.

Early training is heavily based on actions, in line with Meisner's emphasis on "doing." The questions "what are you playing?" and "what are you doing?" are asked frequently, in order to remind actors to commit themselves to playing what Stanislavski called a "task" or "objective," rather than focusing on the words of a play's dialogue. Silence, dialogue, and activity all require the actor to find a purpose for performing the action involved. By combining the two main tasks of focusing attention on a partner and committing to an action, the technique aims to force an actor into "the moment" (a common Meisner phrase), while simultaneously propelling the actor forward with concentrated purpose. The more an actor can take-in about the partner and the surroundings while performing in character, the more Meisner believed they can "leave themselves alone" and "live truthfully." One of Meisner's famous quotations that illustrates the emphasis on "doing" was "An ounce of behavior is worth a pound of words."

### Repetition

The most fundamental exercise in Meisner training is the Repetition exercise. Two actors face each other and repeat their observations about one another, back and forth. An example of such an exchange might be: "You're smiling." "I'm smiling." "You're smiling!" "Yes, I'm smiling." Actors observe and respond to the other's behavior and the subtext therein. If they can "pick up the impulse" – or work spontaneously from how their partner's behavior affects them – their own behavior will arise directly from the stimulus of the other.

Later, as the exercise evolves in complexity to include "given circumstances," "relationships," actions and obstacles, this skill remains critical. From start to finish – from repetition to rehearsing a lead role – the principles of "listen and respond" and "stay in the moment" are fundamental to the work.

As in all Stanislavskian-derived approaches, for a Meisner actor traditional line-memorisation methods that include vocal inflections or gestures are avoided. These traditional approaches merely increase the chance the actor will miss a “real moment” in service of a rehearsed habit or line reading, the technique assumes. Meisner actors learn lines dry, “by rote,” without inflection, so as not to memorise a line-reading. When the line is finally to be delivered, its quality and inflection is derived from the moment of articulation.

The improvisatory thrust of the technique does not give permission to an actor “to wing it” or to fail to prepare. Meisner training includes extensive work on crafting or preparing a role. As students mature in the work, they get to know themselves and can make use of this self-knowledge by choosing actions that are compelling to their particular “instrument.” They “come to life” through informed, provocative choices. Actors prepare emotional responses by “personalising” and “paraphrasing” material and by using their imagination and “daydreaming” around a play’s events in highly specific ways that they’ve learnt are particularly evocative for them personally. Solid preparation supports the spontaneity, in line with Martha Graham’s observation that “I work eight hours a day, every day, so that in the evenings I can improvise.”

Despite some misconceptions, Meisner work also addresses characterisation, though in an indirect way. Characteristics, such as “mousy,” “vindictive,” or “noble,” result from actors’ choices about what they do. Rather than attempting to play “mousy,” a Meisner actor might seek to appease another character, in order to manifest the characteristic.



## 6. BRECHT – EPIC THEATRE

1898–1956 German



### Forces – Hitler and the rise of fascism

Eugen Berthold (later Bertolt) Friedrich Brecht was born on February 10, 1898 in Germany. He briefly studied medicine but, after World War I, he gradually gained recognition as an unconventional poet and playwright in Munich and Berlin. When the Nazi Party came to power in Germany, Brecht's political beliefs and activities were threatened and he fled into exile. Travelling and working in a number of cities in Europe and in the United States, he remained in exile for 14 years. After World War II, he settled in East Berlin where he co-founded a highly acclaimed theatre company called the Berliner Ensemble. He died in 1956 while in the midst of working with the Ensemble reviving one of the productions he had staged in the United States.

Brecht was strongly influenced by the political and cultural ideals associated with Marxism. He also admired the theatrical innovations introduced by the radical Russian director Vsevolod Meyerhold as well as the dynamic and politically motivated director Erwin Piscator whom Brecht worked with in 1927. The social, aesthetic and political ideals inspiring their theatrical styles were also addressed and articulated in Brecht's early propagandistic 'teaching plays' and they informed much of the work that he wrote and produced. In keeping with the egalitarian ideals he associated with Marxism, Brecht's productions were often very collaborative. For example, all those involved in productions were expected to discuss and develop their own critical attitudes to works and ideas being developed.

While it would be difficult to view his style of directing as completely egalitarian, it is clear that he remained open to critical discussion and that his productions enabled and encouraged the expression of multiple viewpoints.

Brecht's emphasis on the political and didactic significance of theatre inspired him to try and alert audiences to the need for social change. Incorporating Piscator's concept of Epic Theatre, Brecht suggested that plays set in different historical or cultural circumstances would establish some distance between the experiences of an audience and the experiences of the characters in a story. He hoped that this safe distance would enable spectators to critically appraise the circumstances and attitudes evident in the story and encourage them to compare those in their own world. To stimulate critical attitudes in his audiences, Brecht introduced theatrical devices that were designed to break or challenge their unthinking emotional involvement with the production. Aiming to stimulate rational thought, he developed methods that he hoped would produce what he called *Verfremdungseffekt*, or the estrangement or 'alienation' effect.

## The Alienation Effect

Brecht developed scenic, technical and acting methods that highlighted the construction of 'theatricality' in performances. Some examples of these 'alienation techniques' include: making the mechanics of scene changes visible, inserting songs in the middle of scenes to interrupt the action and finding ways for actors to physically 'show' their characters' relationships to their circumstances rather than trying to 'be' or identify with their characters

Although one might question how effective Brecht's theories were in practice, he always hoped that his productions would offer enjoyable experiences for his audiences. He aimed to create a sense of play and fun since humour often enabled audiences to enjoy the process of being alienated from their ordinary perceptions of familiar things and feelings. Consequently, Brecht's plays offer both comic and insightful portrayals of human behaviour and illustrate ways that individuals can be formed and restricted by circumstances. His plots usually concentrate on exploring the limited choices available to characters confined and conditioned by the ideas and events in their social environments.

A number of Brecht's productions that are typical of this approach include: *Mother Courage* (1941), *The Good Person of Setzuan* (1943), *The Life of Galileo Galilei* (1947), and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1954). Both as a playwright and a director, Brecht's theories and practices have had a major impact on contemporary theatre. His view of theatre as an educational tool for social change, his collaborative approaches, and his theories of epic theatre are only some of his many contributions to the development of theatre.

### Key ideas

Theatre of reform: theatre that has the purpose of using drama to change the political and social structure of our world.

Epic theatre: a story, usually historical, told on a large scale, over a long period.

Brecht's plays are theatrical propaganda – he compared his plays to scientific experiments; human behaviours are studied to show why they happened and how that behaviour could be improved.

Brecht set out to change people's minds.

Brecht wanted to show his audience what was wrong with society and then convince them to go out and change it.

The plays tell stories using techniques to remind the audience that they are observers, watching the events happening. The relationship of the actor and the audience is the exact opposite of what Artaud intended.

'Alienation' was Brecht's intention to take away from a character or an event the things that make them familiar and understandable.

## 7. GROTOWSKI – POOR THEATRE

Polish (1933–1999)



Jerzy Grotowski (1933–1999) was an innovative theatre director and theorist whose approaches to acting training and theatrical production have significantly influenced theatre today. He was born in Rzeszow, in South-eastern Poland in 1933 and studied acting and directing at the State Theatre School in Krakow and in Moscow. He debuted as a director in 1959 in Krakow with Eugene Ionesco's play *Chairs* and shortly afterwards founded a small Laboratory Theatre in 1959 in the town of Opole in Poland. During the 1960s, the company began to tour internationally and his work attracted increasing interest. As his work gained wider acclaim and recognition Grotowski was invited to work in the United States and he left Poland in 1982. Although the company he founded in Poland closed a few years later in 1984, he continued to teach and direct productions in Europe and America. However, Grotowski became increasingly uncomfortable with the adoption and adaptation of his ideas and practices, particularly in the USA. So, at what seemed to be the height of his public profile, he left America and moved to Italy where he established the Grotowski Workcenter in 1985 in a town near Pisa called Pontedera. At this centre he continued his theatre experimentation and practice and it was here that he continued to direct training and private theatrical events almost in secret for the last twenty years of his life. Suffering from leukemia and a heart condition, he died on January 15 at his home in Pontedera.

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In his influential publication *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968), Grotowski explained the focus of his work in the Laboratory Theatre and outlined the following agenda:

“We are seeking to define what is distinctively theatre, what separates this activity from other categories of performance and spectacle...our productions are detailed investigations of the actor-audience relationship.”

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His experiments investigated the suggestion that the actor is the core of theatre art and he used the term ‘poor theatre’ to explain his desire to explore and utilise basic dramatic elements that could enhance communication between actors and audiences. Like the theorist Artaud, he noted that theatre has its own language and that this form of language is quite distinct from the words of a text. He argued that dramatic literature offered only a framework for actors’ explorations of themselves and that theatre only had meaning if it could enable actors and audiences to transcend stereotyped visions and conventional or habitual behaviours and responses. In many ways, he saw theatre as a spiritual process that could enable the discovery of truth and compassion and he wrote that he hoped that his work would enable personal and social transformations.

