

Theatre
First examinations 2009

Diploma Programme

Teacher support material



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Theatre

Teacher support material

First examinations 2009

Produced in collaboration with ISTA



International Baccalaureate Organization

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Diploma Programme
Theatre—teacher support material

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Contents

Preliminaries	1
Introduction	1
The course	2
The course at a glance for HL students	2
The course at a glance for SL students	3
Assessment outline for SL and HL students	4
Planning a coherent IB theatre course	5
A holistic approach to assessment in theatre	13
The assessment	24
The practical performance proposal	24
The research investigation	33
A step-by-step approach to research for students	43
The independent project and portfolio	45
Theatre performance and production presentation	50
Examples of assessed student work	54
Delivering the course—schemes of work	55
Bunraku puppetry—Rob Warren	55
Kathakali: Kerala’s classical dance-drama—Claire Lindsay	62
The legacies of Trinidad Carnival—Dani Lindersay	69
The one-person show—Sherri D Sutton	76
Masks: Actor training and character development—Jessica Naish	83
Stage and costume design—Charlotte Neville	96
Developing the collective vision—Becky Patterson	100
Playing with images: an alternative approach to text—Joanne Scott, Darren Scully	105
Inspirations—Professional perspectives	120
Collective Artistes—Collective theatre making for the world stage (African)	120
RASA—Theatre of the personal (Sri Lankan, Malaysian, SE Asian)	124
An artistic director speaks: starting points and living notebooks—Phil Clark, Artistic Director (British)	128
Ways to use the inspirations	132
Resources	135
Select bibliography	135

Introduction

The starting point for any teacher developing a course for IB Diploma Programme theatre has to be a thorough knowledge and understanding of the theatre subject guide. The purpose of this publication is to give teachers a starting point and a pathway to help them to turn the subject guide into a concrete plan of action, a course of study for the students, in the same way that a director might turn a script into a performance. It is, therefore, important that the support material is viewed as an accompaniment to the guide and not a replacement for it, as this does not contain all the information that is necessary for a student to succeed in theatre.

Each course will be unique and something that works for one teacher will not necessarily work for another. In all cases, however, the course should be devised with integrity and passion. The teacher should not lose sight of the fact that the course must prepare the student for assessment as well as develop a learner that fulfills the qualities described in the IB learner profile.

This publication has been divided into four sections, each dealing with different aspects of developing a theatre course that will satisfy the aims, objectives and requirements set out in the subject guide. It by no means offers a definitive way of delivering the course, as this would be contrary to the very principles upon which it is founded. Each teacher needs to make use of their individual strengths, their expertise as teachers and as artists, their knowledge of their students and schools and the culture of their community in order to devise a meaningful course. An awareness of contemporary practice and developments in the professional world of international theatre are also significant if the course is to be authentic and useful to students.

The first two sections provide an insight into the thinking and principles that informed the subject guide. The two parts, "The course" and "The assessment", focus on the principles of the subject and provide approaches to the process of planning a course and the assessment tasks. The first part also includes three sheets that can be handed out to students at the beginning of the course to give them an overview of the requirements and assessment components, as it is important that they are aware from the start of what is required of them. The second section examines each assessment task in turn and gives strategies to help the teacher to prepare the students and to set up the culminating assessment tasks.

The third section is made up of schemes of work that address the different components of the course. They have not been categorized into any order, with most of them focusing on at least two of the course components. They can be used in a variety of ways: as schemes of work that can be delivered as they are, as prototypes for planning new schemes of work, as inspirations, as models that can be adapted and developed and as a resource offering ideas, exercises and approaches that can be used in a different context. They have been created by teachers, academics and artists who are all familiar with the subject guide and the philosophy and ideals of the course.

The fourth section is made up of "Inspirations" that have been written by prominent professionals whose work and ideology reflects and exemplifies the philosophy, approach and mechanics of this course. They can be used in a variety of ways: as information for the teacher, as discussion papers for students, as starting points for TOK classes or for extended essays, or as ways of demonstrating that the course is grounded in strong artistic and professional principles.

The area that this publication does not cover is the very essence of teaching a practical subject, as human interaction, which is unpredictable and difficult to define and cannot be captured on paper. The best approach to this publication is to treat it as a collection of directions to accompany the map, the subject guide, which navigates teachers through the adventure that is theatre.

Dinos Aristidou, Editor, April 2006

Dinos Aristidou is currently Education, Youth and Participation Manager at the Sherman Theatre, Cardiff. He is also a writer, director, teacher trainer and workshop leader working with young people, teachers and artists from all over the world.

The course at a glance for HL students

<p>Theatre in the making—This area is intended to equip the student with the knowledge and skills necessary to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perform • devise, plan and realize a theatre performance • design, realize an element of production and provide technical support in a theatre performance • observe theatre 	<p>Students explore two different stimuli and, from these, develop plans for a variety of performances.</p>
<p>Theatre in performance—This area involves students in the application of the knowledge and skills developed in “Theatre in the making” through participation in theatre performances in the different capacities of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performer • director • designer • member of production team 	<p>Students participate in at least three performances, working from a different perspective in each one.</p>
<p>Theatre in the world—The practical and theoretical exploration of a range of theatre traditions and cultural practices from around the world and from different historical periods.</p>	<p>Students study at least two contrasting theatrical practices from more than one culture/historical period, one of which should be a non-text-based theatre tradition.</p>
<p>Independent project—The pursuit of an independent interest in theatre, which may have arisen from their studies within the course.</p>	<p>Students select:</p> <p>Option A: Devising practice—this allows students to develop and explore in depth the devising and actualization of a performance concept.</p> <p>Option B: Exploring practice—this allows students to undertake a comparative study of theatre in advanced practice.</p>

Journal

Students keep a journal from the outset of the course. This is the student’s own record, charting development, challenges and achievements, and, as such, students are free to determine what form it should take (written, audio and/or visual).

The course at a glance for SL students

<p>Theatre in the making—This area is intended to equip the student with the knowledge and skills necessary to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perform • devise, plan and realize a theatre performance • design, realize an element of production and provide technical support in a theatre performance • observe theatre 	<p>Students explore one stimulus and develop plans for a variety of performances.</p>
<p>Theatre in performance—This area involves students in the application of the knowledge and skills developed in “Theatre in the making” through participation in theatre performances in the different capacities of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • performer • director • designer • member of production team 	<p>Students participate in at least two performances, working from a different perspective in each one.</p>
<p>Theatre in the world—The practical and theoretical exploration of a range of theatre traditions and cultural practices from around the world and from different historical periods.</p>	<p>Students study at least two contrasting theatrical practices from more than one culture/historical period, one of which should be a non-text-based theatre tradition.</p>
<p>Independent project—The pursuit of an independent interest in theatre, which may have arisen from their studies within the course.</p>	<p>Students create and present an original piece of work. The concept for this work should be inspired by any source of the student’s choice, which can be of any origin.</p>

Journal

Students keep a journal from the outset of the course. This is the student’s own record, charting development, challenges and achievements, and, as such, students are free to determine what form it should take (written, audio and/or visual).

Assessment outline for SL and HL students

Higher level

External assessment	50%
Research investigation Students are required to produce a research investigation of 2,000–2,500 words with supporting visual materials.	25%
Practical performance proposal Students are required to produce a proposal of 250 words with supporting visual materials and a report of 1,000–1,250 words.	25%
Internal assessment	50%
Theatre performance and production presentation Students are required to do an oral presentation lasting 30 minutes with 7–10 images.	25%
Independent project portfolio Students are required to produce a portfolio of 3,000 words on their independent project (either option A or option B) and its connection to their experiences in the core syllabus.	25%

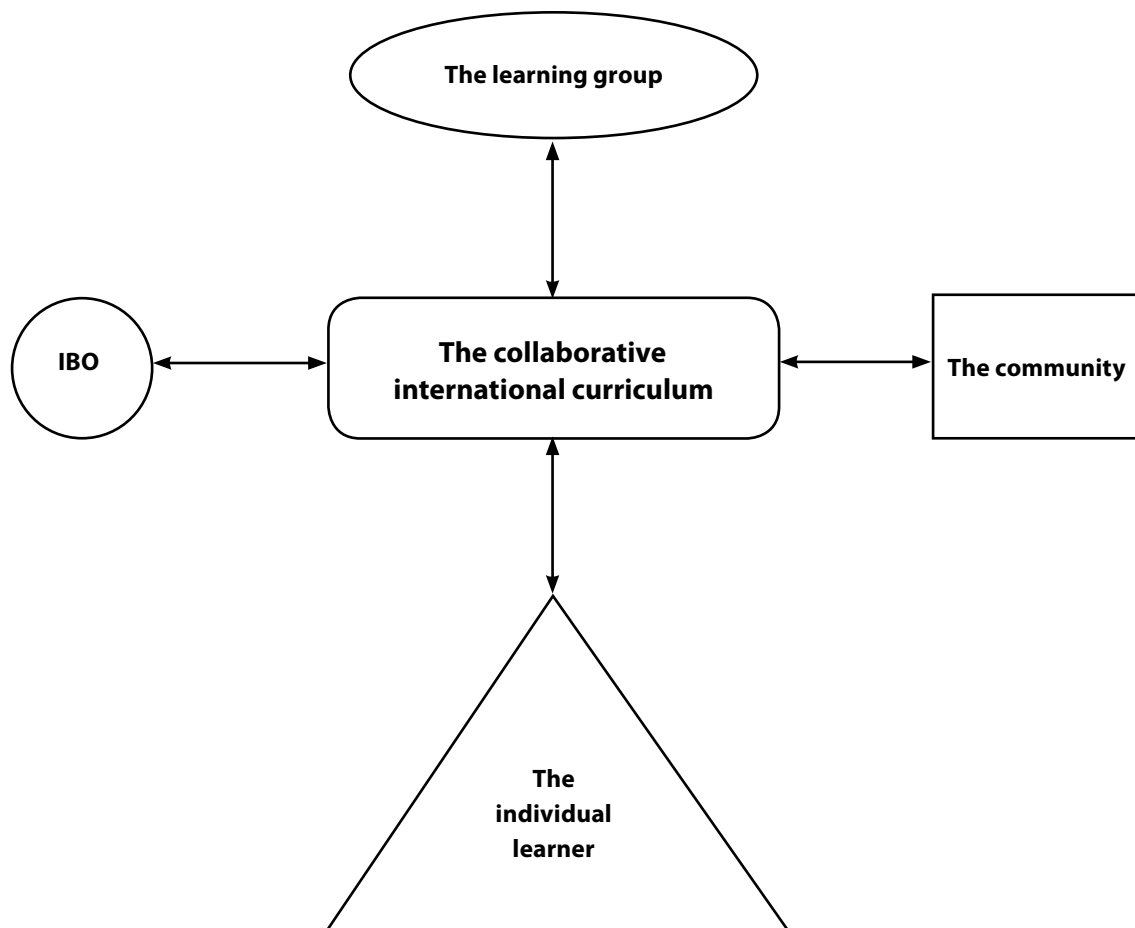
Standard level

External assessment	50%
Research investigation Students are required to produce a research investigation of 1,500–1,750 words with supporting visual materials.	25%
Practical performance proposal Students are required to produce a proposal of 250 words with supporting visual materials.	25%
Internal assessment	50%
Theatre performance and production presentation Students are required to do an oral presentation lasting 20 minutes with 5–7 images.	25%
Independent project portfolio Students are required to produce a portfolio of 2,000 words on their independent project and its connection to their experiences in the core syllabus.	25%

Planning a coherent IB theatre course

Theatre is both a collaborative and a dynamic art form. Learning in this discipline is a journey fired by passion, informed by experience and realized through holistic understanding. The architect of this pedagogical journey is the teacher who personally undergoes a transformation every step of the way. Planning a learning syllabus from a content-free subject guide for a course leading to external assessment is a daunting, yet invigorating exercise. The task seems gargantuan and the number of starting points incalculable. Consideration, however, needs to be paid to a series of interwoven factors, ranging from the nebulous needs of a local community of learners and the resources available to the stated goals of the International Baccalaureate Organization.

Factor 1: The course dynamic



Actors in a course building dynamic

"The Give and Take"

Each **individual learner** comes on the theatre journey with a personal learning style preference of which the teacher needs to be aware. The teacher needs to try to create a course that offers access to the subject while at the same time stretches the individual with new learning style challenges. The balance between group work

and individual tasks is one aspect of the course structure that stems directly from the learning style of the individuals and the needs of the group. The learner is also a source of specific talents and personal interests (perhaps developed outside the school) which the teacher may integrate into certain aspects of the course. The needs of the individual, whether it is requirements for further education or the pursuit of a personal project, put pressure on the dynamic of a learning journey that the teacher must consider during course construction.

The composition of the **learning group** has a profound effect on course development, not only through the contributions and demands of the individuals but also by the nature of the relationship between them. The process of ensemble—its creation, disintegration and constant reformation in different forms—presents the resourceful teacher with lesson plans and opportunities for learning modules with concrete outcomes. This collaborative aspect of the dynamic that constantly shifts and changes demands careful course planning on the part of the teacher.

The local **community** also presents an unlimited wealth of material and resources upon which learning modules may be built, but it also places demands upon the course planner. These resources may include usable links to different theatre traditions, or workshops utilizing the experience and knowledge of local theatre practitioners or parents within the school community who work in the arts.

The desires for, on the one hand, success in external assessment and, on the other, appreciation of the arts as a festive communal experience provides a tension. The discerning teacher must take this into account to construct a course that prepares the students for the final assessment, is responsive to the needs of the community, and also makes use of the theatre resources available within the community.

The **IBO** makes a clear statement of demand on the teacher with the title “international”. The philosophical search for the meaning of this word, together with a declaration of curriculum aims and objectives, challenge the course planner to develop a course that complies with the tensions exerted by all the elements and yet satisfies the clearly stated course requirements. To the pragmatic planner, the Diploma Programme *Theatre guide* offers the most concrete approach to initial course construction. From the detailed guide descriptions of the nature of the subject, the aims and objectives and the syllabus outline details, the discerning course planner can find the essential components to inform the creation of a constructed course.

Factor 2: The aims and objectives

The guide **aims** offer the broad goals of the course. The aims focus on:

- individual experiences and collaborative participation in a variety of theatre activities, practices and traditions
- development of personal, academic, aesthetic and practical theatre skills
- an understanding of the holistic nature of the theatre.

The course **objectives** give insight into those areas that will be assessed. An effective course must create opportunities for the student to acquire the following identified qualities:

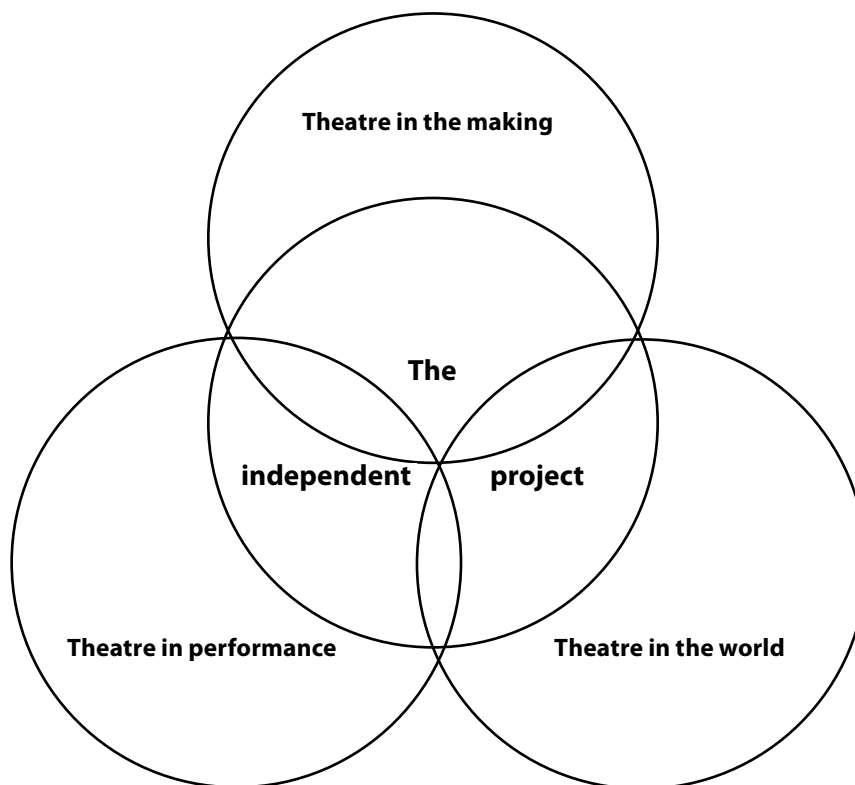
- knowledge of theatrical traditions from more than one culture and, possibly, time
- engagement with theatre performance and technical production
- analytical and imaginative interpretation of performance material
- application of research
- reflection on personal growth in theatre
- initiative and perseverance in both individual and group projects.

The HL student must also have the opportunity in the created course to investigate the nature of the relationship between theory and practice and engage with these findings.

Factor 3: The description of the core syllabus

The guide identifies four distinct but interrelated areas that constitute the core syllabus. These broad areas can serve as the fundamental building blocks of a dynamic theatre course.

Reflections on the experiences, skills developed and explorations in these core areas are recorded in the journal.



The core syllabus areas

The areas are as follows:

Theatre in the making

This area is intended to equip the student with the knowledge and skills necessary to:

- perform
- devise, plan and realize a theatre performance
- design and realize an element of production and provide technical support in a theatre performance
- observe theatre.

Theatre in performance

This area involves students in the application of the knowledge and skills developed in “Theatre in the making” through participation in theatre performances in the different capacities of:

- performer
- director
- designer
- member of production team.