Since Stanislavski, no one had investigated the nature and meaning of acting as deeply and systematically as Grotowski. The experiments and exercises he and his company developed focused on elucidating connections between mental, physical and emotional processes and his methods are still used to inform many contemporary theatre theories and training programs. He called the theatre space he opened in Opole a laboratory because he saw it as a centre of research

but, unlike other centres of research, he argued that poverty is not a drawback and shortage of money is not an excuse for inadequate performance. His 'poor theatre' style of drama was very popular during the 1960s and 1970s and was imitated by a variety of theatre troupes around the globe that are still in operation. Despite the fact that he worked with an exclusive community of theatre actors and audiences during the last twenty years of his life, his experiments have had a profound influence on the development of contemporary theatre throughout the world.

## 8. Antonin Artaud – Theatre of Cruelty

French 1896–1948



Theatre of Cruelty was founded in 1927 by Artaud. Artaud called his theatre the Alfred Jarry Theatre, after Jarry's production of *Ubi Roi*, about the murder of the king of Poland. The set was painted with bizarre illustrations of the inside and outside of a room with a palm tree, a snake and a skeleton hanging from a gallows all visible – some characters were life sized puppets made of cane. It was performed by actors as if they were puppets. The performance style involved wild caricature and extreme satire.

### Key ideas

Artaud wanted to change the world by a direct assault on human emotions.

Artaud did not mean physical cruelty but an attack on the emotions designed to shock the audience and totally involve them in the drama.

Artaud set out to create a theatre of magic, beauty and power. His productions were rejected in his lifetime, but have had a profound effect on theatre since.

Artaud felt the world was in desperate need of change. Actors require motives and reasons for their behaviour that underpin a character's actions. This required finding a character's drive or intentions. Actors need to analyse themselves, their own actions, knowledge and experience to discover their own motives and super-objectives.

For Artaud, a part of the actor must always remain in control of their created character so that part of their consciousness remains separate, observing and directing the behaviour of the character. In other words, reflect on what it is like to be in the shoes of another person, surprise and challenge the audience, while reminding them that they were watching a story with a strong political point.

The magic world created by characters was broken down in a number of ways, such as screens or notices with information or comments about the action or character. Sometimes there was a narrator; often there was a song. These techniques were to remind the audience that they were watching a play and that the play had a message. The audience is aware of the characters as actors (visible lighting, partial set etc.).

Scenery was often changed in front of the audience. Costumes could be whole, or a single item, or a prop would be all that was used. Lighting was often bright and white, despite the time of the scene.

Characters were strongly physicalised – at times in symbolic ways. For example, stylised actions, from the formal Chinese theatre where crying is shown by moving the finger up and down in front of the eyes; robotic, mechanical, dreamlike and other non-realistic movements and voice;

using opposite styles of acting such as a serious death scene in an outrageous comedy change. (Remember, Artaud had lived through WWI and the Depression was looming).

Artaud's view of the world as being full of lies, aimlessness, meanness and hypocrisy echoes the philosophy of existentialism – that human beings must face up to the pointless absurdity of their lives and only then they will be free to take actions and make decisions which reflect the terrible reality of existence.

Artaud shared this pessimistic view, but believed it was possible to change that world through his theatre. For Artaud, life = theatre and theatre = life i.e. they were mirrors of each other. Artaud believed that if the world of theatre could be transformed by him then the outside world would be altered.

Artaud watched Balinese dancers in 1931: the use of stylised movement, gesture, dance, music and costume had enormous emotional impact. It communicated feelings about the great human mysteries of creation, growth and death in ways words could not. He therefore wanted strong physical theatre to be used to 'hypnotise the audience as a snake-charmer hypnotises a snake, putting them into a trance'. The actor should perform with the awareness of being watched.

Vocal work in Artaud's theatre is very demanding; actors are encouraged to sing, chant, use mechanical and strange sounding voices, produce nonhuman sounds and speak in a range of dialects and class accents. Class distinctions and regional accents are carefully written into the language of the plays and are extensively used as part of the political and social messages. His plays use a mixture of naturalistic and unnatural style. They often resemble a trance in which they confront themselves, their way of life, and the meaning and mystery of all existence. Words were still important but only when totally necessary. He wanted theatre to assault the senses, to break through the desensitiveness of people. Artaud planned 'an assault on the senses' using light, music and sound – like rock concerts do. Actors were to use techniques to directly involve the audience in the action and emotion.

Actors were to expose the lies, meaninglessness and hypocrisy of much of life. He saw theatre as a mirror for the audience to be reflected in. With the use of masks, ritual objects and traditional and striking costumes, Artaud hoped to remove his audience from their everyday life.

## 9. JACQUES LECOQ

French 1921–1999



### Physical theatre

Jacques Lecoq (1921–1999) is regarded as one of the twentieth century's most influential teachers of the physical art of acting. He was born 15 December in Paris, France and participated and trained in various sports as a child and as a young man. During World War II he began exploring gymnastics, mime, movement and dance with a group who used performance to express their opposition to the German occupation of France. After the war, Lecoq then studied mime with Jean Daste, (a former pupil of the acclaimed teacher of mime, Jacques Copeau) who introduced him to masked performance and Japanese Noh theatre. He left Grenoble and spent six months teaching mask work in Germany, before accepting another teaching position at the University of Padua in Italy. He spent eight years in Italy teaching and working as a creative practitioner and discovered the traditional and popular Italian theatre style of *commedia dell'arte* as well as the tradition of masked chorus work developed in Ancient Greek tragedy. He returned to Paris in 1956 and opened his own school, the *Ecole Internationale de Mime et de Theatre* which has had many homes in Paris over the years but has continued to attract large numbers of students from all over the world.

Lecoq also toured with demonstrations of his physical art of the actor and periodically conducted classes in Britain that had an enormous impact on the development of British theatre. He was awarded the prestigious *Legion d'Honneur* in 1982 and continued to take classes at his school right up to the day before his death on January 19, 1999.

Lecoq's work and research has mainly been disseminated through the training he has conducted with the many students who have attended his classes and demonstrations overseas or his classes at his school in Paris. This may be why a myth is often circulated that suggests his methods were somehow secretive or reserved only for his students. However, he has published numerous articles and interviews, edited a text in French entitled *Le Theatre du Geste* (1987) and his book, *The Moving Body* (translated and published in English posthumously in 2000) outlines a number of his philosophies and approaches. The texts he has produced also indicate why it is so difficult for students to pass on his teachings. They explain that the training is very practical and very specific for each student because every actor's body and mind has accumulated different tensions and conditioned responses.

Lecoq's training methods therefore focus on releasing preconditioned views of acting and bringing an actor's attention back to 'playing'. In his last publication he explained that: "There is a huge difference between actors who express their own lives, and those who can truly be described as players...They have learned not to play *themselves* but to play *using* themselves. In this lies

all the ambiguity of the actor's work." The strong emphasis on improvisational activity at the school reinforces the central significance of play and students are introduced to physical exercises, masks and popular theatre that reinforce the distinction between playing and being. Lecoq and those who now direct training at the school work on the premise that: "A true understanding and knowledge of theatre inevitably requires a profound experience of play".

Like Konstantin Stanislavsky, Jerzy Grotowski and Eugenio Barba, Lecoq created a place to study and teach what he believed were important principles of acting. Lecoq, like these other figures, described his research into the human body and its movement as his 'passion' and he pursued this work throughout his life. He saw his teaching as 'a path to his own greater knowledge and understanding of movement' and said that his work with students helped him to discover that 'the body knows things about which the mind is ignorant'. Masked work had a powerful influence on Lecoq's approach to performing and he was intrigued with the simple and direct way masks could amplify the physical aspects of a performer and be used to communicate with all kinds of audiences. His research and analysis of masks, movement, body language and gesture has had a huge impact on the development of contemporary theatre and his work has popularised genres such as the clown, bouffons, commedia dell'arte, tragedy, and melodrama.

### Jacques Lecoq 7 levels of tension

Jacques Lecoq developed an approach to acting using seven levels of tension. These changed and developed during his practice and have been further developed by other practitioners. The following suggestions are based on the work of Simon McBurney (*Complicite*), John Wright (*Told by an Idiot*) and Christian Darley.

There can of course be as many or as few levels of tension as you like (*How long is a piece of string?*). This is a guideline, to be adapted. You can train your actors by slowly moving through these states so that they become comfortable with them, then begin to explore them in scenes. The exercise can be repeated many times. Get your characters to move through states of tension in a scene. Play with them.

This is a list of names given to each level of tension, along with a suggestion of a corresponding performance style that could exist in that tension.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Exhausted or catatonic. The Jellyfish. There is no tension in the body at all. Begin in a complete state of relaxation. If you have to move or speak, it is a real effort. See what happens when you try to speak.  |
| 2 | Laid back – the “Californian” (soap opera). Many people live at this level of tension. Everything you say is cool, relaxed, probably lacking in credibility. The casual throw-away line – “I think I’ll go to bed now”.   |
| 3 | Neutral or the “Economic” (contemporary dance). It is what it is. There is nothing more, nothing less. The right amount. No past or future. You are totally present and aware. It is the state of tension before something happens. Think of a cat sitting comfortably on a wall, ready to leap up if a bird comes near. You move with no story behind your movement. |
| 4 | Alert or Curious (farce). Look at things. Sit down. Stand up. Indecision. Think M. Hulot (Jacques Tati) or Mr Bean. Levels 1–4 are our everyday states.   |
| 5 | Suspense or the Reactive (19th century melodrama). Is there a bomb in the room? The crisis is about to happen. All the tension is in the body, concentrated between the eyes. An inbreath. There’s a delay to your reaction. The body reacts. John Cleese.  |
| 6 | Passionate (opera). There is a bomb in the room. The tension has exploded out of the body. Anger, fear, hilarity, despair. It’s difficult to control. You walk into a room and there is a lion sitting there. There is a snake in the shower.   |
| 7 | Tragic (end of King Lear when Lear is holding Cordelia in his arms). The bomb is about to go off! Body can’t move. Petrified. The body is solid tension.  |

## 10. EUGENIO BARBA

Italian 1936



Eugenio Barba is a director and theorist whose work has stimulated much international interest. He was born in the town of Brindisi in Southern Italy on 29 October 1936 and grew up in the nearby town of Gallipoli. In 1954 he emigrated to Norway and worked for a few years as a welder and sailor for the Norwegian merchant marine before going to Poland to study directing at the Warsaw Theatre School. In 1961 he left the school to join the new Opole Theatre founded by Grotowski in the town of Opole in Poland and over the next three years he worked as Grotowski's assistant. In 1964 he founded his own company in Oslo called the Odin Teatret. His theatre company moved to the small town of Holstebro in Denmark in 1966 where Barba later founded the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) in 1979.

Barba writes and lectures about the work he and his company are developing but his first publication assembled and made contributions to the celebrated text *Towards a Poor Theatre*. This text introduced the work and ideas of Grotowski to the West and in many ways Barba's work has been strongly influenced by Grotowski's search for universal theatrical truths. As his assistant, Barba travelled with Grotowski when he visited different celebrated Asian theatre practitioners in order to discuss and study their various styles of performance.

Barba's interest in finding connections between Eastern and Western performance styles and traditions has continued since then but instead of searching for universal 'truths,' he now aims to discover and document cross-cultural commonalities between performance traditions. One of his most influential texts has been a publication he co-authored with Nicola Savarese called *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer* (1991). It offers a detailed and illustrated survey of a variety of historical and cultural performance styles that Barba has studied and outlines the basic principles he believes generate the magnetic 'presence' of accomplished actors. More of his ideas about the nature of acting and the work he directs and studies are included in his publications *The Floating Islands* (1984), *Beyond the Floating Islands* (1986) and *The Paper Canoe* (1994).

The Odin Teatret echoes Grotowski's original vision of a community of dedicated and disciplined international artists who train and work together on the development of performances. Barba defends and usually directs this process and has suggested that it offers performers a 'third theatre.' This term emphasises the fact that his company's theatre is neither avant-garde nor

mainstream but a space where actors are encouraged to perform as a means of self-discovery. In this sense, their community in Holstebro provides an environment where artists can share and explore their potential and their artistry without the pressures and concerns of commercial success. Performers are now increasingly encouraged to develop their own processes of training and to choose the methodologies they wish to employ in performance.

While the results of such freedom often seem to be strange and often incomprehensible arrangements of images and languages, the performances are intended to communicate to audiences at more of a visceral and unconscious level. As the group allows long gestation periods to enable performers to find shared meanings, new works emerge slowly from improvisatory processes and may sometimes take years to develop. As new ideas and approaches are constantly being absorbed and processed during these times, each production differs dramatically from the last. However certain stylistic similarities remain and the performers consistently combine ritualistic performance styles with a high level of physical and vocal agility and precision.

Like Grotowski, Barba sees his work with Odin and ISTA as research but Barba calls his own approach 'theatre anthropology.' Although many have questioned and challenged his use of this term as well as the methods he employs to gather evidence for his claims, he defines the work conducted at the school as the socio-cultural and biological study of human behaviour in performance situations. While this new terminology may sound more 'scientific' it is clear that many of the ideas and practices first introduced by Grotowski have inspired the research and work being carried out by the dedicated and increasingly self-directed performing artists who have gathered together in Holstebro. However, Barba has been much more open to public discussion than his former teacher who slowly became more isolated. Although Barba has also been accused of elitism and has raised the shackles of post-colonial theorists and anthropologists, no other Western theatre worker has investigated Asian techniques, theories and practices as systematically. Moreover, his meetings with the ISTA and his productions with the Odin Teatret will most likely remain relevant to the development of contemporary theatre because they remain open to investigation and debate.

## 11. DARIO FO



Italian (1926–2016). Dario Fo is an Italian satirist, playwright, theatre director, actor, composer and recipient of the 1997 Nobel Prize in Literature. His dramatic work employs comedic methods of the ancient Italian *commedia dell'arte*, a theatrical style popular with the working classes.

Fo's works are characterised by criticisms of organised crime, political corruption, political murders, most of the Catholic Church doctrine and conflict in the Middle East.

His plays often depend on improvisation, *commedia dell'arte* style. His plays, especially *Mistero Buffo*, have been translated into 30 languages and, when performed outside Italy, they are often modified to reflect local political and other issues.

Fo encourages directors and translators to modify his plays as they see fit, as he finds this in accordance to the *commedia dell'arte* tradition of onstage improvisation.

Fo currently owns and operates a theatre company with his wife, actress Franca Rame. Upon awarding him the 1997 Nobel Prize in Literature, the committee highlighted Fo as a writer “who emulates the jesters of the Middle Ages in scourging authority and upholding the dignity of the downtrodden”.

Fo's grotesque farces and satirical comedies on important political themes both entertain audiences and unveil the injustices of political systems. He is arguably the most important figure in the history of political theatre since Brecht.

Fo's theatrical technique revived the jongleurs' (strolling players) grotesque attacks on the powerful. Most of his plays involve central clown-like characters who make audiences laugh at figures of authority (i.e. the madman from *The Accidental Death of an Anarchist*).

## 12. ZEN ZEN ZO PHYSICAL THEATRE COMPANY

Physical Theatre – Australia 1989–current



### Background

ZEN ZEN ZO is a Brisbane-based physical theatre company at the forefront of contemporary performance and training in Australia.

Founders
Founded by Lynne Bradley & Simon Woods in 1992, the company has continually produced edgy, innovative theatre experiences that have challenged and delighted the audiences.
Vision
Zen Zen Zo has created over 50 new productions ranging from radical reinterpretations of the classics to innovative self-devised works, many of which have been showcased at national and international festivals.
Origins
Zen Zen Zo's aesthetic was forged between the ancient Asian dance-theatre traditions, the European avant-garde theatre movement, and contemporary pop culture, where sound, light, movement and spectacle communicate meaning and experience. This fusion of old and new gives Zen Zen Zo its unique appeal, and an audience base that spans several generations. Zen Zen Zo believes in a theatre of contact, in which the relationship between the actors and the audience is at once intimate and shocking, compelling and confrontational, ritualistic and profane.

### Methodology

The company has developed a strong methodology that draws on many traditions in world theatre, primarily from the Artistic Directors' years spent living in Japan.

The Suzuki Method of Actor Training, Butoh Dance Theatre and The Viewpoints are the core training systems that enable the Zen Zen Zo actors to explore the craft of acting.

### Actor Training

The Physical Actor Training classes are designed specifically to equip actors for high energy, physical performance and develop a powerful stage presence. The primary inspiration for this training has come from the Suzuki Method of Actor Training (Suzuki Company of Toga, Japan) and the Viewpoints (SITI, New York). The result is a process that cultivates the performer's physical energy, vocal quality and range, concentration, ensemble awareness and imagination.

### Physical Theatre

Physical Actor Training takes the actor out of the realm of daily life movement and habits and into a heightened state of physical awareness and expression.

It suits individuals who enjoy a challenge and want to explore the possibilities of peak performance.

### 13. DAVID MAMET AND WILLIAM H. MACEY'S PRACTICAL AESTHETICS

Representational Acting Style



Photo courtesy of Practical Aesthetics Australia (2018)

#### Background

**Practical Aesthetics** is an acting technique originally conceived by David Mamet and William H. Macy, based on the teachings of Stanislavsky, Sanford Meisner, and the Ancient Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus

Practical Aesthetics Practitioners and Actors
Renowned practitioners of Practical Aesthetics include: William H Macy, Felicity Huffman, Rose Byrne, Jessica Alba, and Clark Gregg.
<b>Vision</b>
This technique is aimed at making the experience of acting entirely based on the will of the actor. It is in response to “The Method,” which some believe uses more introverted and self-based practices. The Practical Aesthetic asks an actor only to commit his will to the pursuit of an action based on the other actor.
<b>Origins</b>
Practical Aesthetics is a response to Stanislavski’s system and the Method Acting that arose in America from it. Method acting is a range of training and rehearsal techniques that seek to encourage sincere and emotionally expressive performances, as formulated by a number of different theatre practitioners, principally in the United States. These techniques are built on the Stanislavski’s system, for developing real and believable psychologically motivated action.

## A Practical Handbook for the Actor

The technique of Practical Aesthetics is outlined and explained in ‘A Practical Handbook for the Actor’, written by Melissa Bruder and other founding members of the Atlantic Theatre Company. Originally written as an assignment from David Mamet to the six student-authors during an early Vermont summer Practical Aesthetics Workshop, the resulting book, published by Random House, has sold over 300,000 copies worldwide. Foreign language translations include Chinese, Japanese, Dutch, Turkish and Spanish.

### Actor Training

Practical Aesthetics is based on the practice of breaking down a scene using a four-step analysis that entails the following:

- 1) The “Literal”: The essential and most basic description of what is taking place.
- 2) The “Want”: What does one character ultimately want the other character to say or do.
- 3) The “Essential Action”: An evocative and relevant description of what the actor wants within the scene. It is essential to understand that what the *character* is doing and what the *actor* is doing are separate.
- 4) The “As If”: This relates the “essential action” to the actor’s own life.