Theatre in the world

This area involves the student in a theoretical and practical exploration of:

- a range of world theatre traditions and cultural practices within diverse cultural and historical contexts
- an opportunity to explore the roots of theatre and theatre traditions.

The independent project

This provides the opportunity for students at SL and HL to pursue a personal interest, enquiry or passion that may have arisen from their studies within the course.

In addition, the HL student has a choice of one option from the following two electives:

- Option A: Devising practice:** This part of the HL course develops from and explores in depth the devising and actualization of a performance concept.

or

- Option B: Exploring practice:** This part of the HL course develops and provides opportunities for students to undertake a comparative practical study of theatre in advanced practice.

The journal

Students at both HL and SL should keep a journal from the outset of the course. This is the student's own record, charting development, challenges and achievements and, as such, students are free to determine what form it should take (written, audio and/or visual). The aim of the journal is to support and nurture development and reflection, and it is expected that much of the students' assessed work will emerge from it. Students should also be encouraged to explore connections between different areas of learning throughout the course. The journal is not directly assessed or moderated but, since what it contains will reflect the sensibility of individual students, and will contain their responses to the different areas of learning, it should be regarded as a fundamental activity of the course.

Factor 4: The stated course requirements

As well as giving direction for course planning in the form of the aims, objectives and core syllabus outlines, the guide presents some very explicit demands as to what a student at HL and SL should complete during the two years of study in each of the syllabus areas. Knowledge of these requirements will ensure the course planner provides the opportunities for these experiences to happen.

These requirements are summarized concisely in the guide as follows:

Core syllabus:	HL	SL
Theatre in the making	study two different types of stimuli and, from these, develop two action plans for performance	study one stimulus and, from this, develop an action plan for performance
Theatre in performance	participation in at least three performances in three different roles/capacities	participation in at least two performances in two different roles/capacities
Theatre in the world	study at least two contrasting theatrical practices	study at least two contrasting theatrical practices

Core syllabus:	HL	SL
Independent project	choose one of two electives Option A: Devising practice — alternative ways of realizing and practical demonstration of an understanding of the elements of production Option B: Exploring practice — practical examination and critical comparison of theories and the work of one or more forms/ practitioners/theorists/genres	create or present an original piece of work inspired from any source of any origin; pursue a specialized interest with rigour and imagination

Contact time

One important consideration before examining how the process of course building may be implemented is the question of time. The guide gives a clear indication of intended teaching contact hours for both HL and SL students. The HL course represents 240 teaching hours and the SL course 150 hours. In concrete terms these times suggest that over a two-year period of around 60 weeks an HL student should be having contact of four hours per week and a corresponding SL student contact time of two and a half hours. It is the course planner's responsibility to ensure that each student has adequate time to fulfill the basic requirements. Of course, the nature of theatre is such that much learning takes place at weekends and evenings after the normal school day. While this is recognized as being an unavoidable aspect of a vibrant theatre experience, the core syllabus must always offer the opportunity for students to satisfy the basic requirements of the curriculum within the allocated contact time.

Having identified four essential factors that influence the planning of the course, and clarified the time investment necessary, the next stage is to look at different types of approaches by which to organize the learning journey.

Factor 5: Approaches to course construction

There are several basic approaches as to how a course may be structured. The following are some suggestions that are by no means definitive.

1. A modular approach

The course may be structured as a series of units. The units may be discrete, linked and drawn from the content of the course areas.

There is a variety of ways of composing the modules:

Discrete modules could be:

- Theatre in the making—a practical workshop of two weeks on stage management
- or
- Theatre in performance—a three-week process of performance of selected scenes from Shakespeare
- or
- Theatre in the world—a one-day workshop by a visiting Kabuki performer

Although in each of these modules the focus is on the learning that takes place in one area, the "secondary" learning from other areas will also be recorded in the journal.

Double interface modules may include:

- Theatre in the making/Theatre in performance—a four-week project introducing lighting design leading to the designing of the lights for the performance of a text

or

- Theatre in the making/Theatre in the world—a two-day workshop on actor movement and costume design in Noh theatre

or

- Theatre in the world/Theatre in performance—a workshop performance of *Hagaromo* under the direction of a Noh practitioner

Again a spotlight would be on the learning in the two areas with recording of “secondary” learning in the journal.

A holistic module may be a six-week practical engagement with a local theatre tradition, beginning with workshops to develop the necessary skills and culminating in a local community public performance.

2. A sequential approach

In this planning method the semester is divided into specific time slots (for example, three weeks, one day) and work sessions on each area are delivered within the allocated time slots.

For example: Time slot 1—workshop on acting skills. Time slot 2—acting skills in classical Indian theatre. Time slot 3—performance of Kathakali piece. Time slot 4—work on the independent project.

3. A thematic approach

This approach to course construction offers many opportunities to the imaginative teacher. The course planner builds a programme based on a particular theme. The exploration of this theme through each of the syllabus areas covers the requirements of the course.

Example:

Theme: Masks

Possible explorations:

- Theatre in the making—mask designing/making; building skills of acting with mask; using the face as mask
- Theatre in the world—Ancient Greek masks; Commedia dell’Arte; Kabuki
- Theatre in performance—performance of different scenes selected from a variety of mask traditions; lighting design for a mask piece; making masks for a production

The theme may also be broken into sub-themes—looking at images of beauty, secrets, hiding behind a mask—and sourcing texts from around the world on these sub-themes.

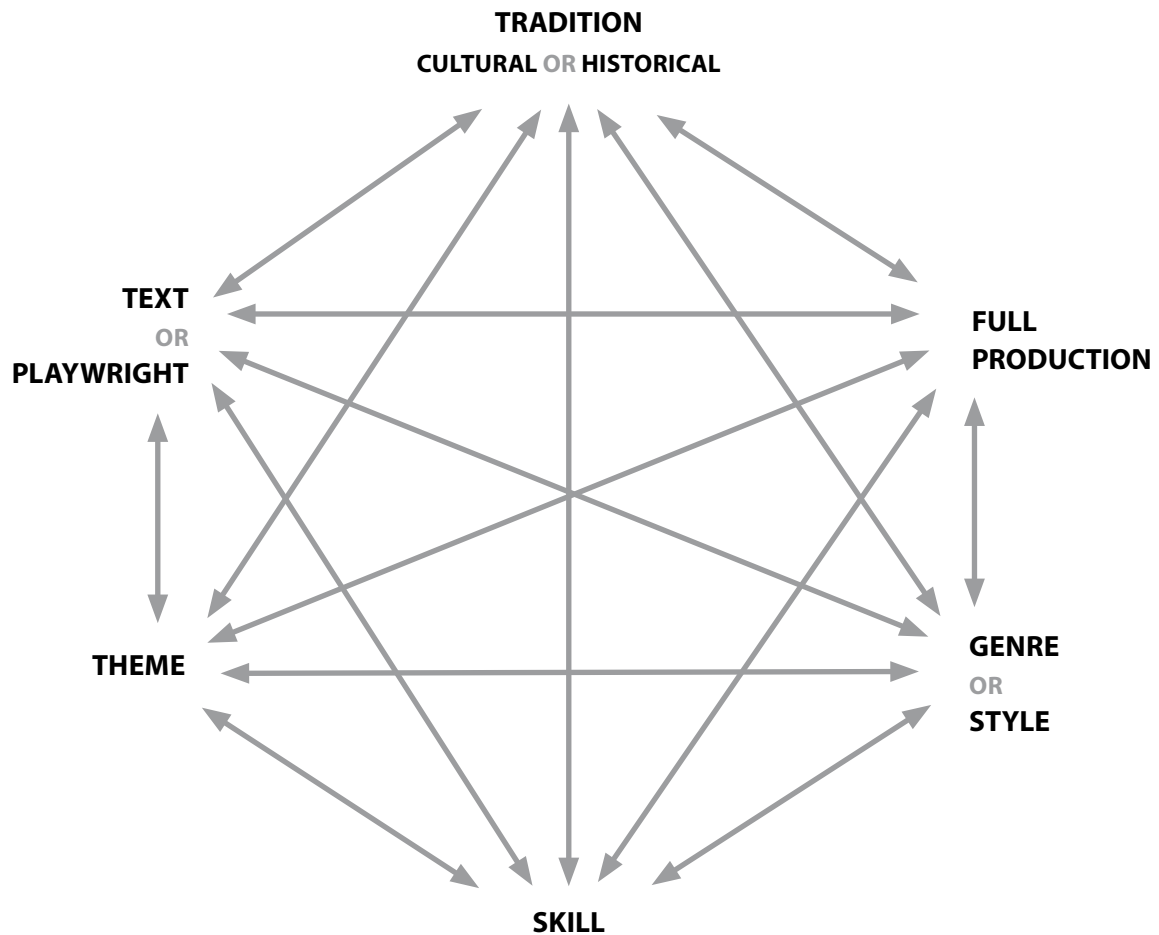
4. A starting points approach

This is similar to the thematic approach. In this method the lead into the course planning could come from:

- a skill—developing a performance, production, examination skill
for example, a module on voice/sound design/research methods
- a tradition—cultural or historical

- for example, a module on Restoration Comedy/Topeng/Roman
- a text or playwright
 - for example, a module on *The Bacchae*/Wole Soyinka/Caryl Churchill
- genre or style
 - for example, Theatre of Cruelty, farce, music theatre
- full production
 - for example, staging a full production of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* by Bertolt Brecht
- theme
 - for example, love, politics, ritual

Any of these starting points could provide a springboard into the other areas, thus creating a coherent web of learning which responds to the dynamic factors of the course.



A WEB OF STARTING POINTS

PERFORMANCE, PRODUCTION, EXAMINATION

Sample syllabus

The following is a sample syllabus.

Sample class syllabus	Year 1
Half term 1(a)	
The journal	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduction to the journal 	
Theatre in the making	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> basic actor training/ensemble building—approaches/theories of Jacques Lecoq Text: Jacques Lecoq, <i>The Moving Body</i> (Methuen, 2002) devising a piece of physical theatre based on Lecoq’s methodology developing a character in the style of Lecoq exploring a play script—<i>Dark of the Moon</i> (1994) by Richardson and Berney. This would include plot analysis, character analysis, play reading and a consideration of set design. 	
Theatre in performance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> devising/directing/performing a new piece based on the ballad in <i>Dark of the Moon</i> designing/directing/being part of the production team for the staging of the full play of, or excerpts from, <i>Dark of the Moon</i> for public performance 	
Theatre in the world	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exploring <i>Dark of the Moon</i> within the context of 20th century American theatre practice examining carnival traditions as inspiration for the character of the Conjur Man and the witches in the play 	
Independent project	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> introduction to the independent project exercises to get students to work autonomously 	
Resources mentioned	
Lecoq, Jacques <i>The Moving Body</i> (Methuen, 2002)	
Richardson, Howard, Berney, William <i>Dark of the Moon</i> (1994) (Routledge/Theatre Arts Books, 1994)	

A holistic approach to assessment in theatre

In contrast to the reputable “objective” or “scientific”, we have the disreputable “subjective”, “intuitive”, or, worst of all “mystical”. It is interesting, for example, that one frequently encounters “merely” before subjective, whereas it is inconceivable to speak of anyone being “merely” objective.

RD Laing

Among teachers of theatre mention of the word “assessment” often provokes emotional outbursts which range from the views of Ross (1982) “that subjecting the arts to conventional assessment procedures endangers their essential qualities, which include ‘imagination’, ‘freedom’, ‘fairmindedness’, ‘passion’, ‘enchantment’, ‘musing’ and ‘sensibility’”;¹ to the perspectives of Aspin (1986) who states that the

division between the “objective” sciences and “subjective” arts is false. In any given subject, appraisal relies on the formulation of a set of criteria which represent the norms and standards of that subject: specific works are judged in relation to these criteria. ... (T)hese criteria must be established by means of intersubjective agreements amongst people with expert knowledge of the domain, that is, those who are familiar with the rules and conventions of the languages of different art forms. If a comprehensible and practicable set of criteria can be agreed upon, then “objective” assessments can indeed be made.²

However, in a subject such as IB theatre, assessment is a fact of life that offers the resourceful teacher an opportunity to nurture important artistic and critical skills necessary for fruitful growth in theatre.

As Hills (1990) points out, “(i)t is not the assessment statement which is crucial to the educational process but the act of assessment itself”³ and, further to that, crucial to this act must be a deliberate effort on the part of the teacher to foster within the pupil an understanding of the equal importance of the twin processes of internal (**subjective**) and external (**objective**) assessment. In terms of theatre, two aspects of this “inner/outer” assessment principle must be stressed. Firstly, the accountability factor pertaining to pupil assessment in the theatre must belong to both inner and outer powers. The inner auditor is the creative integrity of the pupil and the outer auditor is the school, the examination board and the parent body. The second aspect is the clear responsibility of the theatre teacher not only to give equal credence to the student’s personal inner measure of themselves and the teacher’s/examination board’s outer measure of them but also to raise awareness in pupils of the interdependent nature of these elements in the overall venture of assessment.

It becomes clear that to equip the student with the tools of holistic “measure” in theatre, a process should be experienced in which a spectrum of “assessment” means are encountered by the student and the sustaining relationship between these understood and appreciated. Perhaps some discussion around and responses to some practical queries on the nature and function of assessment in theatre may offer some insight into this question.

¹ Hargreaves, DJ (ed.) *Children in the Arts* (Open University Press, 1989). Chapter 5—Hargreaves, DJ, Galton, MJ and Robinson, S “Developmental Psychology and Arts Education”, p 150.

² *Ibid*, p 151.

³ Hills, L “Assessment of Art Activities” in Entwistle, (ed.) *Handbook of Educational Ideas and Practice* (Routledge 1990), p 902.

Question 1: How is learning in IB theatre assessed at the end of the two years?

The IB theatre learning journey is a gradual process where the tools used for final assessment of student growth stem from the process of the course. These tools are the **research investigation**, the **practical performance proposal**, the **individual project portfolio** and the **theatre performance and production presentation**. The first two are **externally examined**, whereas the latter two are **internally examined and externally moderated**. Full details of each of these tools can be found in the section “The assessment”. However, an overview of the relationship between the assessment and the course objectives and components will offer a clear picture of their integrated function.

The tools are designed to comprehensively “measure” individual learning growth based on the objectives stated in the subject guide. The relationship of the tools to the course and these objectives can be found in the guide and in the following table.

Mapping the course

Objective	Which assessment area addresses this objective?	How is the objective addressed?
Demonstrate a theoretical and practical knowledge of theatrical traditions from more than one culture.	Theatre in performance Theatre in the world Journal	External assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical performance proposal (HL only, relevant to all markbands) Internal assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theatre performance and production presentation (emphasized in criteria A and B)
Demonstrate an understanding of production elements and theatre practices.	Theatre in the making Theatre in performance Independent project Journal	External assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical performance proposal (relevant to all markbands) Internal assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theatre performance and production presentation (emphasized in criteria A and B, and, at HL only, in criterion D) Independent project portfolio (emphasized in criterion B)
Evaluate critically a range of diverse performances.	Theatre in the making Theatre in performance Theatre in the world Independent project Journal	Internal assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theatre performance and production presentation (emphasized in criterion C)

Objective	Which assessment area addresses this objective?	How is the objective addressed?
Engage practically in creating and presenting performances, which will include a basic level of technical proficiency.	Theatre in performance Independent project Journal	<p>Internal assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatre performance and production presentation (emphasized in criteria A and B) • Independent project portfolio (emphasized in criteria A and B).
Reflect on their own development in theatre through continual self-evaluation and recording.	Theatre in the making Theatre in performance Theatre in the world Independent project Journal	<p>Internal assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatre performance and production presentation (emphasized in criterion C) • Independent project portfolio (emphasized in criterion C)
Acquire appropriate research skills and apply them.	Theatre in the making Theatre in performance Theatre in the world Independent project Journal	<p>External assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research investigation (emphasized in criterion A, and, at HL only, in criterion D) <p>Internal assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent project portfolio (emphasized in criterion C, and, at HL only, in criterion E) • Theatre performance and production presentation (emphasized in criteria A and B, and, at HL only, in criterion D)
Demonstrate an ability to interpret playtexts and other types of performance texts analytically and imaginatively.	Theatre in the making Theatre in performance Independent project Journal	<p>External assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical performance proposal (relevant to all markbands)
Demonstrate initiative and perseverance in both individual and group projects.	Theatre in the making Theatre in performance Independent project Journal	<p>External assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research investigation (emphasized in criterion B) <p>Internal assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent project portfolio (emphasized in criterion A)

Objective	Which assessment area addresses this objective?	How is the objective addressed?
<p>(HL only)</p> <p>Evaluate the relevance of selected research sources to personal practice.</p>	<p>Independent project</p> <p>Journal</p>	<p>External assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research investigation (emphasized in criterion D) <p>Internal assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatre performance and production presentation (emphasized in criterion D) • Independent project portfolio (emphasized in criterion E)
<p>(HL only)</p> <p>Demonstrate an understanding of the complex processes of performance, from initial conception to the impact the final result leaves on spectators.</p>	<p>Independent project</p> <p>Journal</p>	<p>External assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical performance proposal (HL only, relevant to all markbands) <p>Internal assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatre performance and production presentation (emphasized in criterion D) • Independent project portfolio (emphasized in criterion E)

Question 2: How does each of the tools function and what specific skills/knowledge areas do they measure?