For example: “Essential Action” – To retrieve what is rightfully mine. “As If” – It’s as if my girlfriend has taken away my favorite album that I was going to give as a gift. I need to retrieve it because it is mine.

This step is a memory device, a spark to involve the actor in the scene. It helps the actor escape the fiction, find the truth, and apply it elsewhere.

### Truthful Performance

‘All that is under your control as an actor is your intention’ states Mamet in ‘*A Practical Handbook for the Actor*’ (1986). In Practical Aesthetics training actors work on a variety of scenes from plays and films, both contemporary and classic. Through scene study, actors learn the skills of Script Analysis, Performance Technique, and Moment to Moment work, ultimately bringing all these skills together in performance of the material. The technique enables the actor to break down a script or set of audition scenes, resulting in strong and compelling performance choices. Applied habitually, Practical Aesthetics can inspire some of most compelling performances imaginable – committed, truthful, and totally spontaneous.



## Answers to Terminology and Review Questions

### Answers to Unit 3

#### Voice and movement

- i. voice techniques (posture, breathing techniques, voice production, articulation, pace, pause, pitch, projection, phrasing, tone and accent as appropriate and dynamics) for clarity, control and flexibility of voice in performance appropriate to text, forms and styles
- ii. movement techniques (facial expression, posture, gesture, gait, weight, space, time, energy and proxemics) to achieve precision and control of movement in performance appropriate to text, forms and styles
- iii. physical and text-based approaches to voice and movement preparations for particular texts, forms and styles and contexts of performance
- iv. proximity refers to the distance between characters or between characters and objects. It includes spatial awareness in reinterpreting dramatic texts, contexts, forms and styles

#### Drama processes and the elements of drama

- i. the elements of drama (role, character and relationships, situation, voice, movement, space and time, language and texts, symbol and metaphor, mood and atmosphere, dramatic tension) focusing on characterisation developed through the combination of physical and psychological approaches to role and dramatic action refined through improvisation
- ii. improvisation is spontaneous enactment taking on roles and situations to create dramatic action. It includes establishing the platform, accepting and extending offers and advancing the action.
- iii. rehearsal processes include physical and text based approaches. A text-based approach may be identifying the tempo or pace with which a line or action is completed to reflect the objectives of a character in a scene. A physical based rehearsal process could be exploring how a character moves through mime or dance by focusing on the external aspect of the character.

#### Drama forms and styles

- i. form includes the different genres of drama such as live theatre, radio, television and film, opera, puppetry and mime. It also refers to different 'forms' such as tragedy, comedy, tragic-comedy, farce, melodrama or history.
- ii. style refers to the identifying elements in particular texts including historical, personal and performance style. For example absurdist theatre and realist theatre are different historical styles of theatre. Presentational and representational theatre are different performance styles. Brecht, Stanislavski and Robert Wilson apply different personal styles to directing performances.
- iii. viewpoints can refer to different points of view of characters such as the antagonist or protagonist's point of view. Viewpoints is also associated with Anne Bogart including viewpoints of space, body and time.

## Contextual knowledge

### Drama conventions

- i. conventions of improvisation (breaking routines, dynamic use of space) in reinterpreted drama for contemporary audiences
- ii. contexts refers to the dynamic relationship between drama conventions and their historical, social and cultural contexts, at the time of creation and in subsequent performances
- iii. conventions of recording reinterpreted drama for a contemporary audience (stage manager's prompt copy, metonymic design concept overviews)
- iv. audience theory, such as identification and aesthetic distance, appropriate to reinterpreting drama for contemporary audiences
- v. values refers to the impact of changing historical, social and cultural values on drama production for audience reception
- vi. forces that contribute to the reinterpretation of drama for contemporary audiences such as environmental forces, political forces and economic forces.

## Production and performance

### Spaces of performance

- i. conventional theatre spaces include proscenium arch stage spaces such as His Majesty's in Perth.
- ii. found spaces are spaces used for dramatic performances that were not built for that purpose, such as an old building, factory or park.
- iii. adaptation of purpose-built spaces for specific performance purposes for example adapting an old warehouse for a performance by erecting a stage, and lighting rig.
- iv. purpose built spaces include theatres and amphitheatres or spaces that were designed specifically for a particular purpose.

## Design and Technologies

- i. principles of design (balance, contrast, emphasis, harmony, repetition, unity, variety, movement, scale/proportion, pattern, rhythm),
- ii. visual elements (line, shape, texture, colour, tone/value, 3D form and space) and design technologies appropriate to design roles, chosen text, available technologies and performance space

## ROLES

1. Director: decides upon the interpretation or the conceptualisation of the text and works with actors and the creative team to realise the drama event.
2. Actor: interprets and presents the text by adopting role or character through action to create the drama event.
3. Dramaturge: assists directors, actors, scenographers and designers through contextual research and textual analysis in the process of 'making meaning' in the drama event.
4. Scenographer: provides design for the stage setting to create the sensory environment and layout of a performance space for a drama event.
5. Costume designer: provides design for the appearance of characters on stage including accessories, footwear, make-up, and plans costume changes during a drama event.
6. Lighting designer: provides design for illumination, focus, mood and atmosphere through lighting technologies in a drama event.
7. Sound designer: provides design for aural support for mood, action, context and transitions in a drama event.

## ANSWERS TO UNIT 4

### ESSAY: COMPARE AND CONTRAST CRITICAL REVIEW

*Once in Royal David's City*, written by Michael Gow and performed by the Black Swan Theatre Company at the State Theatre Centre, is a contemporary Australian play incorporating both presentational and representational styles. It follows the life and experience of Will Drummond - "a Brecht - obsessed theatre director". *Endgame*, written by Samuel Beckett, and also performed by the Black Swan Theatre Company in 2017, is an archetypal absurdist one-act play considered to be one of Beckett's greatest works. First performed in 1957, *Endgame*'s protagonists are stuck in monotonous routine and static lives while they wait for death, an ultimate escape. The 2017 version, directed by Andrew Ross, who relocates *Endgame* to the Australian outback, brings this tragicomedy to life. This reinterpretation of the script from the beginning to the end of the play, emphasised the alienation, meaningless, futility and nothingness of the inner and outer landscape. The minimalist actions, dialogue and conversation, use of monosyllabic words, use of terms that denote finishing, death and end all are the salient features of absurdity.

Some of the key ideas explored throughout the performance of *Once in Royal David's City* are veracities of family, sickness, mortality and the inevitable crossover from life to death. The main protagonist, Will Drummond, is caught up in a series of events culminating in the loss of his aged mother. These ideas are also reflected in some of the major themes explored in Samuel Beckett's play *Endgame*, such as 'the end game' of our lives, meaning/lessness, and isolation.

HAMM      What's he doing?

(Clov raises lid of Nagg's bin, stoops, looks into it. Pause.)

CLOV      He's crying.

(He closes the lid, straightens up.)

HAMM      Then he's living.

In *Endgame* the long pauses in between poignant dialogue, the short rat-a-tat-tat of snappy exchanges, and the lilted verse are some of the many verbal techniques used to enhance the production. The pace and energy of their physical performances was remarkable considering the stasis of three of the four-person cast who literally cannot walk (Hamm is unable to stand and his parents live in two large drums). The vast empty space echoes the isolation and emptiness of the character's 'end-game'. The majority of the verbal communication is the sometimes hilarious, mostly tedious bickering between Hamm (a cranky old man played by Geoff Kelso) and Clov (Hamm's long-suffering servant, Kelton Pell). Hamm begs for Clov to kill him; Clov declines.

*Once in Royal David's City* combines Epic presentational theatrical techniques such as tap-dancing skateboard-riding cabaret with believable psychologically-motivated intimate performances. A co-production from Black Swan State Theatre Company and Queensland Theatre, OIRDC follows the protagonist Will (Jason Klarwein), a theatre director with a penchant for Bertolt Brecht as he comes to terms

with his mother's terminal illness. Creating an atmosphere of familial intimacy between the characters and the audience, Michael Gow's writing has been long celebrated in the world of Australian theatre. Set in the lead up to Christmas, the production uses the episodic structure and devices of Brecht's epic theatre.

Will discusses Brecht and his work, and as the play progresses we see exemplars of epic theatre form and style played out on stage. Scenes are often played out in episodic vignettes, actors move constantly between roles, and set changes are accomplished by the performers. An example of Epic theatre is Matt Scott's lighting design, conspicuous on the rig, moving between the stark white lighting of the hospital ward to the backlit shadow-play of a Marxist revolution.

Penny Everingham's portrayal of Will's terminally ill mother is entirely believable, as she creeps inextricably towards death. Facial expression and posture conveyed the severity of the situation and built upon the serious and bleak mood. Adam Booth's awkward fumbling and stuttering doctor offers both humour and empathy, and in one of the final scenes of the performance, where Will describes how the problem with Brecht - that people misinterpret the 'the alienation effect'. He notes that theatre should make you think, and laugh, and feel.

Endgame by Samuel Beckett explores existential themes relating to morality and suffering. The lack of communication between characters shows the audience that authentic communication between the characters is non-existent. However, the use of exaggerated gestures and facial expressions were significant in the conveyance of the comedic elements of the performance.

A key moment in *Once in Royal David's City* that provokes reflection and creates a tense mood and atmosphere is when Will has the realisation that his mother has actually passed away. This has been effective as the relationship throughout the rest of the play had been built up and developed, then when she dies there is a sad and reflective vibe to the mood of the performance. Endgame follows the bland life of Hamm, 'a blind and cantankerous master,' and Clov, 'his long suffering servant son who cannot sit.' The relationship between Hamm and Clov is strained and Hamm is more of a dictator over Clov. Clov realises this and struggles to gain his rightful respect, this creates an imbalance in the relationship and tensions between the couple begin to rise. This relationship is the key feature to this play and creates a bleak mood. When Nell, Hamm's mother passes away it creates a situation of devastation, which turns into anger and frustration towards Clov. This relationship reflects existential themes such as the absurd and precarious nature of life and death.

In conclusion both *Endgame* and *Once in Royal David's City* are plays that explore the nature of life and our inevitable death in both (at times) comic and profoundly thought provoking ways. Through the use of relationships, verbal techniques and non-verbal physicality and movement, we can see these themes illuminated throughout by an excellent cast in Black Swan Theatre Company's productions of both texts at the State Theatre Centre.

## EXAM SECTION 1 ANSWERS

## Question 1: Actor

You are an actor in a production of this drama text.

- (a) Outline how you will use two psychological approaches to develop your chosen character.
- (b) Describe, using supporting annotated diagrams, how you would use sound and silence and stillness and movement to create dramatic tension in Scene One:

<b>Psychological approaches to rehearsing</b>	Psychology is the study of human behaviour and drama involves the performance of human behaviour. Psychological approaches to rehearsing could involve getting the actors to explore emotional memory, focus and concentration exercises and/or collaborative workshopping using emotional stimuli. In this approach, the feelings of the character inform the movement and vocal choices the actor makes which in turn reflects a psychological understanding of human behaviour.
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**Notes:**

<p>1. Stella Adler's Question Activity</p> <p>In this rehearsal technique I would work with the actor playing Marguerite to improvise</p> <p>Act 1 Scene One where all the lines are questions.</p> <p>Once we have done this we would ask each other questions at any given point in the scene. Like, why are you running, Marguerite. This activity helps us to develop realistic and believable motivated action.</p> <p>So when she says, "I really enjoy your lectures, Professor." I would ask, "Why? "Is it because of my astute political observations, or because you find me attractive?"</p> <p>Likewise, when I say, "Sorry, Miss Lee, we have a lock down drill in 5 minutes." She might ask me, "What is the purpose of all of these drills?" and I reply, "It is part of America's hyper surveillance of its citizens post 9/11." This activity helps us explore the text and its ideas in more detail.</p>
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## 2. Stella Adler's Backwards Scene activity

In this activity we take a line of dialogue and create a scene from that line.

Then we recreate the scene backwards. This pushes actors to think on their feet and to understand the dialogue and themes better.

So for example, in Act 1 Scene One 'The Man' states, "If all nations as you say, are ultimately undone by the myths that found them, what will be the fate of America?"

We could then do a scene which focuses on the myth of American superiority and the American Dream. This would help us to explore not only our characters' attitudes to America and its myths, but also the themes of the play itself.

### Question 2: Scenographer (20 marks)

You are a scenographer for a production of this drama text.

- (a) Explain your interpretation of two forces of the play. Support your response with direct reference to the drama text.

#### Notes:

#### Force One: Myth of American Superiority

In this scene Talbot is comparing America to Nazi Germany in that the supreme value of Germans in Hitler's reign was their Aryan superiority.

If the racial purity of the superior Aryan was the supreme value, then the Nazi supermen had no choice but to exterminate the Jews or become degenerate and be exterminated in their turn." (line 14).

Talbot is saying that if Nazis are following this faulty logic of their own superiority which led to the holocaust, then America's myth of its own superiority will be equally disastrous.

#### Force Two: Surveillance

Talbot states that he would like to discuss Marguerite's essay but that there's a "lockdown drill in five minutes" and "just then an ominous-sounding alarm sounds as a voice over directs students, "immediately to their muster points. This is a lockdown." This is a reaction to post-9/11 terrorism scare that has America on permanent high alert. The Man is watching Talbot continually, just as American hyper-surveillance is continually watching its citizens.

(b) Explain how you will highlight the two forces in your set design. Support your response with direct reference to the drama text.

Force One: Myth of Nazi/US supremacy

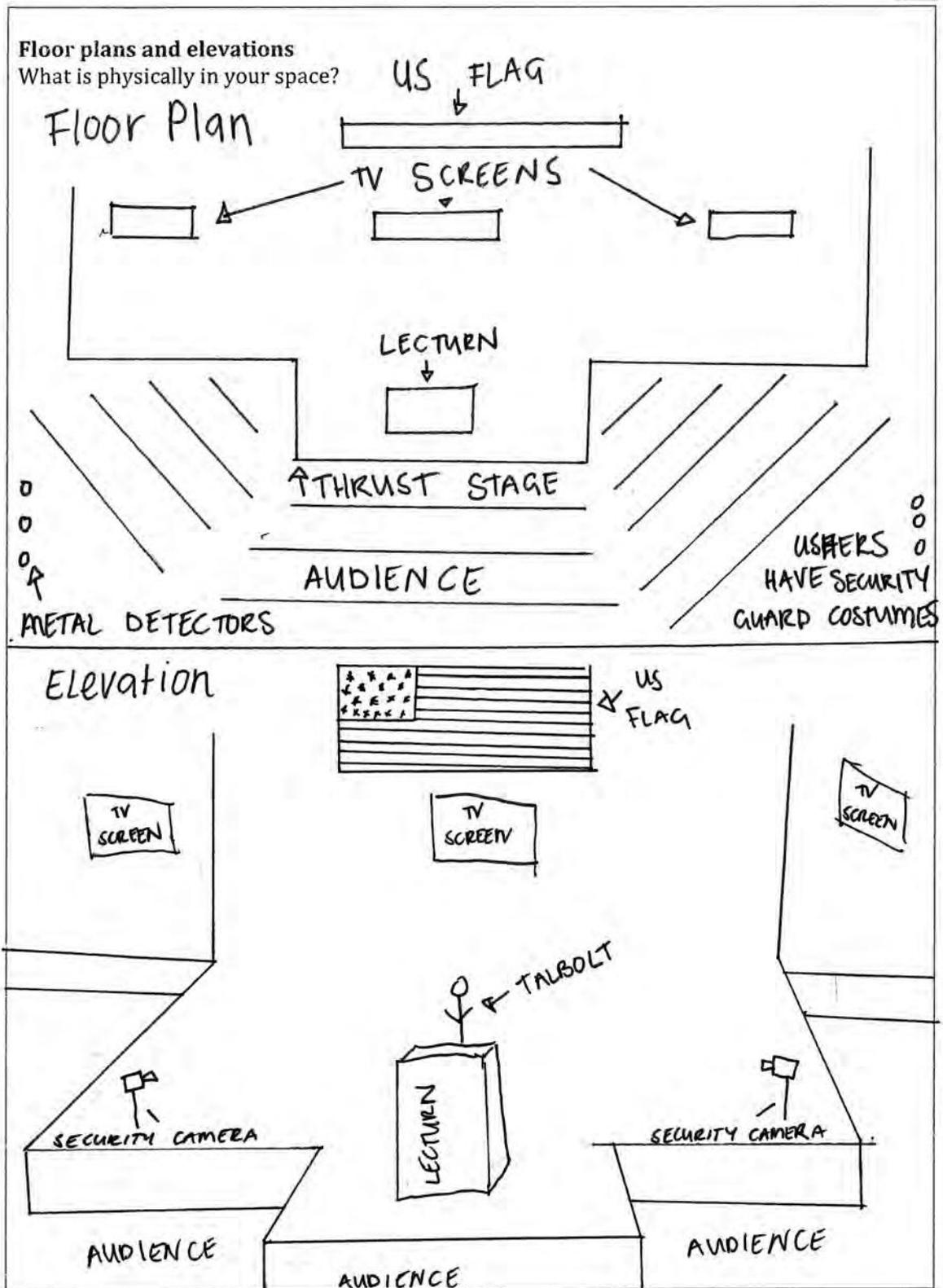
Sewell's stage directions state that Talbot is addressing his students in a lecture theatre with a series of slides and that a US Flag is illuminated during the lecture. Also, the Nazi swastika is illuminated over the flag at the end of the section. I would place Talbot CS downstage with a lectern and the theatre audience become his student audience. The actors could be placed in the audience to reply to his comments. TV screens (3) behind Talbot and on the wings SL and SR would have the images projected onto them. I would project images of Nazis, Eichmann, Himmler etc. and the mythic hobgoblins of Nazi supremacy i.e. propaganda cartoons. Also images that are iconic of the Second World War such as concentration camps, Russian tanks rolling in to Berlin and Hitler's bunker. The US flag would be oversized and hanging from the fly system in the lighting rig below the ceiling.

Force Two: Surveillance

To heighten the force of hyper-surveillance post 9/11 America I would have security cameras DSL and DSR pointing at the audience and continually moving left to right and back. As the audience enter the auditorium I would place mock metal-detectors at either entrance that made random beeps. The ushers would be dressed as security guards. As they check people's tickets they could talk randomly into ear-pieces to create an atmosphere of high alert and hyper-surveillance and unnecessary security.

The security drill and air-raid sirens combined with spot-lights rotating would add to the ominous mood and atmosphere.

- (c) Provide a diagram, with appropriate annotations to support each explanation given in part (b).



### Question 3: Lighting Designer (20 marks)

You are a lighting designer for a production of this drama text.