John D Barrow (1992) in his work *Theories of Everything* identifies three properties of data collected from assessment. There are those aspects that he declares computable in the sense that they are algorithmically compressible; those that he sees as listable (and that can probably be prioritized according to agreed criteria); and, finally, those which “cannot be encompassed by any finite collection of rules or laws. Beauty, simplicity, truth, these are all properties that are prospective. There is no magic formula that can be called upon to generate all the possible varieties of these attributes. They are never fully exhaustible.”⁴

Barrow is proposing that we assess in both an objective and a subjective manner. When we begin to communicate the outcomes of our assessment, however, elements such as beauty, simplicity and passion, although measurable in a subjective system, become difficult to communicate within an apparently objective system.

The theatre assessment tools therefore focus on measurable skill and knowledge objectives which can be communicated, initially in the form of descriptive criteria, and then, as a single mark.

⁴ Barrow, JD *Theories of Everything* (Vintage, 1992) Pp 209–10.

External assessment criteria

The **research investigation** is a formal academic theatre research exercise presented in the form of a written paper. The measurable skill focus areas are:

- research skills (HL and SL)—the ability to locate material, ideas, information and knowledge from a variety of sources
- task relevance (HL and SL)—the ability to choose information and knowledge which are relevant to the task, that is to say, which can be applied in theatre in a practical manner
- presentation (HL and SL)—the ability to present research findings in a written style appropriate to the task
- critique of sources (HL only)—the ability to analyse and make critical comment upon the information and knowledge cited.

The **practical performance proposal** is a two-part task in which the student initially presents a written “pitch” which outlines a considered vision of performance based on a prescribed stimulus in a concise and pertinent manner. The second part includes a fuller descriptive outline of this vision, using visuals such as sketches, swatches, plots, plans and other annotated production materials. The measurable skill focus areas are:

- the ability to explore the stimulus and develop a coherent concept for performance (HL and SL)
- an understanding of the elements of production and how they function and interrelate (HL and SL)
- an understanding of the philosophical, socio-historical, traditional/cultural influences that have informed the proposal or an awareness of the possible impacts and resonances of the proposed performance (HL only).

Internal assessment criteria

The **theatre performance and production presentation** consists of a presentation, using speech and image, of the learning journey in performance and production that the student has undergone over the two years. The source of the material content of the presentation will be drawn from the **journal**. The measurable skill focus areas are:

- analysis (HL and SL)—the ability to recognize, critically consider and use individual elements of performance and production
- synthesis (HL and SL)—the ability to recognize, critically consider and use collectively the individual elements of performance and production
- reflection (HL and SL)—the ability to critically consider and express an understanding of the process of personal growth in the context of theatre performance and production
- applied research (HL only)—the ability to effectively integrate practical and theoretical research into developing performance and production practice.

The **independent project portfolio** is a written and annotated record of the student’s perception of the growth journey undergone during the **independent project** and supported by edited materials drawn from the **journal**. The measurable skill focus areas are:

- preparation (HL and SL)—the ability to effectively initiate, plan and organize an individual theatre project, including setting of objectives, selection of focus and anticipation of challenges
- process (HL and SL)—the ability to persist in the practical realization of an individual theatre project and make decisions which contribute to the completion of the project
- reflection (HL and SL)—the ability to critically consider and express an understanding of the process of personal growth in the context of the individual theatre project

- presentation (HL and SL)—the ability to select and present the material appropriately and in the right register
- application of research practice (HL only)—the ability to effectively integrate practical and theoretical research into the process of the individual theatre project.

Question 3: How can I organize my course so a student can effectively prepare for each of these assessment tasks?

Although attainment of the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve success should be integrated into the course, structures must be put in place by the teacher that allow the student to become familiar with the expectations, concepts and language of the external objectives.

Four distinct phases of learning offer a process that assists the student in preparing for external assessment:

Understanding—when the learner, under the guidance of the teacher, grapples with the clarification of the denotations, connotations and implications of the language of assessment.

Using—when the learner integrates the understood intentions into physical action and concrete choices.

Generating—when the learner uses the understanding of the criteria to generate subjective objectives, as a means of developing challenging and realizable goals for themselves.

Knowing—when the learner integrates both the theory and practice of assessment into the holistic process of theatre.

If we now apply this approach to each of the assessment tools it can be seen that through effective planning, skills and knowledge can be practised that are integral within the discipline and essential for success in assessment. Thus the teacher is **not** teaching for the assessment but fostering learning of assessment within the context of the theatre course. The following suggested activities should always be integrated into course module planning and presented as a natural means in the process of exploring theatre.

The research investigation

Early course activities: Exercises in simple research techniques on theatre practitioners, styles, historical periods and traditions presented in short (1–2 page) written form. Each activity could focus on different types of sources—primary sources, secondary sources and other ways of researching.

Middle course activities: Introduction to the assessment criteria and activities relating to them. Self- and peer assessment of written research papers. Presentation of practical theatre workshops using researched materials with follow-up discussion on the practicability and relevance of chosen research. Exercises on matters such as how to use research, cite sources, academic protocol and plagiarism.

End of course activities: Drafting the research investigation. Self- and peer assessment on validity of research, work on presentation, style, register and format and ways of recording and presenting the range of sources.

For HL students: Critiquing and evaluating sources.

The practical performance proposal

Early course activities: Ensemble work using a range of stimuli and sharing ideas of the variety of performance alternatives that can be inspired by one stimulus. Workshops on how to effectively record ideas in each of the production elements, for example, set design, lighting design, costume, make-up. Explorative workshops into performing styles and traditions. Short sharp exercises in groups on the presentation of a vision of performance with a limited word count. Role play scenarios of director making a presentation to the cast, designers, or possible funders.

Middle course activities: Introduction to the assessment criteria and activities relating to them. Self- and peer assessment of short written visions of performance based on different stimuli. Practical realization workshops in each of the elements of performance with an emphasis on overcoming challenges. Creation of a performance dossier in groups which is then presented and assessed by the cast using both IB and self-generated criteria.

End of course activities: Individual preparation of a performance dossier. Self- and peer assessment on clarity of vision, interpretation of elements and coherence of ideas.

The theatre performance and production presentation

Early course activities: After a project, students make group presentations to the class using speech, text and image to describe the process. Choice of images to represent some aspect of learning in the project. Emphasis on individual contribution and outcomes. Written reflections on the process of a project recorded in the journal in class time.

Middle course activities: Introduction to the assessment criteria and activities relating to them. Self- and peer assessment of individual presentations (to peers/small groups) on involvement in class projects. Tape-recorded journal of a performance project process followed by self-assessment. Self- and peer assessment of journals using the assessment criteria. Short presentation using only selected images of “my involvement in a performance project”. Critiques of a range of diverse productions.

End of course activities: Selection of key performance and production projects. Choice of relevant images. Devising of a dynamic presentation.

The independent project portfolio

Early course activities: Exercises in different ways of recording a journey. Group organization and preparation of a production/performance project. Devising criteria to assess the outcomes of a project. Application of the developed criteria to a performance/production project.

Middle course activities: Introduction to the assessment criteria and activities relating to them. Planning and organizing short performance/production projects followed by recording and peer assessment of both the process and the portfolio. Self- and peer assessment, using the assessment criteria, of the planning process recorded in the journal. Selection of a focus for the independent project.

End of course activities: Realization of the independent project. Regular recording of the process in the journal. Compilation of the final portfolio with integration of practical experiences, research and reflection from the journal.

Question 4: How does the process of assessing a performance and recording the critical responses in the journal, support the development of knowledge and skills in the theatre course?

The culturally ritualistic experience of being part of an audience is, for a student of theatre, a vital opportunity for observing the elements of production and performance in action; interpreting the holistic effects of directorial choices and experiencing the responsibility of being a causal element in a dramatic event. All three of these aspects contribute to a fuller understanding of theatre, its function in society and, thus, the core elements of the theatre course. Throughout the two years of study, theatre students will regularly explore theatre as part of an audience and record their observations and reflections in the journal. These responses will offer essential insights into processes, effects and consequences of their own work in theatre.

The journal recordings may consider the experience of being part of an audience from three distinct but interconnected viewpoints. These are as follows:

Viewpoint 1: Observational/analytic

From this perspective the student views the performance as an informed and interested spectator. Based on the skills and knowledge acquired in “Theatre in the making”, “Theatre in performance” and “Theatre in the world”, the student will make critical commentary on the workings and technical proficiency of individual production elements and of the performance as a whole. Recordings of this aspect of performance assessment contribute directly to the **theatre performance and production presentation** as well as supporting the **practical performance proposal** and **independent project portfolio** assessment components. These critical responses may also help guide the student towards their choice of independent project. Some areas for consideration from this critical perspective of the performance can be found in the following table and questions.

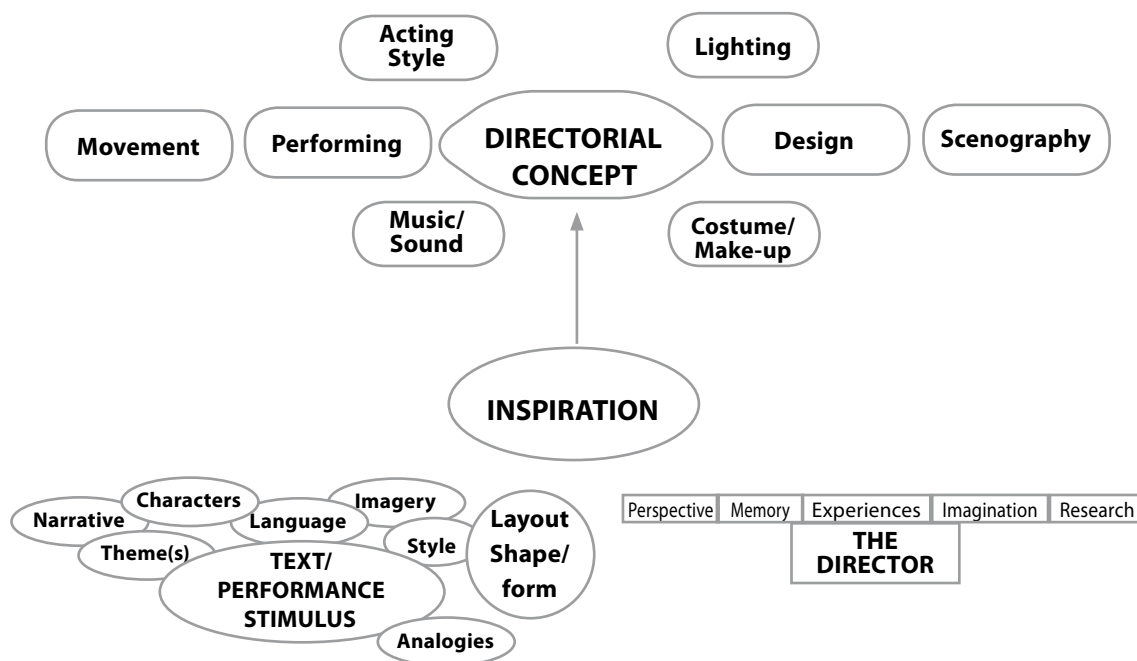
OBSERVATIONAL/ANALYTIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Genre/style of production
- Growth of plot
- Use of space (actor/spectator relationships)
- Use of individual design elements
- Depth and style of character representation (acting)

Sample questions: How did that scene change take place? What caused the lighting effect on stage left? What practical problems were caused by those costume choices? How did so many characters get on stage so quickly? How were levels created and used? What colours in costume and set design worked and what colours were lost?

Viewpoint 2: Interpretational/holistic

The standpoint assumed by the student for these critical responses is that of artistic director. In this instance, the journal may contain not only observations of productions the student has seen, but also comments on the artistic effect of choices made. Attention should also be paid to the effect of the interrelationships between the elements of production and performance and whether this achieved a holistic impression. These reflections should be informed by the students’ experiences and work on the course. Critiques of performance from this standpoint could play a part in the drafting of the **practical performance proposal** and could be included in the **theatre performance and production** and **independent project portfolio** tools of assessment. This aspect of critical response both feeds and draws on an understanding of the “director’s concept” and the complex process of artistic creativity as suggested in the following diagram:



The Way to the Director's Concept

The director draws inspiration from the “chemical reaction” between the stimulus for performance and their personal creativity and imagination. This inspiration is then transformed into a plan of action and realized through directorial performance choices.

Some areas for consideration from this critical viewpoint of the performance can be found in the following table and sample questions.

INTERPRETATIONAL/HOLISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

- Interaction and interdependence of production elements
- Displays of harmony/discord
- Visual/verbal/aural use of symbols and metaphors
- “Time”, its interpretation and depiction through performance
- Creation/use of dramatic tension through pacing, timing, rhythm
- Use of line/shape/form/texture/colour—as practical/aesthetic/symbolic choices
- Acting and blocking choices from a practical/aesthetic/symbolic perspective

Sample questions: Could I perceive the themes of the piece in the design elements? Could I identify the director’s interpretation and their practical/aesthetic/symbolic choices in the performance/production elements? Did I find them effective? How? Why? How did the director “mark the moment” when necessary? How did the different performance/production elements fuse to create effect? What directorial choices did I not understand? What could have been the reasons for those choices? How did the different layers of directorial choice produce a coherent, significant whole?

Viewpoint 3: Reflective/philosophic

The third standpoint from which the student should record critical commentary of the performance in the journal is concerned with the impacts and resonances of the performance upon the individual and the audience in general.

In the former situation, the student will record perceptions of the relationship between “self in theatre” and “theatre in self” and consider how aspects of this performance relate and link to areas of personal theatre growth in the course.

Journal reflections in the latter case will focus on how the performance provoked the intellectual, emotional and subconscious faculties of the audience. These deliberations would be based upon observation of audience responses to the performance, reflection and in-class group discussion.

Further research into the production, play, period, style, personnel and past productions recorded in the journal can also nurture the skills necessary to develop a **research investigation** and contribute to the **theatre performance and production** and **independent project portfolio** assessment components. The process of observation, research, reflection and recording developed during this viewpoint of performance assessment also resonates strongly with the theory of knowledge approach to learning.

Some aspects for consideration from this standpoint of performance critique can be found in the following table and sample questions.

REFLECTIVE/PHILOSOPHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Individual versus universal themes and ideas
- Audience interaction and response
- Striking/engaging and uninteresting/disengaging moments
- Construction of “altered” state of reality
- Comparisons to other theatre traditions/cultures/practices experienced by the student
- Performance/production provocations

Sample questions: How, in this performance, did the drama of everyday life become theatre? What did I feel/think/experience while being part of this performance? Is there an attempted pedagogy in this piece of theatre? A lesson? A moral? How were my/our perspectives challenged by this performance? How was meaning conveyed to the audience? What links were there in this performance to other theatre practices/cultures/traditions I have experienced? What other aspects of work I have covered in class did I recognize in this performance?

Question 5: What is the difference between the external and the internal marking process?

Assessment in IB theatre is equally divided between external marking and internal assessment followed by moderation. Each assessment component carries a weighting of 25%.

The **research investigation** and the **practical performance proposal** are externally marked components. On completion of the tasks, the examination scripts are sent to IBO-designated examiners who have a thorough understanding of the course and an agreed interpretation of the assessment criteria. A marking team will consist of various assistant examiners, team leaders and a principal examiner.

The **theatre performance and production presentation** and the **independent project portfolio** are internally marked components that are externally moderated. Towards the end of the theatre course the teacher, in collaboration with the students, will choose assessment dates for the **theatre performance and production presentation** and designate a date to hand in the **independent project portfolio**. Student

involvement in the internally marked components is encouraged, but the awarding of the final mark will be the responsibility of the teacher. After the **theatre performance and production presentation** and the **independent project portfolio** have been marked, the coordinator will enter the marks on IBIS. A sampling of marks will then be chosen by IBIS for moderation. The **theatre performance and production presentation** sample will consist of the recorded tapes or CDs together with the A4 copies of the chosen images. The **independent project portfolio** samples are sent to an IBO-designated moderator, as are the **theatre performance and production presentation** tapes and images.

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The practical performance proposal

The **practical performance proposal** is an exercise that invites the student to present the outcomes of the skills and knowledge acquired during the course for external assessment by submitting a rationale and vision of a performance.

The **HL student** must extend the scope of the presentation to include relevant commentary, drawn from personal research, to support the proposal. This would include a philosophical rationale, the presentation of possible socio-historical and traditional/cultural influences and/or any perceived impacts and resonances that this production may have.

The teacher should take care to distinguish here between the process of **devising** a performance and that of developing and proposing **a vision** for performance. This critical distinction lies at the heart of this assessment component that is **not** about turning a stimulus into an original play but about using the theatre making process to bring the selected stimulus to life with originality and imagination.

The task

This is:

- an externally assessed component
- 25% of the final mark
- presented in the form of a practical performance proposal file which includes a 250-word pitch and the presentation of supporting materials.

In addition, students at HL submit a commentary of 1,000–1,500 words on their influences and/or the possible impact of their production.

The teacher

Throughout the two years the students should work on exercises exploring the process of realizing a performance and communicating its intended vision and impact to others. This assessment method, which carries 25% of the final mark, should be an organic extension of the work done in class and should not be perceived simply as an assessment exercise. The knowledge and skills necessary for success in this component should be honed through regular practice and a routine of doing, reflecting, recording and revising throughout the course. The HL students should have access to relevant literature and research materials and should have been encouraged to use their research to inform their practical work.

The process

Phase 1

1. The IBO provides a list of a range of performance stimuli to schools in the November Diploma Programme coordinator notes the year before assessment. This may include textual and/or non-textual material.
2. The teacher decides on a four-week period from the moment the student receives the stimuli to the final presentation of the file.
3. The teacher gives the stimuli to the students at the beginning of this period.
4. The student chooses one of the stimuli to develop into an imaginative plan for the realization of a theatre production.