- (a) Explain how you will use two elements of drama in your lighting design for the play. Support your response with direct reference to the drama text.

#### Element One: Mood and Atmosphere

The mood for the formal lecture section of the play is formal and serious so a white spot on Talbot DSC would be the focus. As the atmosphere intensifies so would the lighting. As Talbot mentions Nazi death camps and the holocaust and the images are projected onto the TV screens on the cyclorama the lighting would cross fade from pure white to red.

As the tension grows with the introduction of the man and then the sirens/alarms the lighting could be a red wash followed by swirling follow-spot for air-raid siren. This lighting highlights the ominous mood and atmosphere of fear, terrorism and hyper-surveillance.

#### Element Two: Symbol and Metaphor

The themes of Myth (of US supremacy) and Propaganda (that 9/11 justifies the US torturing detainees and monitoring its own citizens) have a number of symbols that I, as a lighting designer will highlight.

These include:

US flag - symbol of US supremacy and the American Dream.

Swastika - a symbol of Nazi Germany

Guns and tanks - symbol of war

Jewish boy in holocaust - symbol of Nazi extermination of the Jews in WWII.

A downlight would emphasise the US flag suspended from the fly system in the lighting rig. The swastika would be projected over the US flag by way of a gobo.

The projected images of guns, tanks and the Jewish boy on the TV screens SL, USC, and SR would be accent lit from below also. A yellow/white hue would cross-fade to red as the images and symbols progressed.

- (b) Explain how you will use lighting design to highlight the mood in a significant scene in the play. Use annotated diagrams to support your ideas.

### Lighting Cue Run Sheet

Cue No.	Cue Point	Fade Time	Stage Notes	Description
1	Talbot	Up 5	Talbot "So that what you really have..."	Talbot lecture begins DSC
2	Talbot & Screens	Down 5	"organized killing machine"	TV Screen projections: guns, tanks, Nazi's, Jewish boy and gun. Swastika on US Flag
3	audience	Up 3	First voice: "What's the point?"	Audience downlit
4	The Man	Up 3	Man: I have a question, Professor...	Cross-fade red
5	Marguerite	Down 3	Marguerite: Professor, I wonder if I could see you...	Red down, white up.
6	Alarm/ sirens	Down 2	voice over, "This is a drill..."	Followspot swirling, sirens, alarms, air - raid
7	DBO	DBO		

## EXAM SECTION 2 ANSWERS



Question 1: As an actor, you are focusing on voice, movement, form and style.

- Critically analyse the form and style of each set text.
- Discuss the choices about voice and movement you could make to perform a significant character from each set text.
- Consider how you could apply these elements of form and style to one significant moment in each set text.

Make detailed reference, including quotations, to your set text to support your answer. Answer the question in the role specified.

As an actor in a production of *Ruby Moon* and *Beautiful Burnout* I will be focusing on voice, movement, form and style. *Ruby Moon*, by Matt Cameron, is an Australian play (2003) written for one male and one female actor to play all of the eight roles. As the male actor, the main character I play is Ray Moon, and the minor characters are: Sid Craven (the clown), Sonny Jim (the soldier) and Carl Ogle (the inventor). *Ruby Moon* is presentational in performance style and it uses an eclectic intermingling of historical styles including absurdism, epic theatre and surrealism. The form is contemporary drama. The setting is 'Flaming Tree Grove', a "timeless, placeless world" (p.1) in Australian 21st century suburbia. The play is episodic in structure (much like a Brechtian drama) with a prologue, ten scenes and an epilogue. The themes include urban isolation and fear and the main motif is the 'little lost child'. As the director has instructed us to remain true to the original form and style of the play, we are aiming to make our performance of *Ruby Moon* much like a David Lynch film.

*Beautiful Burnout* (2010), written by Bryony Lavery and devised by Frantic Assembly and the National Theatre of Scotland, is a contemporary play that is

also presentational in performance style. The form is physical theatre. Set in a boxing ring in a theatre in the round space the play is a high energy, very visceral and physical theatre production. Frantic Assembly's style is energetic dance theatre that takes a creative, collaborative approach to theatre-making that focuses on telling the stories of minority groups such as disenfranchised young men. As a lead male actor I am playing Bobby Burgess, the Scottish gym boxing trainer.

Ruby Moon is a twisted fairy-tale. It is utterly presentational in style, in a manner which is reminiscent of Artaud's theatre of cruelty. A little girl, Ruby Moon, sets off to visit her grandma, much like Little Red Riding Hood, however, she never returns. Matt Cameron has used a variety of styles of theatre to show the darker side of our 'idyllic, picture perfect' (p.1) Australian suburbia. For example, the structure of the play is similar to Brecht's epic theatre in that it is episodic. The prologue forms the exposition of the play, which is followed by 10 scenes (or episodes) which are complete in themselves, and the epilogue forms a sort of 'conclusion' to the drama. However, the play is also absurdist, in that the end of the play merely returns us to the beginning - and nothing is resolved. The characters repeat the drama day after day - each cycle ending where it began in meaningless repetition. In fact, at the end of Ruby Moon, the audience is left wondering if there ever was a little girl.

Beautiful Burnout's historical style is a 21st Century physical theatre approach where energy and movement combined with choreographed dancing-boxing scenes keep a frantic pace throughout the production. The theatre in the round square space forms the boxing ring and the small area at the back of it is completely covered in TV data screens for the projections and the announcements. Frantic assembly performance style focuses on energy and collaboration in their physically dynamic productions. Director and choreographer Scott Graham is one of the 21st century's leading contemporary theatre practitioners.

Ruby Moon is also quite surreal in style, especially in its use of staging, sound and lighting. In the prologue the setting is described as a 'timeless placeless world'. Upstage is a 'blood-red velvet curtain and scrim, allowing objects to appear and disappear with light. There is also a street lamp and the bare branches of blackened trees pointing like gnarled fingers through a vivid night sky. A full moon hovers'. The sound of a distorted music-box version of 'Greensleeves' crackles in the background. My character, Ray Moon sits motionless, staring at an empty rocking horse while thunder rumbles and rain falls in the background, and the ghostly whisper of Ruby Moon is heard, "It begins like a fairy tale..." (p.1). As you can see, this is very 'unreal', even surreal as far as style is concerned.

Beautiful Burnout captures the sights, sounds and smells of a boxing gym. The production is a sensory overload and as an actor I need to capture this in my physicality and rough-earthy middle aged Scottish accent. As a member of the cast I must train vigorously in boxing and circuit workouts to make my performance as a boxing trainer believable. When Cameron Burns gets brain damage from boxing, as his coach, I feel complicit in his demise, and this is the turning point for my character. For the first  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the play I am all energy and drive, but at this turning point I become more kind.

As an actor performing the male roles in Ruby Moon, the presentational style of the play informs my decisions about my characters' verbal and non-verbal

communication. To give some example of this I will discuss the two characters I play in *Scenes One, Two and Three*, where I transform from Ray Moon in *Scene One and Two*, into Sid in *Scene Three*. Firstly I will discuss my verbal communication as Ray and the transformation into Sid. In *Scene One* I play the stereotypical Australian male 'concerned parent'. Thus I want to appear strong and in control, yet vulnerable in that my daughter has been taken away from me and I am unable to deal with my feelings. My voice, therefore would be deep in tone, with enough inflection to not sound too monotone, but not enough to sound animated. I would speak slowly and project my voice. My accent would be middle-class Australian as I envisage him living in one of those middle-class walled suburbs. He is around 40 years old. When I am talking to the crazy old lady, Dulcie, I would try to sound as if I were threatened by her, because I feel guilty that I haven't been able to protect my daughter. Consequently my tone would sound slightly angry as if I am justifying my actions, "It's not like we sent her off into the dark woods, Dulcie. Ruby often walked down to the grandma's. She only lived at the end of the cul-de-sac." (*Scene One*, p.10).

In *Scene Three* I transform from Ray Moon into Sid Craven (the clown). Sid is a parody of a clown, much like Crusty the Clown from *The Simpsons*. In the playwright's note, Matt Cameron states that the actors 'need not make wholesale changes in costume, hair and make-up. Rather they adjust simply and swiftly from the base attire worn by the characters of Ray and Sylvie and use props, coats and hats along with body, voice and perhaps accents to create each new character'. Thus, in addition to quickly putting on a skull cap/wig and blood-stained singlet under suspenders (p.150, I would change my voice from 'concerned Australian male parent' to 'ridiculous yobbo-clown'. My voice would be screechy and nasal, and higher in pitch than Ray's. I would use a very Aussie-bogan accent to make it even more silly. Sid also imitates the voices of Sylvie, Ray, a radio voice, a police car siren, a detective and a police dog. The voices are all cartoon-like (p.19) and exaggerated, but still including the base voice of the screechy Aussie clown. Thus the character remains presentational, alienating the audience from identifying with any of the characters.