The teacher

The teacher needs to fix the four-week work period, allowing for enough time to meet the deadlines for dispatch after the assignment is completed. This should be planned at the beginning of the year and needs to be done in collaboration with each school's coordinator.

Phase 2

1. Preparation period—over the prescribed four-week period the student prepares a file to present to the teacher. The teacher arranges for this file to be sent to the examiner.
2. The file should be composed of two sections at SL and three sections at HL.

The first section of the file (HL/SL)

The pitch

The first section (HL/SL) should contain a proposal or “pitch” for a performance of 250 words and may include:

- the motivating factors for undertaking this particular performance
- the focus or aim of the performance
- the issues or themes treated by the performance
- a description of the performance concept
- a justified identification of the target audience
- the elements of the performance which the student considers would excite and inspire them and an audience
- any other perspectives of the performance which the student believes would convince a reader of the viability and feasibility of the project.

The style

The pitch should be written:

- in a concise, dynamic writing style
- using language that conveys an understanding of theatrical production processes and performance conventions
- within the designated word limit of 250 words.

Coherence and form

The pitch will include:

- a justified outline of a concept for performance which communicates the dramatic impact of the intended performance
- a description of how the production elements interrelate to convey the performance concept.

The teacher

Here is an example of a teacher's approach to preparing the students for this examination exercise. It presents some examples of the pitch written by students with the examiner's comments.

TEACHER: Last month, we began working on writing **the pitch**. The first attempt was a series of presentations to the rest of the class. We began by using the poem *The Shooting of Dan McGrew* by Robert Service as a stimulus for performance. In pairs, the students worked through their ideas through practical work in class. They then wrote a short newspaper article that, they felt, passionately presented their envisaged piece of theatre. The discussion afterwards was fruitful since we were able to hear which ideas were clearly communicated and which were not. For the next practice, the class were given *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare. The range of the work varied enormously.

EXAMPLE: Student 1

I really enjoyed reading the play by Shakespeare who was born in Stratford, England during the reign of Elizabeth I. I already knew a lot about Shakespeare as I saw the movie *Shakespeare in Love* so I was able to cut down on my research and focus on the play. There are basically three groups of characters who live in Ancient Greece. The opening scene shows the lovers who will run into the woods to escape the wrath of their father. The workmen are the comedy interlude and I will build my performance around them. The fairies are the third group. The Fairy King, Oberon, and Titania, the Queen, are having an argument about a boy and this is why Bottom, one of the workmen, ends up in bed with the Fairy Queen with an ass's head.

I want to do my show in Ancient Greek style. The costumes will be Ancient Greek style togas. My stage will be normal but will have a forest at one end and the palace at the other. The lighting will have a whole range of colours with basically yellow for the palace and green for the forest. I will use the fairies as a Greek chorus and have them move together during the entries and exits of Titania. I would like to use a rock band to do the music which should be heavy metal on most occasions but slow rock during the Fairy song.

243 words

Examiner comments:

The student has 250 words to transmit their vision of this play on stage. The student has wasted valuable words talking about background information which, if the student feels it is relevant, could come in the second part of the file. Too much emphasis on explaining the plot which is not necessary. When the student finally arrives at their vision of performance, the descriptions are vague and the choices not justified. What is a "normal" stage? What elements of Classical Greek Theatre have been chosen and why? A little more focus is needed in the exercise.

EXAMPLE: Student 2

My inspiration for the performance concept came from the word in the title "Dream". I will use a proscenium arch performing space as I want the audience to be looking into the picture of a dream. My main character, who is set in modern times, will be watching a television soap opera set in Ancient Greece about a love triangle or quadrangle while a group of modern workmen work in the next room. The television will actually be a scrim at the back of the stage so the Ancient Greek actors can perform the lover's scenes. As the man watches the soap he begins to doze but is constantly being woken up by the sound of the workmen who drift in and out of the room rehearsing a short play for their works party. The fairies appear when he is in his dozing state and become the link between sleep and reality. As the plot unfolds I want it to become more and more difficult for the audience to know when he is awake or dreaming. To do this I will use lighting effects to differentiate between the awake state of watching television and the workmen rehearsing and the dozing state when the fairies appear. White and cream gels during the awake state and many soft colours (reds, blues, greens) during the dream scenes. As the plot develops I will run the harsh bright lighting of the reality scenes into the more colourful lighting. In the final act, the lovers, Hippolyta, Theseus and everyone else will sit behind the scrim as the mechanicals/ workmen perform their show. Puck's final speech will be done on a dimly lit stage after the man has gone to bed and put the room lights out.

289 words

Examiner comments:

A very good basic idea for performance. However, there are certain problems with the proposal which the student needs to work on. Firstly, the word count is well over the designated 250 words. Secondly, for a performance concept to be effective the student must be realistic about the feasibility of its realization.

There must be some harmony between how the plot and ideas are conveyed in the stimulus and how the student will communicate these through their concept. Whilst this is a good “raw” idea some more thought needs to be put into how this approach will work fluidly on stage. I like the concept but remain a little sceptical about how it will be realized.

EXAMPLE: Student 3

On first reading the script, the idea of circus jumped into my head. On second reading, my perception of the wild comings and goings of the mechanicals, the posing and prancing of the lovers and the discrete directorial influence of the fairies made this idea a performance concept. My performance space will be a circus ring (7 metres in diameter) with audience on tiered seating on three of four quadrants. On the fourth quadrant, a cyclorama will create mood and scene changes using coloured lighting and gobos. Three raised circular diases will be placed in the circus ring to provide a variety of levels. I see the mechanicals as a wild bunch of clowns from Bottom as an Arlecchino-type character, to Quince as a Chaplin-type clown. The humans I see as circus animals, mainly horses. I will develop this idea in movement—as in Shaffer’s *Equus*—and costume style. The fairies I see as scene changers with Oberon and Titania as ringmasters. The fairies I will have present all the time but, using lighting states, they will be less visible in others’ scenes. They will be mixed in with the audience giving the impression of being omnipresent. The live music will be critical in creating the circus sound. An oompah band will play between scenes and, with the lighting, change mood and atmosphere. I want the colour of the costumes, the audience interaction of the clowns, the energy of the music and the stately tableaux of the humans to blend into a special event, a spectacle of colour, noise and storytelling.

263 words

Examiner comments:

A clear idea of the intended production. The student has developed a clear performance concept based on an understanding of the stimulus. Although the word count is slightly over, everything mentioned is relevant. I look forward to seeing the supporting materials which will give a better picture of the production concept. Some ideas are not clear enough, for example, the humans. There is not always a rationale for the choices.

The second section of the file (HL/SL)

The collection of supporting materials

1. The form
 - the material in the **second section (HL/SL)** of the file should consist of a collection of supporting materials to elaborate, develop, clarify and illustrate the intent and practicalities of the performance proposal
 - this section **must not** be written in essay form
 - accompanying text may be used to elaborate, clarify and expand upon any of the material
2. The material

This may include:

 - brainstorm and mind maps
 - inspirations
 - images and photographs
 - collage

- DVD and/or CD-Rom
- a “mood” collage inspired by the stimulus
- a diagrammatic representation of the performance concept
- rough sketches of initial ideas
- preliminary sketches of staging or space design ideas
- floor plans of performing space(s)
- scale drawings
- costume ideas and/or swatches
- make-up ideas and/or swatches
- lighting ideas and diagrams
- annotated script/text sections
- storyboards of blocking and space relationship developments

The student should include any other materials that may help the examiner to understand the student’s concept and envision the project.

The third section of the file (HL only)

The commentary

1. The form
 - The **third section (HL only)** will consist of a written commentary of 1,000–1,250 words providing further insight into production choices and performance decisions.
2. The focus

The student must choose to research any of the following four broad areas that the student feels are appropriate to his/her vision:

 - the philosophical rationale
 - the socio-historical influences
 - the traditional/cultural influences
 - the possible impact and resonance of the production.

This commentary should communicate how any of these areas and any subsequent research have informed their choices.

HL Areas	Content	Example
Philosophical rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek to clarify and link the performance choices to the work of a theatre philosopher 	<p>“Theatre of cruelty techniques being used in this production are inspired by the work of Antonin Artaud as I feel they would help convey powerfully the message of the piece.”</p> <p>Leading to written work on an elaboration of the practicability of the applications of Theatre of Cruelty approaches.</p>

HL Areas	Content	Example
Socio-historical influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seek to clarify and link the performance choices to the issues or norms of society at a particular period in time 	<p>"I am going to use the performing space that was used in Restoration Comedy, as I perceive that the themes in my performance stimulus resonate with the social mores of that period."</p> <p>Leading to written work on an elaboration of the use of space in Restoration Comedy and the practicability of this choice.</p>
Traditional/cultural influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seek to clarify and link the performance choices to the theatre style of a particular tradition or culture 	<p>"I am going to use physical, vocal and movement storytelling approaches of Kathakali theatre in rehearsal as I think these techniques would focus attention on the cultural content of my performance."</p> <p>Leading to written work on an elaboration of the acting techniques used in Kathakali.</p>
Possible impacts and resonances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> seek to reflect upon how the performance may have long-term effect upon director, performers, audience or society in general 	<p>"Based on my research into Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, how can I try to ensure that my performance will have an effect upon the audience's perception of social injustice?"</p> <p>Leading to written work on how other theatre projects focusing on social awareness have been able to have an effect on audience and how this effect was achieved through elements of theatre production.</p>

The teacher

An understanding of this assessment component forms the basis for a teacher to create projects and exercises that fulfill the aims and satisfy the objectives of the course. These will also prepare the student for this task. Over the two years, the students should acquire practical knowledge and skills in all the elements of production. Some of these experiences may be focused on simply "how to" and others on how the elements of production interrelate. Performance processes in different cultures should be explored and the students encouraged to communicate their findings to other class members. Time may be spent with an art class working on different ways of recording designs and using visual material.

Throughout the two years, the HL students should carry out mini-projects focusing on the different areas of research and linking this to their practice. These dramaturgical exercises should always be directly linked to class explorations and modules. The students' research can be developed into practical class workshops given by the students on the philosophies of theatre practitioners, different theatre traditions and the principles/conventions of a particular historical theatre practice. The preparation and presentation of this workshop to peers, followed by group discussion and reflection, helps students to link what they often perceive as two discrete elements.

Assessment

1. The written pitch
 - The practical performance proposal is a tool designed to assess a student’s understanding of production elements and theatre conventions.
 - The proposal is also a means of appraising the ability of the student to interpret play scripts and other types of performance materials analytically and imaginatively.
 - This process of preparing a concisely written, yet detailed proposal, offers the student an opportunity to display in different ways the outcomes of two years’ learning about the process of realizing/presenting a piece of theatre from initial stimulus to final production.
 - The first section of the proposal, the pitch, obliges the student to condense ideas, demonstrate understanding and convey essential information on the creation of a performance concept and process.
2. The supporting materials
 - The second section of the proposal, while allowing textual clarification, engages other communication skills as a means of demonstrating learning and the concept. This should be a development of the ideas communicated in the written pitch and it should show how different production elements interrelate to communicate meaning.
3. The context (HL only)
 - The third section of the proposal challenges the HL student to clearly link research and practice.

The teacher

The theatre course attracts students from a wide spectrum of learning styles. The many different types of class activity, ranging from practical hands-on workshops to academic-style discussions, ensure that all the students are engaged in the learning process of theatre. Assessment of learning is critical in determining progress. Throughout the course different assessment tools are employed to allow different learners to succeed and to also give the students an experience of the different external assessment methodologies.

The skills

1. the performance concept (HL/SL)
2. development of the concept (HL/SL)
3. realization of the concept through the elements of production (HL/SL)
4. systematic analysis and imaginative synthesis of stimulus, production concept and production elements (HL/SL)
5. the presentation in the form of a commentary of the theoretical areas that have informed their concept and vision of their production (HL only)

The basis for assessment in this component is formed by some of the skills identified in the theatre guide objectives. These skills can be clearly distinguished by analysing the individual elements described within each band descriptor of the assessment criteria. Credit is awarded based on qualitative evidence of these skills within the appropriate sections of the presented practical performance proposal file.

The **SL descriptors** are composed of **two** skill elements for the two lower levels and **three** at the three upper bands. The **HL descriptors** have a similar composition, but also include an element focusing on the links between theory and practice.

HL/SL	Descriptor element: Key ideas	What it means
all markbands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> imaginative interpretation of stimulus plan for performance coherent concept 	Evidence of imaginative engagement with the chosen stimulus and how this engagement is developed into a justified concept and plan for performance.
all markbands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> elements of production interpretation of the elements 	Evidence of an understanding of the different elements of production and how each element contributes with effect to the overall performance.
markbands 11–15 16–20 21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> realization of a coherent concept practical understanding of the process 	Evidence of a holistic approach and an understanding of the process of turning a performance concept into a live performance.
HL Only	Descriptor element: What it says	What it means
all markbands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> practicable and innovative understanding of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> philosophical rationale socio-historical/traditional/cultural influences impacts and resonances 	Written evidence of research in chosen area(s) and how this research has informed the student's choices and their approach to turning the stimulus into a live performance experience.

The teacher

The following is a four-step approach that may help to prepare students for this examination exercise.

Step	When	How
1. Understand and clarify the guide requirements	From the first month of the course	Hand out: Guide materials Activities: Games, tests, quizzes on key information.
2. Practise writing the pitch	From the fourth to the sixth week of the course	Hand out: Different types of stimuli Activities: Dynamic writing exercise expressing ideas, games on vocabulary and choices of words, concise ways of presenting a vision and ideas.

Step	When	How
3. Practise non-textual material creation	Throughout the first year of the course	<p>Hand out: Different types of stimuli</p> <p>Activities: Short sharp projects on designing a performance space, lighting for effect, character through costume. Collages, mood charts, photography, illustrations, sketches. Longer modules on integrated and in-depth production skills—set design going from idea to factual design and from design to realization ending with a costume, a lighting plot, a set model, and so on.</p>
4. Compose the coherent whole	From the second year of the course	<p>Hand out: Different types of stimuli</p> <p>Activities: Developing a vision of performance file from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a scene, a script, an oral story, a recited poem, a song, a ballad, a ballet, a folk dance, a painting, a series of photographs, a ritual, a ceremony, a tale or myth.

During “Theatre in the making” modules, students will have explored each of the main elements of performance and production—from acting to staging, from costume to lighting—which they record in their journal. The “Theatre in performance” experiences will have ensured the development of the practical skills required for the process of going from design to realization. Different cultural and historical approaches to theatre will have been explored and assimilated as part of the “Theatre in the world” component. The completion of the independent project will have fostered a sense of personal commitment to the art of making theatre and clarified the concept of coherence of the elements of performance and production.

During class work, the teacher will have taken care to distinguish between the process of devising a performance and that of developing and proposing **a vision** for performance. This critical distinction lies at the heart of this assessment component, which is **not** about turning the stimulus into a piece of theatre but about transforming the selected stimulus into a production.

The research investigation

The **research investigation** is an exercise for **external assessment**, which invites the student to carry out dramaturgical research into an unfamiliar theatre practice.

It is:

- an externally assessed component
- 25% of the final mark
- written as a formal essay with supporting visual and/or textual material
- titled with a clearly defined research question.

It has:

- all sources clearly cited and attributed
- a word limit of
 - 2,000–2,500 words at **HL** plus visual documentation and/or textual references
 - 1,500–1,750 words at **SL** plus visual documentation and/or textual references.

Purpose

The purpose of this research investigation is to inform the work of a practitioner working on the production of a particular play or theatre piece from the chosen theatre practice. The findings, therefore, need to inform practice and should be **relevant, specific** and **focused**. The job of the investigation should be to provide the research to aid and inform the realization of the chosen play/piece of theatre and **not** to describe how it should be realized. In this respect the focus of this task is research based. It is **not** about the creative interpretation of the play/piece of theatre.

Dramaturgical research is used to inform a production. This does not necessarily mean that a practitioner would take the research and use it to create a piece of theatre from the particular theatre practice that has been researched. Rather, it gives the practitioner insight into the theatre practice from which the play/piece of theatre originates. The practitioner would then make the creative decision to use this material either to create a “traditional” performance by exactly transferring this information into action or to use the information simply to inspire or inform their own creative interpretations.

Example 1

- A director is staging *Woyzeck* by Buchner. A dramaturg provides information on Expressionism which is the theatre practice related to the play. The director then decides, however, that having considered the research, she wants to direct it in a naturalistic style. The director’s decision is made **after** the research not before. The dramaturg does not have this information at the outset. **The dramaturg’s job is to focus on the theatre practice and the play, not on how the director/actor/designer may choose to use this research (in this instance on Expressionism).**

Example 2

- An actor is playing the Monkey King in a Kathakali production of a story from the *Ramayana*. The dramaturg provides information to the actor on how this role is performed in this particular theatre practice. This will inform the actor and may or may not influence the final production for the director may choose to present the story in a different style. The actor would not have this information prior to rehearsal but still requires the research into the way this role is traditionally played to inform his work.

In both examples the research has provided information, but is not necessarily forming the basis of the production.

For this reason the student (the researcher) should not make creative decisions though they may offer creative possibilities if this is relevant.

What needs to be in the research investigation?

The elements that **must** form the basis of the research investigation are:

- research into an unfamiliar theatre practice
- selection of a play/piece of theatre appropriate to the chosen practice
- a particular question to focus the research arising from the production of the selected play/piece of theatre in the chosen theatre practice
- useful, clear and relevant information to the reader on how the unfamiliar theatre practice (or aspect of that practice) relates/informs an aspect or the whole of the play/piece of theatre selected.

It **must**:

- be presented as a formal, academic essay clearly titled and with **all** sources clearly and fully cited
- include a research question that is clearly formulated and indicated
- consult a variety of sources.

The **HL student** is required, in addition, to write a critique of the sources used and cited. This is not part of the word count. The sources critiqued should be relevant to the specifics of the research. This critique should form a separate section at the end of the research investigation and should demonstrate the relevance and usefulness of the sources used and referred to. Naturally the focus of these sources would be primarily the chosen unfamiliar theatre practice, the play/piece of theatre and anything related to the research question.

How are the skills for this assessment task developed through the three components of the IB theatre course?

Theatre in the making

This component develops the student's dramaturgical and research skills so that they understand the function and role of the dramaturg and researcher in the process of creating theatre. By building their skills in a variety of production roles they understand the role of the various practitioners and the areas each one is responsible for in production. They become aware of the different creative processes, conventions and techniques relating to theatrical practices from around the world and/or from different historical periods. They develop practical knowledge and skills relevant to this task, which may include approaches to research, reading plays/pieces of theatre, critiquing sources.

Theatre in performance

The students understand what is involved in staging a production and what research may be useful. They see how a piece of theatre/play is realized and how dramaturgical research is a useful base from which the director/performer/designer might work, either by using it directly or by using it as a base to inform artistic decisions. They may take on the role of dramaturg for a particular production being presented.

Theatre in the world

The student develops research skills by researching and examining unfamiliar theatre traditions and practices from different cultures and/or times. This component makes them aware of how different practices and traditions work in action. It gives them an awareness of the broad range of theatre from around the world and through history, the commonalities and the differences and the ability to analyse them. They

develop an appreciation of theatre and its political, social, aesthetic and intellectual context and the way in which it contributes to a variety of different communities. It develops their curiosity for the unfamiliar. They learn to research appropriately, relevantly and with focus, selecting what is useful and understanding how to use the different sources relevantly. The teacher should also create opportunities for the students at HL to develop the skill of critiquing sources.

The teacher

Throughout the two years the teacher works on exercises exploring methods of research and the process of dramaturgy, as well as exploring different theatre practices through both academic and practical research. Students should examine a number of different plays/theatre pieces and look at the practice that has informed them or from which they originate. The nature of the approach is such that this examination assessment method, which carries 25% of the final mark, is an organic extension of classwork during the course. The knowledge and skills necessary for success in this component need to be developed through regular practice and a routine of doing, reflecting, recording and revising. All students should have access to relevant literature and research materials and should have been encouraged to make connections between research and the practical work. HL students should also work on developing skills needed to critique sources.

It is useful for the teacher to hand out a list of deadlines for the various drafts required, allowing for the work to be submitted in time for it to be sent off to the relevant examiner by the required date. In this list of deadlines there should be a number of drafts requested for the teacher to see (at least two recommended) before the final submission. Time should be organized so that the teacher can meet with each student individually to advise them on their work and give appropriate feedback on the drafts.

The starting point

1. Choose an unfamiliar theatre practice

The student identifies a theatre practice that is unfamiliar to them. This may be:

- a theatrical **tradition** from a particular culture and/or time, for example, Kathakali
- a theatrical **style** originating from a particular time, movement, culture, practitioner, for example, Restoration comedy
- a theatrical **movement** originating from a particular time, culture, practitioner, for example, Butoh
- a theatrical **form** developed by a practitioner, theorist, playwright, for example, Brecht's Epic Theatre.

The student does some initial research to get a feel for this tradition.

2. Choose a play/piece of theatre appropriate to or chosen from the selected theatre practice

The student researches into plays/pieces of theatre that are either from or appropriate to the chosen theatre practice. The student selects an appropriate play that would be rich as a primary source on which to base the research into the unfamiliar practice.

3. Examine the play/piece of theatre

The student reads and examines the play/piece of theatre, keeping in mind the practice that is going to be researched. Regarding the practice, which aspects of the play/piece are most appropriate for further examination and exploration?

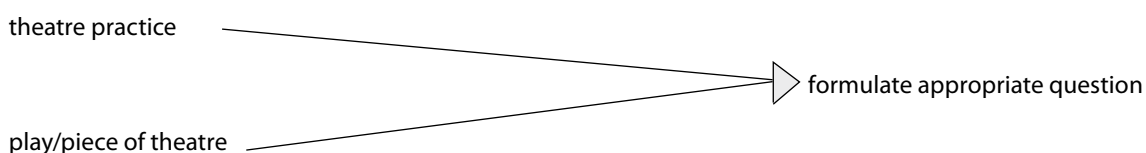
4. Formulate a research question

A question requires an answer or a solution. The point of a question is to narrow down and concentrate the research so that the student has a focus and can demonstrate relevance. At this point the student might also think about which member of the production team (designer, director, performer, choreographer, music director) might find the information most useful. The formulation of a research question also makes it

easier for the student as it helps them to narrow down the sources that they will consult and examine, and guides them in their search for research materials. It also helps them to check their investigation against the research question they have set, to ensure:

- that the question has been addressed or answered and possible solution/s found
- that everything included is relevant and useful.

The question should emerge from the relationship between the unfamiliar practice selected and the play/piece of theatre from that practice.



The teacher

It is recommended that at the end of the first year/beginning of the second year, the teacher works with the students, advising them on their choices and steering them towards theatre practices which are unfamiliar to them. These may be theatre practices and plays that have been touched on or mentioned but **not** covered during the course. The student should do some initial research into the unfamiliar theatre practice to see if there are enough materials to research so that a variety of sources are used and referred to. The teacher should steer the student in the direction of materials and could also have a variety of resources built up which are made available to the student throughout the course and which may provide possibilities for a research investigation. Once the student has found a relevant play/piece of theatre from or appropriate to the chosen practice and examined it, the teacher and student discuss what aspects may be most appropriate to research for that particular practice and that particular play. The student then formulates a question. The student submits the question to the teacher and the question is examined with attention paid to the phrasing and to whether or not it is a question that will focus the student's investigation and encourage them to create a body of work that will be of practicable help.

The process

Phase 1

The student:

1. begins by examining the question in relation to the play/piece of theatre and begins to look at what information is required to answer it
2. consults a variety of primary and secondary sources focusing on the aspects of the question that need answering
3. organizes research
4. writes the first draft.

The teacher

The teacher should check to see if the student has enough material and if the research is relevant to the question they have formulated. Students often need to be reminded of the different types of sources and encouraged to look beyond books and the Internet. The teacher should also make sure the student has found a useful and efficient way to record their research. They need to be reminded to keep a record of all resources and research they have consulted. The HL students need to be reminded that they also have to keep a record of the usefulness of each source they have consulted. In effect they are working simultaneously on gathering appropriate information and judging and recording the usefulness of each of the sources. The teacher should take in the first draft and read it but **not** mark it. Advice should be given to the student on how it can be improved and what further work needs to be done. It is useful for the teacher and student to put themselves in the shoes of a theatre practitioner working on the selected play and see how useful the research would be. The teacher should also ensure that the student is writing in the correct form and register.

Phase 2

The student:

1. redrafts
2. compiles all the materials—visual and/or textual—that will accompany the research investigation
3. checks the word count
4. checks all sources have been attributed and that a bibliography is attached (at HL with all sources critiqued)
5. submits the research investigation.

The teacher

The teacher should take in a draft of the completed investigation to look at before submission so that the student can be advised of anything that needs to be added. Once the final research investigation has been submitted the teacher cannot hand it back, but must send it to the relevant examiner through the coordinator, allowing sufficient time for it to be received before the deadline.

Checklist for the research investigation

- Does it meet the word count? (2,000–2,500 words plus visual documentation and/or textual references at HL; 1,500–1,750 words plus visual documentation and/or textual references at SL)
- Is the research question clearly formulated and stated?
- Has the research question been explored?
- Are accurate observations made, supported by appropriate research evidence?
- Has the visual and/or textual material been carefully selected and presented? Is it appropriate?
- Is the linguistic register of the written work formal in nature?
- Has the work been clearly set out as a research investigation essay?
- Is there a range of sources and have these been attributed properly?
- Is there a critique of sources accompanying the research investigation? **(HL only)**
- Is there an indication of how the sources are relevant to the dramaturgical research? **(HL only)**

Key ideas: assessment

The research investigation is an exercise designed to assess the student's:

- understanding of an unfamiliar theatre practice
- ability to understand what information is useful for the realization of a particular selected play/piece of theatre
- ability to write a formal research investigation
- ability to select and apply relevant research appropriate to the requirements of the research area
- ability of a student to formulate an appropriate research question and respond to it
- ability to cite, attribute, and at HL critique, primary and secondary sources
- ability to research with imagination and resourcefulness
- ability to select appropriate visual/textual information that is appropriate to the research investigation
- ability to present his/her ideas and answer the question fully in the designated number of words.

The teacher

The theatre course attracts students from a wide spectrum of learning styles. The many different types of activities that are explored in class, ranging from practical hands-on workshops to academic-style discussions, should ensure that all the students are engaged in the learning process of theatre. Assessment of learning is critical in determining progress. Throughout the coursework in each module explored, different assessment tools are employed, to offer access to different learners but also to give experience of the different external assessment methodologies.

Dramaturgy

There is a myth that a dramaturg is an elusive profession, difficult to define, and even more difficult to pin down. Is s/he a director, an assistant director, a stage manager, or a playwright? The answer is simple. S/he is, and should be, none of the above. A dramaturg's task is to offer another perspective in the theatre production process, and his/her role will depend on a project, or a stage in the project. It may include the skills of a researcher, an editor, an audience's eye in the rehearsal room, working through and with a director, but not necessarily agreeing with them all the time, and always observing, questioning and recording. A good dramaturg is invaluable to a director/designer/performer at any stage of the theatre production process.

The history of modern dramaturgy dates from 18th century Germany, when the Hamburg National Theatre hired a dramatist-critic, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, to write essays about the plays the company produced. Those who hired Lessing wanted him to advertise the plays so the audience would want to see them, but Lessing had a different idea altogether. He went beyond mere reviewing to identifying the flaws he saw in those productions, in the acting and in the choice of repertoire that he publicly denounced as trite bourgeois entertainment. His critical discourse was innovative and became the learning base for new generations of dramaturgs throughout Europe who followed his example. These dramaturgs have often been seen as resident scholars, the true keepers of artistic goals.

Dramaturgy can be seen on various levels—as a role, it refers to a profession, while as a function, it implies a set of activities that might include research into a play's historical, critical and theatrical contexts, the very understanding of the main elements of drama such as structure, characterization, language, and style, as well as the understanding of theatre making processes. As such, dramaturgy forms an integral part of producers', directors', designers' and actors' work. In a way, all of them undertake their own dramaturgical research. Even though a dramaturg might not be assigned to a particular project, dramaturgical functions still need to be performed.

In the context of the research investigation dramaturgy operates as a function, focusing on applied research into a theatre practice, a complementary play/piece of theatre and an aspect of production.

The skills

The skills identified in the Diploma Programme *Theatre guide* objectives:

- demonstrate a theoretical and practical knowledge of theatrical traditions from more than one culture
- demonstrate an understanding of production elements and theatre practices
- acquire appropriate research skills and apply them
- evaluate the relevance of selected research sources to personal practice.

These skills can be clearly distinguished by analysing the elements within each band descriptor.

Credit is awarded based on qualitative evidence of these skills within the appropriate sections of the research investigation.

HL/SL	Descriptor element: Key ideas	What it means
A. Research skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> accurate observations supported by research evidence use of a range of primary and secondary sources attribute sources properly 	The student provides accurate information that would be helpful to a practitioner working on a particular play/ piece of theatre from the unfamiliar theatre practice chosen. All information is supported by research evidence. Sources have been used, cited and attributed correctly.
B. Task relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the specific requirements of the research investigation are met an appropriate research question has been formulated and responded to with appropriate evidence 	Evidence of an understanding of the theatre practice that's been researched and the application of that research to a specific play/piece of theatre. The marriage of these two elements is partly dependent on the formulation of an appropriate research question that allows this to happen. The question should focus the research. The formulation of an appropriate question is key and that in itself shows an understanding of the theatre practice. The research needs to be helpful to the realization of the play/piece of theatre and all sources need to be cited.
C. Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> written in appropriate register and style carefully selected and presented visual/textual material word count has been met 	The research investigation is written as a formal essay with a bibliography and appropriate citing of sources. The accompanying material has been carefully selected and is appropriate and relevant. The student has neither exceeded the word count nor substantially gone below it.
HL only	Descriptor element: What it says	What it means
D. Critique of sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sources have been critiqued there is a clear demonstration of the relevance of these sources 	There is an accompanying bibliography which critiques all sources, describing their usefulness, relevance, what they cover and how useful they have been for the task.

Preparing the student for this task

It is obvious that the skills needed to produce the research investigation should be taught before the task is undertaken. The final essay should be the result of mature reflection upon the ideas and information collected during the research process. Knowledge of the work of theatre practitioners, already drawn from the rest of the course, will be invaluable. The content of the final essay itself and the processes of research cannot be based upon last-minute decisions. Students need to know what lies ahead from the very beginning. They need to recognize that the research investigation will be the culmination of much of what they have discovered during the course and their engagement with previously unfamiliar theatrical practices.

For students unfamiliar with the skills of independent research this area may appear rather daunting. The teacher, therefore, needs to create an environment that helps students through this process.

During the course the teacher needs to help the students to:

- develop sophisticated and high-level research skills
- know how to use the Internet safely and wisely
- be clear of the rules of research such as proper referencing and avoiding plagiarism.

The relationship between teacher and student is also often different during research work as the teacher will also need to be supervisor, advisor, guide, support, idea prompter and troubleshooter.

Strategies

The teacher will need to teach specific strategies to enable the students to take an independent approach to their research and to focus on the quality of both the research and the finished essay. The teacher is also a source of research—in specific areas of theatre, in knowing where sources may be found and in relating their own experience of research. Some of these strategies might include how to:

- look for what is there, rather than what they want to find out
- choose suitable areas of the course that they have covered for possible areas of extended study, not only for the research investigation but for other areas of the course
- keep a record of their sources
- organize their materials efficiently from the start
- refine a specific area to be studied
- read a live performance
- use and apply material to a practical context
- analyse material and support all points with evidence
- interview
- read different texts actively for different purposes
- formulate research questions
- take notes during an interview, lecture or from an academic text
- cite sources, create a bibliography.

Resources

Beyond text and image

The repeated use of the term “information” may give the student the idea that research is a predominantly text and image exercise, but we know from practice that traditions and practices in theatre are always about much more than words. Resources may also be places, people and live productions and encounters.

Box library

If possible, have easy access to some resources in the classroom in the form of a box library that contains books, articles, lists of useful web sites, lists of traditions, practices and styles. This may help to set a student’s project easily in motion and is also useful for mini-practice research exercises and investigations.

Text resources

Examples of research by previous students, abstracts of university theses, a small library of key textbooks, a range of magazines, posters with key learning approaches and phrases, glossaries of key terms, quotes by theorists, journals.

Image resources

Contrasting theatre posters, photographic stills, magazine covers, moving image resources, art galleries, newspapers, videos, CD-Roms, DVDs.

IT resources

Topic files containing copies of Internet printouts by students, lists of recommended web sites, images.

Oral resources

Interviews, people, discussions, audio tapes, music.

People

Practitioners, audience members, experts, professionals, members of the community.

Organizations

Embassies, cultural centres, theatres, research centres, training schools.

Resource centres

Art galleries, museums, costume warehouses, shops, theatres and theatre sites, archeological sites, public spaces and buildings.

General guidelines for writing the research investigation

Critiquing sources

In any research, the student reads extensively to form a background knowledge base of the area they are researching into, but not all of that material will be included in the writing. After an initial extensive search, the following stage in the research process is careful editing, weeding out unnecessary material, and deciding upon those sources that can help develop and focus their argument. This is also why the bibliography that follows the text must reflect not only the extent and depth of their research, but also their ability to select and edit sources that are relevant for one's chosen topic. In the research investigation, HL students are asked to critique the sources that they have used in their essay. This is extremely important, as it enables them to develop a researcher's instinct for the type of sources that can, or cannot, be useful for their work. Does this source shed any light on the research question? Is it relevant to the question? Does it provide any answers? How can it be used in the best possible way? A way of organizing this critique of sources at the end of the research investigation is to begin by identifying the source, briefly summarizing the contents, describing how it was used and why it was useful and finally making a value judgment as to its usefulness. The student can also comment on the credentials of the author.

Illustrations

Presentations and overall neatness are important, and it is essential that illustrative material, if included, is well set out and used effectively. Graphs, diagrams, tables and maps are effective only if they are well labelled and can be interpreted with ease. All such material must be directly related to the text and acknowledged where appropriate. The use of photographs and postcards is acceptable only if they are captioned and/or annotated and are used to illustrate a specific point made in the research investigation.

References/bibliography

The direct or indirect use of the words of another person, written, oral or electronic, must be acknowledged appropriately, as must visual material in the essay, derived from another source. Failure to comply with this requirement will be viewed as plagiarism, and will therefore be treated as a case of malpractice.

The bibliography or list of references should include only those works, such as books and journals, that have been consulted by the student. An accepted form of quoting and documenting sources should be applied consistently. The major documentation systems are divided into two groups, parenthetical in-text

systems and numbered systems; either may be used, provided this is done consistently and clearly. It is good practice to require students to study a major style guide appropriate to the subject of the research investigation so that they can present their list of references professionally.