Non-verbally, in *scenes two and three*, as Ray I would adopt a 'strong in-control man' pose. Thus my shoulders would be back, I would stand with my legs apart and my arms crossed over my chest. My eyebrows would be knit with concern and I would rub the stubble on my chin as an idiosyncratic gesture. My walk would be like Laban's punch - direct and sustained. When I transform into Sid, my movements would be more jerky. My posture would be hunched, and I would adopt a ridiculous walk, much like Basil on *Faulty Towers*, depending upon who I was imitating at the time. I would really throw my body around when being a police siren or a dog, in true *commedia dell' arte* fashion (like Jim Carey in *Ace Ventura Pet Detective*). For example, when I am Sid imitating the detective interrogating my victim I would throw my head from left to right when saying, "Blah blah blah blah blah blah pervert!" (p.18) and when I am the victim being dragged away I would throw myself around with my hands behind my back in a very exaggerated manner like a fish flopping around out of water - totally unrealistic. Not only does this interpretation of my two characters conform to the presentational form of the play, but it also contributes to the absurdist nature of *Ruby Moon*. Sid is a completely absurd character - a clown, and Ray is absurd in that he is merely a stereotype, a parody of a concerned parent.

As we can see, my interpretation of the characters Ray and Sid, from *Ruby Moon* and Bobby from *Beautiful Burnout* fulfils the director's vision of the production as being true to the original form and style of the play in that they are presentational in form and absurdist/surreal in style. My verbal and non-verbal communication for both characters borders on parody and my transformation between the two takes place in front of the audience in true Brechtian style.

## SAMPLE ANSWER – SCENOGRAPHER

### Question 2:

As a scenographer you are focusing on how you will enhance the audience's experience of the performance space by manipulating the elements of drama.

- Outline the overall impact you want to have on the audience for each set text. (6 marks)
- Discuss how you would use two of the available technologies, to realise the given circumstances of the set texts as a whole. (10 marks)
- With close reference to one scene or section, critically analyse, using annotated diagrams, how you would use your chosen available technologies through a focus on manipulating the elements of drama to enhance the audience's experience of the space of performance. (10 marks)

Introduction:

As the scenographer for *Ruby Moon* by Matt Cameron and *God of Carnage* by Yasmin Reza, it is my role to design all the visual elements of a performance. As a scenographer I will be working together with the director to enhance the audience's experience of the theatre space by manipulating the elements of drama through the visual aspects or "look" of the productions – which includes scenery or sets, lighting, and costumes, and projections. The elements of drama are role and character, situation, voice, movement, space and time, language and texts, symbol and metaphor, mood and atmosphere, audience and dramatic tension, according to particular conventions. *Ruby Moon* uses the conventions of absurdist and surrealist theatre, utilising presentational style of scenography and both presentational and representational acting styles. *God of Carnage* is hyper-realist in acting style, however, as far as scenography is concerned it has an absurdist edge in the set design to highlight the irrationality of suburban life and the decline of western civilisation. *Ruby Moon* is an Australian play written in 2007 that combines the elements of absurdism, gothic horror, and fairy tales with the paranoia of suburban myths as well as drawing upon real-life headlines about missing children. *God of Carnage* (2006) was originally written in French and holds the mirror up to bourgeois hypocrisy. Reza trained in Lecoq's drama school and this can be seen in the 'realism morphing into absurdity' performance style.

- Outline the impact on the audience that you, as the scenographer want to have.

As a scenographer, I want to create a surreal and nightmarish atmosphere for *Ruby Moon* to enhance the absurdist aspects of the play. The story revolves around

Sylvie and Ray Moon, a couple from the fictional town of Flaming Tree Grove, who are struggling to come to terms with the mysterious disappearance of their young daughter, Ruby, who left to visit her Grandma and never came back. The case has long gone cold, and they're almost ready to give up hope, until the arm of Ruby's doll turns up in their letter box. Desperate for answers, they go up and down the street and interview their neighbours about the incident. I want Flaming Tree Grove to resemble a Dali surrealist painting with the houses being all out of proportion and very bright garish colours and textures. The cul-de-sac is symbolic of the cyclical never-ending plot of the play and I want it to look as though it repeats itself monotonously. The Ruby doll I would also make out of proportion with a freakishly big head (like a Bratz doll) but also clown-like but evil. She would be wearing a red and white polka-dot dress.

As for *God of Carnage*, the set remains the same throughout the 90 minute production and the action takes place in the lounge room of Michael and Veronica, a wealthy couple. The lounge room will look like the latest fashioned Parisian apartment with wooden floors, and leather furniture, however, this will be suspended in a sea of garbage bags to represent the moral failure and hypocrisy that lies at the heart of the play itself. In the introduction to the play Reza states, "A living room. No realism. Nothing superfluous." And that, "in the centre, a coffee table, covered with art books. Two big bunches of tulips in vases."

Ray and Sylvie Moon encounter many eccentric characters, including a bible-thumping old woman, an ex-soldier who still lives with his mother, Ruby's creepy babysitter and even a mad scientist. As any one of them could be responsible for the abduction I want the costumes to be exaggerated and the makeup like a horror-film. The lighting would enhance the nightmarish quality of the production using lots of red floods and fresnels and fog. I want Ray and Sylvie to be haunted by their missing child and to descend further into a nightmarish world throughout the production, where the boundaries between the real and imaginary become increasingly blurred. Using sound technology I would include creepy music such as the song 'Greensleeves' and SFX such as doors slamming, thunder and lightning, to enhance the surreal atmosphere. When Sylvie reenacts her daughters return as Ruby I want the audience to be left wondering if they will ever get over not knowing what happened to their missing child, and even to question whether or not she ever existed. In essence, I want the scenography to create an atmosphere of a dark and creepy fairy-tale, like *The Brothers Grim*, or like the movie *Pan's Labyrinth*.

- Discuss how you would use the available technologies to realise the given circumstances of the set text as a whole.

As a scenographer I would use the available technologies of lighting, sound, audio-visual technologies and staging equipment to realise the given circumstances of *Ruby Moon*. The given circumstances – a term coined by Russian drama theorist Constantin Stanislavski – refers to the clues in what the characters say, or is said about them, the stage directions, the physical clues and cues, and subtext. Basically, everything the text tells you about the play and how it should be interpreted. The setting is described as:

'a timeless, placeless world featuring an armchair, standing lamp, rocking horse, gramophone, telephone, answering machine and coat stand with various garments.

The furnishings are antique in a room evoking dust-covered memory. Upstage is a blood-red velvet curtain and scrim, allowing objects to 'appear' and 'disappear' with light. There is also a street lamp and the bare branches of blackened trees pointing like gnarled fingers through a vivid night sky. A full moon hovers.'

Therefore, I would design the stage so that DSL is Ray and Sylvie Moon's house with all of the properties such as armchair, lamp, rocking chair, horse etc (see above) are placed in a 'lounge room' style position with an antique rug marking out the parameters of the 'house'. I would have the red velvet curtain USC and the scrim USR. Veronica Vale - the singer, would enter through a slit in the curtain and sit on a stool just in front of it. The other characters would appear DSR near the street lamp and blackened trees. As all of the characters are played by two actors (Sylvie/Dulcie/Veronica/Dawn and Ray/Sid/Sonny/Carl) the coat stand in Ray and Sylvie's house would have all of the costumes needed for each character so that the actors could transition into each character by picking up the costume from the stand and move to their 'house' DSR. For the 'backdrop', USL and USR either side of the velvet curtain I would have a suburban landscape painted on MDF flats. If this was a problem then I would simply project these images onto the cyclorama.

In God of Carnage the two 'civilised' couples meet in the impressive Parisian apartment to sort out a playground fight: the son of Alan and Annette has broken two teeth of the son of their hosts, Michael and Veronica. At first, polite niceties are observed. Gradually, however, tensions emerge between and among the couples. Alan, a cynical lawyer distractedly defending a dubious pharmaceutical company on his mobile, annoys his hosts and causes his wife to throw up. Meanwhile, Veronica, a moral crusader who has just written a book about Darfur, allows her mask to slip and exposes the hollowness of her marriage to Michael, who is a cynical nihilist at heart. To match this wealth and cynicism and hollowness of the couples I would make the set look very minimalist, beautiful yet cold. The couples are completely oblivious to the garbage/carnage that surrounds them. For the sound design I would have French carnival, almost absurd circus music as the curtain raises, to reflect the high status, yet hollow souls of the characters.

For the sound design in Ruby Moon in the prologue I would have 'a distorted music-box version of 'Greensleeves' crackling' as if coming from an icecream van, as is outlined in the prologue stage directions. I would also add thunder and rain and 'Ruby's ghostly whisper' as is stated in the prologue. This could all be done on Garage band on the Mac computer and then controlled in the bio-box through the sound board by the lighting controller. Other SFX would include a streetscape sound (cars beeping, dogs barking, wind chimes) and a door chime 'playing the tune Kum Bah Yah' for scene one. In scene two the stage directions state that 'the naïve piano refrain echoes'. I would have a very slow adage such as Tres Gimnopedes which is a sad evocative piece that suits the scene where Ray and Sylvie are losing their minds about Ruby and their relationship is breaking apart. The piano is heard again in scene three along with wind, wood pipes and a wind-chime. In scene five we meet Veronica Vale -the femme fatale singer- and I would have a track of a gramophone playing. Veronica Vale's music would be very sultry, and sexy music from the 1940s, such as Marilyn Monroe singing "Mr President". I would also have the voice over for the telephone message, explosion and gunfire SFX for Sonny Jim and Carl the scientist and weird clown music for Sid the Clown.

For lighting of *God of Carnage* I would use atmospheric lighting such as downlight pin spots over the lounge room CS and almost complete black out over the garbage surrounding the lounge room so that the audience can only just see it once the play begins. As the couples descend into chaos the white wash would gradually be replaced with more red hues to symbolise the violence and thinly veiled hatred between and within the couples.