Each work consulted, regardless of whether or not it has already been cited as a reference, must be listed in the bibliography. The bibliography should specify: author(s), title, date and place of publication, and the name of the publisher, following consistently one standard method of listing sources. Possible examples are:

Peterson, A.D.C. *Schools Across Frontiers: the Story of the International Baccalaureate and the United World College*. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1987.

Peterson, A.D.C. (1987), **Schools Across Frontiers: the Story of the International Baccalaureate and the United World College**, Open Court: La Salle, Illinois.

Bruckman, Amy S. "MOOSE Crossing Proposal." mediamoo@media.mit.edu (20 Dec. 1994)

Note that for personal e-mail listings, the address should be omitted.

The use of other media and materials

Apart from graphic material, materials in other media may be submitted only as supporting appendices and should not detract from the written extended essay.

A step-by-step approach to research for students

1. The very first step is **choosing** an appropriate topic. This is often harder than it appears. Choose either something you are already interested in and know a little about or an area that you believe you would enjoy given your interests.
2. **Discuss** the choice with your teacher.
3. Once a topic has been broadly decided upon, research can begin. Begin by **browsing** and trying to find out if there is enough material and sources for this to be an area of research. Remember at this stage you are still free to change direction if you find the topic too problematic or you cannot find adequate sources for research. Browsing will also give you a **general** sense of the topic.
4. Remember to keep a **record** of everything that you have looked at and researched, no matter how insignificant these sources may seem to you. Everything you looked at should be recorded.
5. **Brainstorm** this idea and any areas connected to it that you may have discovered through your research.
6. **Define** the area of study for research
 - what is the bare outline of the area that will become the core of the project?
 - break down the topic into sub-topics or key concepts
 - develop a broad overview of the topic by browsing sources
 - become fully conversant with the necessary terminology.
7. Formulate a **research question** that will help to focus your search. Then break this question into smaller questions to help guide you with what you need to include.
8. Develop a **research strategy**
 - what is the scope of the project?
 - how manageable is the project?
 - how much information will be needed?
9. Locate and retrieve the **information**
 - determine what type of information is needed—books, articles, current or retrospective information
 - identify the likely and unlikely sources or places to find information
 - ensure that you have all the information you need including the full citation of any references that are collected. When photocopying, always write down the title and author of the book.
10. **Evaluate** the information
 - establish authority—who is the author and what is their credibility?
 - determine the scope of the work—what is its purpose? Consider whether this work is an academic text, a review or promotional material.
 - evaluate accuracy and relevance
 - recognize bias and/or point of view.

11. Determine whether there is **enough** information
 - look at the length and focus of your project, whether you have any unanswered questions.
12. **Internet research**—web pages require the same, and sometimes more, caution as any other source. Anyone with access to a server can put material on the web. Do not assume statements are true. As a critical user you should consider:
 - who is responsible for the site? What are the credentials of the author of the site?
 - its rationale/purpose
 - whether the information is recent or part of an archive
 - whether the site is permanent or part of a permanent organization.
13. Create an **outline** for your investigation
 - introduction—which will define the area of study and the scope of your investigation
 - body—a detailed breakdown of the ideas, your findings and the answer/s to the question you have formulated, backed up by information and evidence from your research with every source of information cited
 - conclusion—summing up the main findings and offering possibilities for further research and development.
14. Write the first draft.
15. Redraft as many times as is necessary to produce a coherent and clear investigation.
16. Work on your bibliography and any supplementary materials.
17. Now check:
 - is the research question clearly formulated and stated?
 - has the research question been explored?
 - are accurate observations made and supported by appropriate research evidence?
 - has the visual and/or textual material been carefully selected and presented? Is it appropriate?
 - is the linguistic register of the written work formal in nature?
 - has the work been clearly set out as a research investigation essay?
 - is there a range of sources and have these been attributed properly?

The independent project and portfolio

This component is:

- internally assessed and externally moderated
- worth 25% of the total grade both at HL and SL.

Standard level

Overview

The independent project provides an opportunity for a student to practically pursue an **independent** interest, enquiry or passion that may have arisen during the course. This is then recorded in a portfolio which:

- takes the form of an account of an act of theatre making
- is 2,000 words
- draws on experiences from the core curriculum.

This project and portfolio must not be a repetition of work undertaken in other areas of the course.

The word “independent” characterizes the fundamental nature of the project and the approach to it. The independent project portfolio must also be the **autonomous** work of the student. It is recommended that students should not attempt this component of the course until the final stages of the course.

The form of the independent project

The independent project is an act of theatre making. Teachers should note that there is an emphasis placed here on the “act of theatre” that the student will be exploring. This can consist of a number of possible projects, outlined in the relevant section of this component in the subject guide.

Possible options are:

- devising a performance
- writing original scripts
- performing a role
- designing costumes, lighting or sound
- running a workshop where the **process** of making theatre is practically explored.

Though the independent project must be the work of the individual student, it may be part of a wider group project. For instance, the class is staging Ionesco’s *Rhinoceros*. One student chooses to do the costume design for this production as an independent project. Another student runs a series of workshops on “Theatre of the Absurd” for the company as their independent project.

It is assumed that the preparatory work and process will culminate in the application of ideas into some sort of artistic activity or product. The “act”, whatever it may be, **must** happen. The performance/presentation/workshop will take place and the student will reflect on the efficacy of the act. For instance, the design of the costumes will be applied and will be tested in performance.

The workshops will take place and any critical response to them will be incorporated into the reflection that will follow. The student might be advised to create evaluation forms for the participants that may be incorporated into the reflection.

Though the “act” is essential, a proviso should be added here. Performance for all students is the cumulative experiential point of any process; however, in terms of learning this may not be the case. The learning may very well be in the preparation and the process leading to the performance or it may be in the reflection that follows it. This is where the portfolio is of great importance.

The independent project portfolio format

The independent project portfolio will consist of:

- a table of contents
- an introduction
- clearly marked sections
- a conclusion
- all visual/textual material used must be cited and annotated in specific detail.

Presentation

The student should be encouraged to carry out an independent exploration of **different ways of presenting** the portfolio. The examiner will be interested in receiving creative responses to the challenge of presentation, not formulaic portfolios but students must make **appropriate** reference to the three stages of the “act of theatre”; the preparation, the process of creation and the reflection which follows.

The assessment criteria for the component are indicative of how this independent project portfolio might be structured:

- preparation
- process
- reflection
- presentation.

The sequence of preparation, process and reflection identifies the organizing focus of the component. Presentation evaluates the student’s ability to present his/her insights in the appropriate manner.

Register

The independent project portfolio is about **charting** a learning experience, part of which is a performance experience, but students should be wary of attempting to convey the **emotional** experience of the “act” (in whatever form it may take) to the examiner.

For example, the examiner needs to know how effective the student was in her role as Gertrude in Hamlet and why. How did she prepare? How did she approach the part? What was the audience response? The examiner needs to know comparatively little about how it “felt to be Gertrude”. This is not relevant.

The student should be encouraged to adopt a **professional** discourse in the independent project portfolio. This will not compromise the student’s “ownership” of the project nor should it detract from their enthusiasm for it. It merely encourages them to adopt an **appropriate** register in relation to the subject matter they will be presenting.

As preparation it might be helpful to show the students source material where professionals—designers, educators, actors, directors—talk about the process of their work. This will give them a sense of the appropriate tone.

Possible sources for this are:

Croall, Jonathan *Peter Hall's Bacchai* (National Theatre, 2002)

Delgado, Mario, Heritage, Paul (eds) *In Contact with the Gods? Directors Talk Theatre* (Manchester University Press, 1996)

Oida, Yoshi *The Invisible Actor* (Methuen, 1997)

Sher, Anthony *Year of the King* (Nick Hern Books, 2004)

Walter, Harriet *Other People's Shoes* (Nick Hern Books, 1999)

Higher level

Overview

Higher level students choose between two options:

- Option A: Devising practice
- Option B: Exploring practice

Option A: Devising practice

This option explores the devising and actualization of a performance with the student cast in the role of the director/theatre maker. It involves the application of knowledge gained from the core course into practice and focuses on the **process** through which ideas for performance are translated into coherent action. The stimuli for these concepts or ideas may be taken from any source chosen by the student.

The creative process will be informed by the student's prior exposure to different ways of theatre making and different theoretical approaches to that skill. These will be drawn from studies of "Theatre in the making", "Theatre in performance" and "Theatre in the world".

In the independent project portfolio the student will follow the structural imperatives indicated for the SL independent project portfolio. The student should be aware of the fifth assessment criterion that applies only to HL students and emphasizes the integration of theory and practice.

Application of research and practice

In relation to option A the purpose of this criterion is to establish the ability of the student to integrate research and practice. This is done through application of the initial exploration of a concept or stimulus and the subsequent transformation of that into live action. The key words here are **integration** and **application**. The student might look at the task in the following manner:

Through an exploration of a variety of sources—examples might be a text, or a piece of music, a series of photographs, or a space of particular significance—the student will make a choice as to which of the stimuli offers the more effective or interesting performance potential. It is important to stress that this will involve a careful exploration of the stimuli. The exploration process may consist of a variety of approaches. There could be an improvisational process involving experiment in physical movement or states of feeling or it may be a more academic exercise involving brainstorming and discussion with a group. It may be a combination of these and other approaches. It may be a group process or an individual process. Again different performance theories and traditions will inevitably inform the choices the student will make to inform the process. The performance concept comes from the integration of the theoretical and practical examination of the stimulus. The student then applies the skills of a theatre maker/deviser/director to transform the performance concept into live action. Underlying this process is the understanding the student is able to demonstrate by reflecting and critically evaluating the final presentation and the process by which it was produced.

To clarify the creative or “making” process:

The core curriculum → source material (performance traditions and theory) → stimuli, ideas, concepts → exploration of/experimentation with stimulus/idea to determine its performance potential → development of performance concept → application of theatre making/directing skills → transformation of performance concept into → performance → reflection → evaluation

The above sequence may help to clarify the task, but it should be stressed that the task may take many forms: writing a script and performing it or having it performed by a fellow student; directing/making and presenting a play performance; the practical realization of a self-devised performance; or the practical creation of a performance developed from non-text-based sources.

The key relationship is that between the making and the performance. The student should not feel constrained to follow traditional models or established theory, but must explore these in order to shape and develop an understanding of the process of theatre making. What may eventually appear in the independent project portfolio could well be a type of hybrid, coloured hopefully by the dynamic of the individual student. Certainly, through reflection, the student should be encouraged to focus on the particular individual qualities of their eventual performance as well as the difficulties encountered through the creative process.

In something as emotive as theatre performance it is vital to encourage the student to engage with this component in a professional manner, recording the presentation, the process and the learning, in the portfolio in an engaged, yet objective style.

Option B: Exploring practice

Option B for HL students encourages the student to engage **actively** with one or more theatre forms, practitioners, theorists or genres that have had an impact on the development of theatre.

Again the onus is on the student to choose the area of study. The student should be aware that the theatre form, practitioner, theorist must have had an **impact** on the development of theatre. Part of the study might be to assess that impact.

For example, how did Artaud’s theories influence the development of western theatre? Alternatively, how did theatre from other cultures influence Artaud’s theory and practice in theatre? Both these examples seek to understand the relationship between the subject under study (Artaud) and the wider context of the subject itself (theatre).

The word “impact” is quite a strong one and it has been chosen advisedly for it is expected that part of the focus in the study will be to evaluate critically the relationship between the subject and its context. To offer an example of an exploration of a genre, we might ask the question of how a sub-genre like farce might have modified the dramatic genre of comedy through influencing its form and function. Here students might be asked to take a practical look at how a “comedy” by Chekhov “works” on stage compared to a contemporary farce like Frayn’s *Noises Off*. Through both a discursive and an active analysis of two scenes from the plays the student might be able to establish points of similarity and points of difference. The comparative exercise is designed here to enhance understanding of both forms within the genre of comedy. It should be explored practically—for example, by rehearsing the two scenes and paying attention to the differences in approach.

The business of researching such questions is often a more practical endeavour in theatre than in other, more academic subjects. The academic student may engage in researching their area through a study of theory and with reference to prior research in the field. What is arguably more true to the nature of the subject, however, would be a more practical approach to the exploration of the area. At this point it is important to remember how criterion E (for HL students only) is specifically concerned with the integration of research and its practical application. One can “learn” Brecht’s theory of the *Verfremdungseffekt* by “studying” Brecht but the student can only “test” the theory by enacting it and working with it practically.

The play *Fear and Misery in the Third Reich*, for example, gives students the opportunities to explore Brecht's ideas on acting practically by using successive episodes from the action of the play. Each episode provides the student actor with material to explore: narration, placards, song, *gestus*, and tableaux are just a few examples of the staging used in order to produce the *effekt*. Students could also use these episodic scenes as stimuli for their own creative projects which might consist of the creation of scenic episodes in the style of Brecht presenting a contemporary issue. Here theory becomes a stimulus for the students' own creative work as well as an exploration of theory and practice.

In this way, part of the research methodology becomes an **active engagement** with the material through application of theory to practice. The relationship between them in different theatrical contexts can be examined through a careful study of the relevant literature but students can only come to a full understanding of the theory through practical experiment and enactment.

The expectation is that the student becomes an active participant in the research challenge. One of the key areas where this may happen is in workshop or in rehearsal. This is where enquiry, experimentation, exploration, improvisation and risk-taking find their natural home in the theatre. Interestingly enough, the student researchers do not have to enact the theory or genre or form personally. They may use their research as an opportunity to direct others. In this way they may observe the enactment of theory and take notes. They may seek to test the efficacy of Grotowski's physical exercises for vocalization, for example, by conducting the exercises for their group of theatre classmates. In this way they are creating a practical context for their engagement with the task and also adding a specifically theatrical character to their research. Alternatively, they might investigate a theatrical form like Noh by focusing on how the conventions of physical movement peculiar to the form may have influenced a modern practitioner like Yeats. A practical way of exploring this would be to workshop a Noh play and one of Yeats' later plays to establish similarities and differences. This **practical** exercise could not be usefully attempted until the necessary **academic research** into movement in Noh has been completed.

The word count for the independent project portfolio at HL is 3,000 words.

The independent project portfolio should not be presented as an academic essay.

Theatre performance and production presentation

The purpose

- This component represents an opportunity for the student to **synthesize** and **present in speech** and **visual images** the essence of what has been learned and developed through the practical, performance and production aspects of the course. But given the practical nature of this component it is worth emphasizing the fundamental point that the presentation and the images that accompany it will communicate an experience or experiences of learning by doing.
- The presentation will be exciting and dynamic as the student discovers a voice that will reflect a sensibility, a way of seeing, of doing and of reflecting on theatrical action through the course.
- As the presentation is essentially a distillation of experience it should take place towards the end of the course and have as its primary focus the work of the student.
- It is important that students be encouraged to see this component as their opportunity to articulate, within the parameters described, their convictions about theatre in practice. These convictions should have been tested and contested through the experience of doing and making theatre, of watching theatre from their own and other cultures and applying it to their own practice and, in the case of HL students, of testing theory by the application of it to their own work.
- The teacher should be continually aware that the theatre arts consist of four interdependently dynamic components. The assessment of this component reflects the centrality of this interdependence.
- The work will be internally assessed by the teacher and a sample of the work will be externally moderated by examiners.

The form

The component takes the form of a 20-minute (at SL) or 30-minute (at HL) verbal presentation accompanied by 5 to 7 images (at SL) or 7 to 10 images (at HL). The aim for the student should be to select one or two experiences from the course that will act as starting points to stimulate reflection on the entirety of the course and the student's own development within this context. It is important, therefore, that the student is able to discern relationships between aspects of the course and make connections between a role undertaken, a play seen, a technical skill mastered, a play from another culture. In understanding the nature and function of essential elements within the theatre making process the student will analyse their connection to one another. How can a decision about lighting affect the presentation of a character on stage? How can immersion in the world of Balinese dance-drama transform the self-conscious and stilted student of acting into a physical communicator on stage? How can a production the students have seen radically alter their perception of what is possible in theatre?

Through the understanding of the importance of the essential skills and their relationship to each other the students begin to understand the significance of a holistic approach to theatre and to their learning. They are in a position (through a focus on the chosen experiences from throughout the course and their impact on them) to present in a passionate and convincing manner an account of their learning, a rationale for their personal convictions and a reflection on their own practice.

The **visual images** that accompany the verbal presentation reflect the importance of theatre as an act of visual communication. The images should not be anecdotal or merely decorative. The most conventional way of approaching this task would be to select images that illustrate the process or experience being described in the verbal presentation.

Images are a powerful way of communicating feelings, thoughts and ideas. They help to place what is being said in a wider context of the student's learning path by illustrating, juxtaposing or contradicting what is being said. How the images are used in conjunction with the spoken word emphasizes or enriches a point that is being made, an idea that is being expressed or a feeling that is being described. Images of specific aspects of theatre from other cultures, for example, can be juxtaposed beside one another as a way of investigating contrasting traditions. Counterpointing image to spoken word can highlight relationships that, through their startling contrasts, illustrate a complex concept or a challenge encountered. Students should resist the temptation to deal in the sentimental currency of only their own feelings; part of what the course should teach is the ability to recognize the objective self as a worker in theatre, a student learning to balance thought and emotion. It would be a trite reduction of the presentation to use the visual images to indulge in advertisements for the student's own mastery.

The use of visual imagery as **an abstract parallel narrative** provides interesting objective correlatives for the student who may apprehend his experience not as a linear narrative with a clear structure, but as a series of impressions or images that refuse to submit to any structural discipline. The anarchic play of imagery may indeed be a far more authentic graph for the imagination of the creative student than the illustrative journey that ends in a recognizable place.

HL students

The **HL** student's practice will be informed by research and the student should always ensure that the theoretical research passes through the crucible of **practical** experience and is applied. Theory as theory is merely a verbal exercise; we expect the student to show in work throughout the course how theory in practice can enhance theatrical experience and open pathways towards new and exciting discoveries. One of these discoveries and the pathway that led to it may form part of the presentation.

Examples

- A student might, for example, experiment with different ways of using memory as an acting stimulus, researching Stanislavski's and Kantor's ideas on memory, which may have been a feature of the course.
- A student could investigate the centrality of sacrifice in tragic theatre by researching the Greeks and the theatre of Grotowski. The power of these ideas could be explored by acting out a scene from the *Bacchae* of Euripides.

Preparation

How does the teacher prepare students for this exercise? The first point to make is that this component comes at the end of a long process of devising theatre, of performing and working in theatre, of being an audience for theatre, of exploring practice and theory. The student's journal will be virtually complete and in it the student will find a record of key experiences that have engendered development over the two years of the course. In our teaching we will continually look to synthesize, first by establishing the importance of certain skills, ideas and actions, and next by engaging the student in a sense for their interconnectedness.

The student will not experience a fragmented course. The student will, for example, see *Death of a Salesman* on stage and will be encouraged to connect it to a theory of acting, perhaps early Stanislavski, or to a body of ideas about political theatre. The student may notice, in the actor playing Linda, mastery in the delivery of emotion; he may compare that to a later theatre visit to see a Noh play where emotion is captured and registered by the actor in an entirely different manner. The key activity for the teacher may be to encourage the student, inspired by these diverse qualities, to discover, for example, their own way of communicating emotion in a particular role they are playing. Thus the teacher is a facilitator in preparing students for this component; the teacher will think seriously about possible directions in the learning experience and will seek to encourage exploration. The teacher will also constantly encourage students to cross-reference, make connections and synthesize their learning and experiences into new understandings. The crucial issue here is to challenge the student in the educational process, to insist that this assessment task offers

freedom and responsibility in equal measure; responsibility to make the best of what has been learned and acknowledge in a mature way how it has shaped and changed the student as a theatre practitioner and the freedom to find the most appropriate form for the presentation that communicates the discoveries, developments and challenges faced by the student during the theatre course.

Assessment

- The method of assessment of this work is criterion-related.
- SL students will have three assessment criteria applied to their work.
- HL students will have four.

Assessment criterion A: Analysis

The achievement levels refer to varying levels of attainment in three skills:

1. the identification of essential elements within the area of study
2. the understanding of how the elements function individually
3. the practical application of skills and concepts.

This could be conceived as the first stage of the preparatory work and arguably may consist of the opening part of the presentation. For example, the presentation may focus on design and acting and may embrace an evaluation of an external production, a costume design, the place of props in relation to that costume, the lighting sequence through a scene, the student's performance (in a certain style) of that scene in that costume under that lighting using those props.

In this example the essential design elements are costume and props. The technical element is lighting. The critical basis for analysis may be a play seen and analysed in the terms set out in the presentation and the practical exploration of it may be within the student's performance work.

The visual images that may mirror the presentation could include photos of the external production, the costume under lights, and the student acting with a prop, abstract objects placed in incongruous contexts, shadows.

Assessment criterion B: Synthesis

The achievement levels refer to varying levels of attainment in three skill areas:

1. the ability to identify relationships between elements within the area of study
2. the ability to experiment in order to discover a way of combining the elements in action
3. evidence of the practical outcome of the experimentation.

This may be conceived of as stage two of the presentation where the relationship between individual elements and the way this synthesis works in performance and production are identified.

Using our example above, the focus now develops into an understanding of how colour in costume functions with colour in lighting, how the shape of a prop may harmonize with the form of the costume and how the student's movement as an actor may bring out aspects of these relationships. The criterion also marks a point where practical exploration may cease to be an individual action to become a group activity, as "synthesis" may also encompass the notion of the individual working in collaboration with the ensemble. The emphasis in the assessment criterion on two words—"experiment" and "exploration"—should be noted.

The relationship between colours may be a simple question of matching and complementing, but if the acting is in the expressionistic style, the connections may be more visceral and experimental. The student may choose to examine acting in Peking Opera, with stylized make-up and different colour coding which

will again offer the student new artistic explorations that transcend a more Eurocentric understanding of colour. This is designed to encourage the student to experiment, pursue new meanings and new knowledge of theatrical forms. One photographic image, in this instance, could communicate the essence of a synthesis of forms in a way that no verbal description could. The continual recourse to the visual in this component represents a wonderful opportunity to engage in parallel narrative, symbolic imagery or counterpoints to illustrate kinds of relationships and juxtapositions.

Assessment criterion C: Reflection

The achievement levels refer to varying levels of attainment in three skills:

1. reflection upon content and individual or group creative processes
2. critical response to the student's own work or the work of others
3. the connection between the student's work and the work of the course as a whole.

This area focuses on the student's ability to reflect on their experiences both as an individual and as part of an ensemble. It also asks students to place their own learning and experiences into the context of the course as a whole and of the ensemble as a whole. Here students reflect on their individual role in the ensemble, their relationship to practice and what they regard to have been their contribution to the group and the course. Students should also reflect, in a critical way, on how they have had an impact on others' work/journeys and also how others have had an impact on their work and journeys.

Again text and image can work to register this understanding through an objective insight into what makes this presentation representative. This is a unique opportunity for the student to take the subject of the presentation as a starting point for a wider examination of the experience of the course.

Assessment criterion D: Applied research (HL only)

The achievement levels refer to varying levels of attainment in three skills:

1. the theoretical exploration of different areas of performance
2. evidence of research outcomes connecting with the student's practice
3. attempts at creation for the purpose of practically exploring research outcomes.

The HL student is expected to research the theoretical underpinnings of their discoveries and practical work during the course. What is expected is the exploration of the theory and the setting of the student's own work within the context of a cultural practice, style, theory or period.

Again the importance of the visual as a graph of this exploration must never be minimized. Indeed the visuals themselves could be part of the objects of research in the first place.

The selection of the visual image is a skill that has not been mentioned explicitly in the assessment criteria but it should form part of every aspect of the presentation.

Examples of assessed student work

Please see the accompanying CD-Rom for sample student work for all four assessment components with examiner marks and comments. There are four samples for each component, including written work, visuals and audio, offering a range of marks and highlighting common mistakes. In addition these materials can be accessed on the online curriculum centre (OCC) theatre pages.

Bunraku puppetry

Focus

Theatre in the making, Theatre in performance, Theatre in the world

Description

The aim of this project is to introduce students to a new world theatre tradition, and present them with an opportunity to explore the conventions and practices of Bunraku puppetry and to acquire an understanding of the skills and techniques used in building and performing with a Bunraku puppet.

The students are introduced to the assigned scenario that will form the backbone of the unit on Bunraku. The students are told that in six to eight weeks their ensemble will be responsible for a live Bunraku performance. Each student must work together to learn about this unique tradition, develop the skills and techniques used to perform and build Bunraku puppetry, and acquire the discipline needed to work under a Bunraku master as a Bunraku apprentice to create a traditional production. The teacher's role is to facilitate the ensemble's journey, initially taking on the role of the master Bunraku puppeteer to help train the students in puppetry, vocal and musical skills and then guiding the ensemble with assignments to help them create and produce their final production. It is essential that the student does most of the work, but that the facilitator is there to help guide them along the way.

This scenario can be used for any world theatre tradition and can be as much of a learning experience for a teacher as it will be for the students. However, it is important that the teacher is prepared to help the students learn the necessary techniques to perform with Bunraku puppets. This can be done by assigning a research exercise to the students at the beginning of the scheme of work while taking two to three weeks to work on Bunraku training. The students during this workshop can dress in kimonos and the teacher can be dressed as a Bunraku master. The workshop is conducted as though the students are training at the Bunraku Theatre in Osaka, bowing to the teacher as master, creating a disciplined environment and having students learn about the spiritual journey a Bunraku apprentice would take, as well as the journey to develop his/her artistry.

Before deciding to do this unit on Bunraku reading *Zen in the Art of Archery* by Eugen Herrigel is highly recommended. This book explains how Japanese artists see their work as a connection to Buddhism.

Aims

- to investigate and study a world theatre practice
- to provide ways of developing students' performances and production skills
- to develop an individual student's knowledge of theatrical practice and theory
- to develop dramaturgical and research skills

Activities

Part 1: Research

Research exercise

1. To begin your unit on Bunraku have your students visit the National Theatre of Japan's web site (<http://www.ntj.jac.go.jp/english>) and read the excerpt "An Introduction to Bunraku".

Divide the class into four groups, ask them to do further research and come up with a way to present one of the following areas:

- Bunraku's history, paying attention to the social and intellectual context out of which it grew
- the structure of the stage
- the Chanter, Shamisen Player and the puppeteers
- the puppets, costumes and props.

Part 2: Preparation

1. Warm-ups and ensemble exercises: concentration and teamwork

Use these warm-up exercises to give the students an understanding of how inner focus leads to committed and focused group work:

- meditation exercises or Tai Chi exercises
 - as a group keep a ball in the air without talking
 - pass a clap around a circle without talking; quicken the pace only when the whole group agrees
 - using one ball create a routine by throwing the ball from student to student in a circle. The ball should pass to every student and arrive back to you at the end. Create a second routine by adding a second ball. Now try both routines at once. Create a third routine by adding a third ball.
- #### 2. Performance skills and theatre production: Zen and the Art of Puppetry
- Cane work (single): Balance a cane (bamboo or dowel rod) on one finger. Focus on the top and switch cane from left to right hand.
 - Finding inner energy (palm exercise): Place hands a foot apart and focus on the space in-between. After a while rotate your right hand no more than a quarter and continue to focus on the space in-between. After a few more minutes stop rotating and slowly bring your hand in to meet the other hand. You should feel an energy between the hands, stopping you from putting your hands together. Play with the energy by slowly pushing and pulling your hands apart.
 - "Ball of sunlight": Close eyes. Focus on the area between the stomach and the middle of the back. In Japan the idea is that here is where "a ball of sunlight" exists. Bunraku puppeteers say that the puppet should speak from this point. Go back to the cane exercises and focus from this centre. Have the students balance the cane on their chin and ask them to breathe from this point up the cane.
 - Energy connection (visual): Ask the students to stand in pairs facing each other. Ask them to make a connection by looking into one another's eyes. This will take some time. Ask them to focus on sending energy from the point inside them across to the other person. Then ask them to explore connected movement by imagining strings connected to certain body parts. Have one person be the marionette and the other the puppeteer. Have students move through the space.
 - Cane work (paired as one): Similar to the energy connection exercise. Use the canes to explore a paired connection and movement through space. Connect and lead each other without talking.
 - Cane work (groups of three): Same as the last exercise, but this time in groups of three, connect and lead each other without talking.
 - Cane work (groups of five): Keeping the group of three connected using the canes, now add a storyteller (chanter) and musician. The musician can use any instruments, however I recommend using claves. The storyteller will start telling a story being both the voice of the narrator and the voices of the characters s/he creates. The storyteller's job is to focus the story around the puppets, creating the heartbeat of the performance. As he or she does this, the three connected performers are to explore

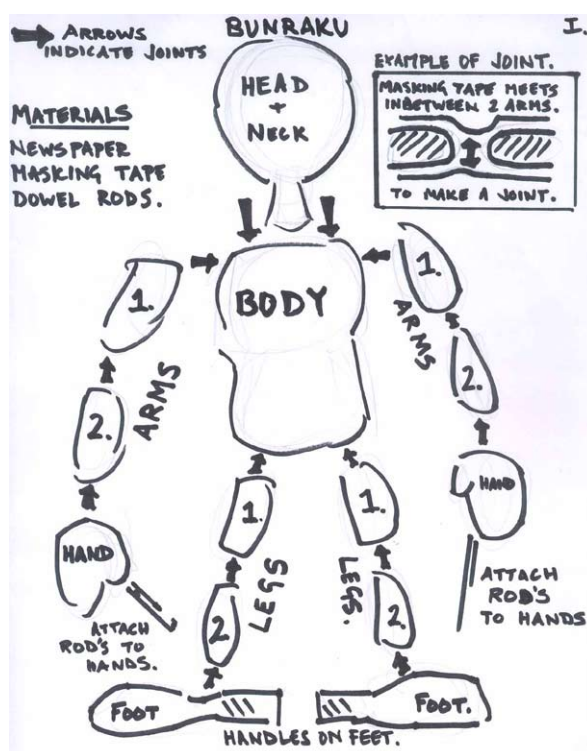
performing the story by staying connected to one another through the canes. The musician's job is to create the spirit of the performance by supporting the storyteller and performers with sound. Sound can be used to heighten tension, create an environment or define a character.

- Human puppet exercise: Working in groups of three, have one member blindfolded. Using the other two members as puppeteers, one operating the head and right arm, the other moving the left arm and legs, explore how it feels to work with and be a Bunraku puppet. This exercise does rely on trust and some students will need to have covered some more trust exercises before jumping into this exercise. Make sure each student gets an opportunity to be the human puppet. Using the human as a puppet, take them through the following: bringing the "puppet" character into the space, revealing the character to the audience, finding an object, reacting to the object, playing with the object, thinking about the object, discovering what the object is, showing their response to it and then leaving the space.
- Discuss what a puppet has to do to be able to tell a story.

Part 3: Bunraku puppetry

Building a Bunraku puppet

The students build a three-quarter-human-size Bunraku puppet out of masking tape and newspaper. Students should work quickly to create a puppet that moves well. Students ball up sheets of newspaper to create various body parts and then join them together to create a full-size Bunraku puppet. Dowel rods are attached to the hands, and handles are a part of the feet, so that the puppeteers can manoeuvre the puppets. Use the diagram to help with the construction of the puppets.

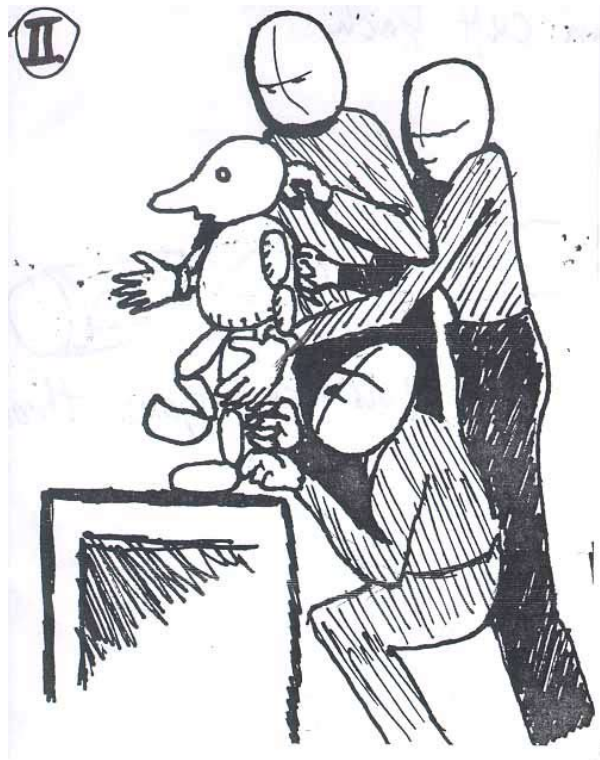


Puppetry exercise

Using the new Bunraku puppets the students, in the traditional groups of three, present the entrance and revelation of their character. As in the human puppet exercise the students may proceed to do the following with their puppet:

- enter a space/environment

- reveal the character
- find an object
- react to the object
- play with and investigate the object
- think about what the object may be
- decide what the object is and show it
- respond to how the object works
- exit the space.



Discussion and experimentation

After the exercises the students discuss what they learned about how a puppet works in performance. The students discuss and experiment with these five steps:

- Group work on collaboration: What can we learn about the role of ensemble in Bunraku? What skills are needed to work together?
- Eye contact: Why are the eyes or face of the puppet considered one of the most important features of the performance? Remember to tell the students to have the puppets look at the audience regularly. The head of the puppet may need to be tilted down to do this. Ask the students to think about how the puppet can express a reaction without using a facial expression.
- Posture: How can weight be created using a puppet? How does the way the puppet stands and expresses weight identify the character in the story?
- The “stop and pose” technique: When students work with their puppets, experiment with various speeds. Using the “stop and pose” technique, students should realize the importance of slow, controlled movements. Teachers can connect this technique to comic timing or choreographed movement.

- Characterization and intention: During the course students should learn about how performers in different theatrical traditions create a character. Have the students discuss how a character is created using a puppet. How does a puppeteer express the character's objectives and intentions through a puppet? Try working with the Bunraku puppets to create various characters with different objectives.

Part 4: Vocal work and music

- vocal warm-ups
- storytelling: have the students tell a story using different voices for the characters and for setting the scene
- using the same story, add sound to it to help support the action and emotion created by the puppet, use percussion instruments
- using a newspaper article, have groups pair up to create a scene. Because Chikamatsu's plays are based on real-life events, have the students search for news articles that may inspire them to create mini-plays. Group numbers will depend on the number of characters in the article. However, it is recommended that articles are chosen with only two characters.