My lighting would generally utilise a lot of red and fog to enhance the absurdist surrealist atmosphere of the entire play for *Ruby Moon*. I would also need white washes or floods to light up the action in the part of the stage where it is taking place. So when Ray and Sylvie are DSL I would have a white/orange wash or flood on them, and the rest of the stage would be blacked out. When the characters are DSR, such as Sonny Jim and Sylvie Moon, I would have a white/orange flood on them. Veronica Vale would have a spotlight on her as she is a 'singer' and Sid the Clown would have a colourful chase and a roaming spotlight because he represents the 'crazy clown' much like Crusty the Clown from *The Simpsons*. For Sonny Jim the soldier's scene I would use a strobe light to represent war and fighting. The lighting overall, however, would evoke a nightmarish atmosphere and quality in keeping with the absurdist form of the play.

For the visual aspects of *Ruby Moon* I would have the streetscape projected onto the cyclorama of 'Flaming Tree Grove' which would be a distorted all out of proportion streetscape of houses that were very cartoon-like and all different bright colours, but on odd angles. This would be projected mainly USL and USR on either side of the velvet curtain. I would also have hand-writing projected onto the cyc in the final scene with Ruby's voice and the writing would be in a child's hand-writing, saying the lines she says:

'She's not in the room

She's not outside

Hide from the world

The curtain girl...

Behind the curtain girl.'

All of these technologies would be utilised to have a creepy effect that would further enhance the absurdist nightmarish quality of the production.

- With close reference to one scene or section, critically analyse, using annotated diagrams, how you would use your chosen available technologies through a focus on manipulating the elements of drama to enhance the audience's experience of the space of performance.

With reference to the section in *God of Carnage* just after Annette vomits all over the Kokoschka and Michael hints that Annette's son is a 'snitch'. In this scene both couples slowly stop pretending to be civilised and this leads to the eventual climax where they have an all-out argument which ends in a punching match of their own on the couch.

ANNETTE. You think my son is a snitch?

MICHAEL. I don't think anything.

ANNETTE. Well, if you don't think anything, don't say anything. Stop making these insinuations.

VERONICA. Let's stay calm, Annette. Michael and I are making an effort to be reasonable and moderate ...

ANNETTE. Not that moderate.

VERONICA. Oh, really? What do you mean?

ANNETTE. Moderate on the surface.

And later...

MICHAEL. Let me tell you something, I'm up to here with these idiotic discussions. We tried to be nice, we bought tulips, my wife passed me off as a liberal, but I can't keep this bullshit up any more. I am not a member of polite society. What I am and always have been, is a fucking Neanderthal.

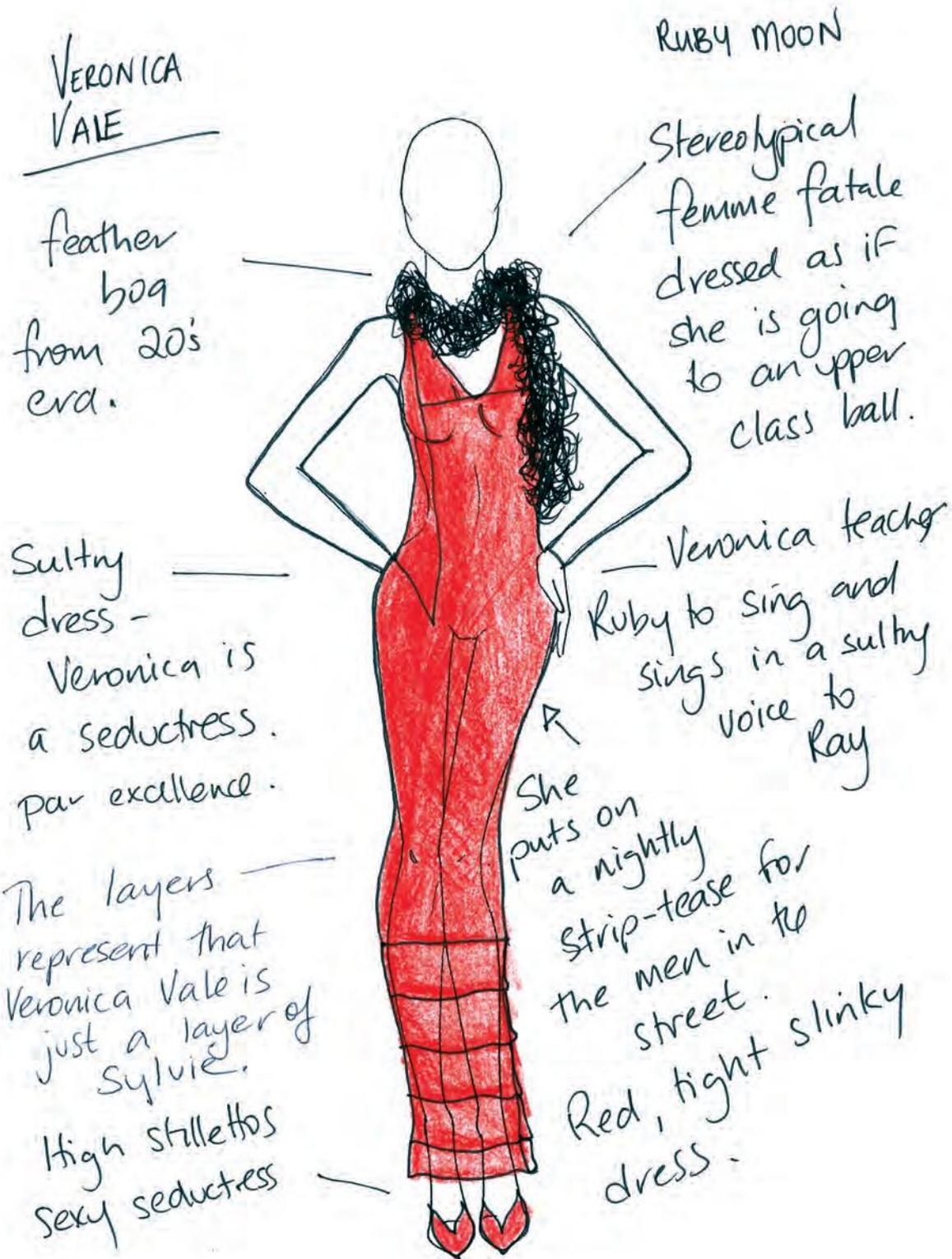
ALAN. Aren't we all?

VERONICA. No. No. I'm sorry, we are not all fucking Neanderthals.

Because this scene is the beginning of the end for 'civilized' couples I would start to tilt the stage and put a soft yellow/green wash on the garbage that surrounds them. The set itself will get messier and messier as she vomits everywhere and they eventually shove the phone into the flowers. This will highlight the descent into annihilation.

With regard to scene 5 with Veronica Vale and Ray Moon I would manipulate the elements of drama: role and character, situation, voice, movement, space and time, language and texts, symbol and metaphor, mood and atmosphere, audience and dramatic tension. Veronica Vale would be the actress playing Sylvie Moon, however she would appear through the velvet curtain USC with a blonde Marilyn Monroe wig on, a red feather-boa, and a microphone. She would be sitting on a stool USC singing and then talking to Ray. Following is an image of Veronica Vale:

The red symbolises lust and enhances her femme-fatale character and role. Her voice would be sultry and sexy and the mood would be one of a darkened cocktail bar at night with fog and red lighting to enhance the sultry atmosphere of the scene. The dramatic tension is increased with the audience wondering if Ray will succumb to Veronica's advances by her sexy movements and physicality.



Veronica Vale would appear USC through the velvet curtain and sit on her stool. When she says 'Come for another cup of sugar, Ray?' she would walk DSC in a sexy sultry manner and take him by the collar. Then when she removes her wig and takes a drink from his bottle the red sultry lighting and the music would be immediately ripped off - revealing white lighting and no sound - as she returns to Sylvie Moon. Then as she goes back to the seductress Veronica Vale when he tries to seduce her: "Should we turn off the light?" I would put the red lights back on but not the music, which would enhance the dramatic tension because we see that Ray is desperate for some affection from his wife but she is unavailable to him because of her grief.

The mood and atmosphere should change during this scene from the sexy bar of Veronica Vale to the sad relationship between two grieving parents, Sylvie and Ray, and this can be achieved through the use of the lighting, sound and costumes as described above. This will portray the elements of drama – role and character, situation, voice, movement, space and time, language and texts, symbol and metaphor, mood and atmosphere, audience and dramatic tension, in an absurdist form and presentational manner.

### Conclusion

As the scenographer for Ruby Moon by Matt Cameron and God of Carnage by Yasmina Reza it is my role to design all the visual elements of the performance. As a scenographer I will be working together with the director to enhance the audience's experience of the theatre space by manipulating the elements of drama through the visual aspects or "look" of the production – which includes scenery or sets, lighting, and costumes, and projections. The elements of drama are role and character, situation, voice, movement, space and time, language and texts, symbol and metaphor, mood and atmosphere, audience and dramatic tension, according to particular conventions. Ruby Moon and God of Carnage use some of the conventions of absurdist theatre, utilising presentational style of scenography and both presentational and representational acting styles. Ruby Moon is an Australian play written in 2007 that combines the elements of absurdism, gothic horror, and fairy tales with the paranoia of suburban myths as well as drawing upon real-life headlines about missing children. God of Carnage by French playwright, Yasmina Reza is a contemporary farce where the comedy highlights the absurdity and hypocrisy of social relationships in 'civilized' western society.

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