Part 5: Working with a play

Chikamatsu Monzaemon: *Sonezaki shinju* or *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*

- Read the play *Sonezaki shinju* or *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki* by Chikamatsu Monzaemon. Analyse the play and discuss the differences between this play and western plays or plays the students may have already read in class. Have the students research the playwright (the impulses that made him write), the period the play is set in, biographical or critical works, the play's production history or any field work that will help them to stage this play.
- After the students have read the play, divide the class into groups of eight (six puppeteers, one chanter and one musician). Using sections from *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*, have each group rehearse and stage a performance. Use a table or some black boxes for the students to perform on. You can have the students concentrate on rehearsing this play for performance or continue with the next exercise to be performed in front of an audience.
- Now that the students have performed sections from *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*, have them research a news article as a whole group or as small groups in order to create a performance. Students should try and find articles featuring between two and eight characters and that have "performable" plots. A shadow screen can be used behind the performing space so that students can design scenery. The students will rehearse their scenes to be performed in front of an audience. It is your job as teacher to help develop their pieces with them. Use the rest of the class to help critique and give notes—a lot can be learned from observation when using puppets. The more time you give to creating your performance the better. Give roles out to the students to help in creating the performance, for example: stage manager, poster and programme designer, set designer. Invite the school community to your showcase.

Assessment

Journal

Students should maintain writing in their journal throughout the process. The teacher could help with this process by assigning some journal questions. Remember questions that you ask need to be answered through practice and practical research to avoid a purely theoretical approach. For example:

- How are patterns and sequences used in Bunraku performance and production?
- The puppets as we see them in the theatre today are two-thirds life-size, and require three men to manipulate them properly. The puppeteers, in the black outfits, are considered invisible, even though they do not hide themselves as in western puppet-plays. They are said to represent "the living

spirit” of the dolls. (In fact, if a puppeteer operates without wearing the black hood, it indicates his special skill and is a mark of respect for his artistry.) Why do the Japanese think that not hiding the puppeteers—making the puppets appear to be moving as if by magic—is very important? To what extent does the presence of men in black in the background make the dolls seem any less realistic?

- One disadvantage of puppets is that their faces do not have the mobility or expressive qualities of a human face. How does the design of the puppets and the manipulations of the puppeteers serve to make Bunraku puppets more “realistic” and expressive than puppets used in other dramatic traditions?
- The narrator of a Bunraku play recites the lines of all the characters—changing the voice for each different part—as well as all the descriptive portions of the play. List the various jobs in a western play, such as director, actor, and so on. What functions does the narrator in Bunraku share with each? How do you think this influences the performance?
- In the West, puppet plays, like *Punch and Judy*, are usually comedies; a puppet play about a tragedy would be considered rather strange. Why do you think the Japanese had little difficulty in imagining puppet-plays as serious drama?
- What do puppets do best? Why use a puppet?

Theatre in the world

Students can be assessed on the knowledge and understanding they gain about the theatrical tradition of Bunraku and skills they learned in investigating its historical and cultural context. Students can be graded on the dramaturgical work they do as a research project and the sources they use to gather the information.

Theatre in the making

Students can be graded on how they developed during the “Theatre in the making” section of this scheme (parts 1–4), which dealt with the acquisition of skills, and the practical application of their research. These skills are then applied in part five, which deals with Bunraku in performance.

Theatre in performance

Students can be graded on implementing and using the design process and on their staging of a production of *The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*.

Resources

Theatre companies

National Bunraku Theatre: 1-12-10 Nippombashi, Chuo-ku, Osaka City. Tel: 06-6212-2531

Center of Puppetry Arts: 1404 Spring Street at 18th, Atlanta, Georgia, 30309, USA. Tel: 404-873-3089

The Puppeteers of America, Office of the Membership, Joyce and Chuck Berty, P.O. Box 29417, Parma, OH 44129, USA. Tel: 1-888-568-6235. www.puppeteers.org

Books

Herrigel, Eugen *Zen in the Art of Archery* (Random House, 1999) If one really wishes to be master of an art, technical knowledge of it is not enough. One has to transcend techniques so that the art becomes an “artless art” growing out of the unconscious. *Zen in the Art of Archery* is a charming and deeply illuminating story of one man’s experience with Zen.

Keene, Donald *No and Bunraku* (Columbia Press, 1990) This book combines informative work on two forms of classical Japanese theatre into a single volume to help readers truly appreciate these exceptional art forms. Kyogen is also discussed.

Keene, Donald *Major Plays of Chikamatsu* (Columbia Press, 1997) Donald Keene has translated 11 of Chikamatsu's major works and presented them as a representative of Chikamatsu's great genius.

Kominz, Laurence R and Levenson, Mark (eds) *The Language of the Puppet* (The Pacific Puppetry Center Press, 1990) A collection of essays by some of the world's leading figures in puppet theatre.

SCENE: Bodymind by ISTA. May 2004: Issue 4 has an article entitled "Bunraku Puppetry" by Maurice Halder. The article is a unit of work he used with his students on Bunraku puppetry. The article shows you how to make puppets and use them in a performance of Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*.

DVDs and videos

Puppetry: Worlds of Imagination distributed by The Cinema Guild, INC. 130 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, USA. Tel: 202-685-6242. www.cinemaguild.com or infor@cinemaguild.com. This 44-minute video highlights the revolutionary developments in the world of puppetry in American puppet theatre, profiling many of puppetry's most imaginative contemporary artists. It discusses new directions and ideas in puppetry considering its influence on opera, music, theatre, and dance.

The Tradition of Performing Arts in Japan: The Artistry of KABUKI, NOH and BUNRAKU distributed by GPN, PO Box 80669, Lincoln, NE 68501, USA. Tel: 1-800-228-4630. gon@unlinfo.unl.edu. This video presents a variety of traditional Japanese Theatre, Noh, Bunraku and the total theatre experience which is Kabuki.

Bunraku: Japan's Classic Puppet Theater distributed by Creative Arts television, PO Box 739, Kent, CT 06757, USA. catarchive@aol.com. This video presents the Japanese theatrical tradition of Bunraku puppetry, looking at the making of a puppet and the performance of Chikamatsu Monzaemon's play *Sonezaki shinju* (*The Love Suicides at Sonezaki*).

Bunraku: Masters of Japanese Puppet Theater distributed by Films for the Humanities and Sciences, PO Box 2052, Princeton, NJ 08543, USA. Tel: 1-800-257-5126 or 609-275-1400. www.films.com. This programme presents the story of Bunraku through two of its greatest masters, puppeteer Tamao Yoshida and chanter Sumitayu Takemoto. These two transform ancient tales of old Japan into vibrant human drama. Cameras go backstage to capture rarely seen rehearsals.

The Lovers' Exile distributed by Marty Gross Film Productions Inc. Tel: 416-596-3355. www.martygrossfilms.com. *The Lovers' Exile* features the incomparable Bunraku Theatrical Ensemble of Japan; the world's most sophisticated puppet theatre. *The Lover's Exile* is an adaptation of *Meido no Hikyaku* (*The Courier for Hell*) by Chikamatsu Monzaemon, first performed in 1711 and based on events of his day.

Double Suicide distributed by The Criterion Collection. ISBN 0-780002-329-3. www.criterionco.com. In this striking adaptation of a Bunraku puppet play, a paper merchant sacrifices family, fortune, and ultimately life for his erotic obsession with a prostitute.

Resource companies

Contemporary Arts Media, P.O. BOX 245, South Fremantle WA 6162, Australia. Tel: +61 (0)8 9336 1587 infor@hushvideos.com or www.hushvideos.com

Insight Media, 2162 Broadway, New York, NY 10024, USA. Tel: 1 800 233 9910 or 212 721 6316

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Kathakali: Kerala's classical dance-drama

Focus

Theatre in the making, Theatre in the world

Description

The information and exercises given below have been designed to introduce western performance students to the **principles** of Kathakali. The exercises are derived from personal experiences of traditional Kathakali training received in India and they have been adapted for the purposes of this scheme. They are not therefore traditional exercises.

Aims

- to develop the students' understanding of selected theoretical and practical principles of Kathakali dance-drama
- to give students the experience of the practical principles of Kathakali through the devised workshop exercises
- to develop the students' dramaturgical and research skills through the exploration of the historical, cultural and social context of Kathakali
- to provide a starting point for further explorations of Kathakali

Activities

Preparation

The students are given the notes on Kathakali in context (see the Resources section at the end of this scheme). The different aspects of Kathakali referred to are then divided among individuals, pairs or small groups. They are then asked to research that aspect and do a short presentation to the class of their findings and a critique of their sources.

Part 1: Body and breath awareness

These are exercises for the exploration of selected Kathakali principles.

Kathakali performers develop full articulation of their bodies, but on stage they are very restricted by their costumes. When I asked my teacher why he needed to have physical skills he would never use on stage, he said "I cannot act with just my eyes—without my body I have no eyes. I must always act with my entire body".

Full articulation is coupled with full body awareness—the ability to sense every part of the body at all times. Exercises one to four are simple tasks that demand a great deal of focus and concentration. It can be helpful for the teacher to coach the students, reminding them to keep looking at one fixed point, to really sense their back, neck, knees, stomach, hands and all the other parts of the body. The students are asked to reflect upon their experience of the exercises and encouraged to be very specific. If they say they felt "anxious" ask them where they felt that in their body—a cold feeling in their stomach? A tension in the jaw? Once they reflect on it deeply, students are often surprised at how much they do experience.

Exercise 1: Feet

- Starting with toes and working up through the body explore all of the different possibilities of movement with all the joints.
- Coordinate this exploration with breath control, breathing in when you bend the knee and breathing out when you straighten it, breathing in while doing one full ankle circle, breathing out while doing a circle in the opposite direction.
- Check and see who can lift their big toe while gripping the floor with their other toes. This is a basic Kathakali foot position.

Exercise 2: The Kathakali stance

- Place your feet far apart and parallel, knees bent and pushed outward so that they are directly above the feet.
- Hold the top part of the body upright and arms out at shoulder height parallel to the floor.
- Ensure knees are directly above the feet. Activate the lower abdominals to support the lower back and relax the shoulders.
- After some vigorous exercise (traditionally two hours of stamping exercises but for western students conduct a game which involves a lot of running), assume this position and hold it for as long as possible.
- Fix your eyes on a specific point in front of you and then let yourself become more and more aware of the sensations of your body.

Exercise 3: Face

Working in pairs, give each other feedback on how well you perform the following exercises.

- Keeping the eyelids lifted, move the eyes as smoothly as possible in circles, straight lines, side to side, up and down, a figure of eight.
- Raise each eyebrow separately.
- Move your lower eyelids while keeping the upper eyelids still.
- Move both corners of your mouth down and up.
- Find something that you can do with only one side of your face.

Exercise 4: Emotions

- Tense and move the muscles in your face to create a frozen “mask” for each of the following emotions: anger, love, fear, sadness, disgust, peace, courage and wonder.
- Hold each emotion for as long as possible and notice any feelings or sensations created.

Exercise 5: Movement

Movement is seen as a continuum: at one end you have *nritta* (pure dance) and at the other end *nritya* (movement that suggests meaning). In the West we tend to work exclusively at either end of the spectrum; theatre or drama is *nritya* and dance is *nritta*. Indian performance forms tend to use more of the spectrum. This next exercise explores how we can develop our ability to suggest meaning through movement.

- Choose one of the emotions given in the previous exercise and find one physical movement to express it (“express” rather than “show”). Try not to judge the movement or seek the “perfect” movement—it is best if the movement is instinctive and uncensored. Repeat this movement several times.
- Break the movement down into the tiniest sections, making sure you know every nuance, checking for small movements, such as the slight downwards movement that tends to come before an upward movement. Make sure these nuances are noted and defined, including face and eye movements. The movement will probably take longer to execute after this process.

- Exaggerate the qualities of each part of the movement. If it is slow then make it as slow as possible; if it is tense, make it as tense as possible. Start to think about how you can use various physical qualities to express emotion as strongly as possible. Consider pace, tempo, rhythm, energy, strength, direction.
- Challenge yourself to go as far as possible. You may find it helpful to find reasons for the various qualities—for example, the slow and tense build-up in the anger movement is an expression of how anger builds when you try to control and contain it.
- Note the variety in expressions of emotion. Do not treat emotions as universal, but as specific to a person and a context.
- Explore emotion and movement further.

Part 2: Research

As a homework assignment research the caste system, *samsara*, and *dharma*. In addition, develop a list of descriptions of the various characters and character types in Kathakali.

References: Zarrilli (2000: 53-5), Zarrilli (1984: 173-6)

Part 3: Exploring a scenario

In small groups the students take the scenario of *King Rugmamgada's Law* (see the Resources section at the end of this scheme) **without the conclusion** and dramatize it using words and movement.

- They then repeat it with only action and gesture.
- They are then asked to devise a concluding scene that would resolve the conflict without the characters acting uncharacteristically.
- The class discuss the results of the improvisation and what they think might be the conclusion.
- The students are then given the conclusion.
- The students dramatize the conclusion.
- The groups now redo the whole scenario with knowledge of the conclusion. What changes? How do the characters act differently? What is presented through the action?
- The students now condense the scenario into a small movement piece using some of the actions and movement developed from the exercises above.
- Discuss what happens when a story becomes a movement piece. Relate to research on Kathakali.

Assessment

Journal

Students should maintain writing in their journal throughout the process. The teacher could help with this process by assigning some journal questions. Remember questions that you ask need to be answered through practice and practical research to avoid a purely theoretical approach.

Tasks

- The students read and discuss the actual play of *King Rugmamgada's Law* translated by Phillip Zarilli (Zarilli 2000: Chapter 8). They choose an aspect of Kathakali or a part of the body that they want to explore further through this tradition. Relating it to the play, they write a research essay and give a presentation and workshop to the class on their findings.

Theatre in the making

Students can be graded on how they developed during the exercises that dealt with the acquisition of skills, and the practical application of their research.

Theatre in the world

Students can be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of the theatrical tradition of Kathakali and the skills they developed by investigating its historical and cultural context. Students can be graded on the dramaturgical work they do as research and the sources they use to gather the information.

Resources

King Rugmamgada's Law ⁵

The story

King Rugmamgada, a devotee of lord Vishnu, learned how to observe the *ekadasi* rites correctly through fasting and meditation.

Once King Rugmamgada and his subjects began observing the rites everyone, when they died, went to *Vaikuntha*, Vishnu's heavenly abode. No one was going to hell and the god of death Yama became increasingly concerned.

He went to Brahma and explained that with everyone observing *ekadasi*, no one was coming to hell and he had no work to do. Brahma told Yama that he would try to dissuade Rugmamgada from being so vigilant.

Brahma sent the enchantress Mohini to obstruct Rugmamgada's observance by testing his devotion. Rugmamgada met Mohini, not knowing that she has been sent by Brahma to test him.

He fell in love with her immediately and invited her to live with him as his consort. She agreed on the condition that he never denied her anything she should want. He agreed and took an oath.

On *ekadasi* day, King Rugmamgada began meditating on Vishnu. Mohini entered in an amorous mood and tried to entice Rugmamgada. Rugmamgada tried to dissuade her, explaining that as a devotee of Vishnu he had to remain pure the whole day and could only fast and meditate.

Mohini then reminded him of the vow he had taken never to deny her what she desired. She challenged him by explaining that she would allow him to continue his fasting and meditation, on the condition that he would behead his only son, Dharmagada.

Rugmamgada became angry with her and then begged her to relent, but she refused.

The conclusion

Dharmagada and his mother came forward and reminded Rugmamgada that for members of their clan (*Kshatriyas*) a vow must always be honoured. Rugmamgada suffered the emotional torment of the contradictory demands of his situation, but finally knew that he had to sacrifice his son. Just as he raised his hand to strike, Vishnu appeared and, after blessing Rugmamgada, took him to *Vaikuntha*, the heavenly abode, and installed his son as king.

⁵ Adapted from Zarrilli, Phillip B. 2000. *Kathakali Dance-Drama: Where Demons and Gods Come to Play*. London/New York: Routledge, Pp159-160.

Characters

Pacca

King Rugmamgada and his son Dharmagada are Pacca:

This class of characters includes divine figures like Krishna and Vishnu..., kings..., and epic heroes... They are the most refined among the male characters, being upright, moral, and ideally full of a calm inner poise – “royal sages” modelled on the hero (nayaka) of Sanskrit drama whose task as a kshatriya is to uphold sacred law... The ideal royal sage is a figure of enormous physical strength and energy who also has the power to control his senses.⁶

Minukku

Mohini and Sandhyavali (Rugmamgada's wife) are Minukku:

This class includes both idealised female heroines... and the purest and most spiritually perfect males, including brahmans, holy men, and sages.⁷

Kathakali in context⁸

The form: Kathakali is a visually spectacular, dynamic and dramatic art form characterized by the power and virtuosity of its actors. The physical control and powerful emotional presence of the actors is the product of a rigorous psychophysical training based on an Indian understanding of the “body” and “performance”. Kathakali can only be taught mimetically: face-to-face with a master.

Location: Kerala stretches for 550 km along India's south-west coast and is a tropical landscape fed by two monsoons.

Language: The spoken language of Kerala is *Malayalam*, a *Dravidian* language. Most ancient Hindu texts are written in *Sanskrit*, the oldest recorded language in India. *Kathakali* is written in *Manipravalam*, which is a mixture of both *Sanskrit* and *Malayalam*.

Festivals: All-night festivals usually associated with Kerala's temples are a common aspect of Kerala life and huge amounts of money are spent on them. There are normally fireworks, gold-bedecked elephants, and loud highly skilled drum orchestras. It is often at these festivals that Kathakali is performed although it is also performed in western-style theatres.

Theatre & dance: As well as *Kathakali* dance-drama there are countless other performance forms in Kerala, including the female classical dance form, *Mohiniattam*, the 2000-year-old *Sanskrit* drama *Kutiyattam*, as well as ritual dances such as *Teyyam* in which dancers become “possessed” by temple deities.

Religion: The primary religion in Kerala is Hinduism, there is also a large Islamic community and Christianity has been present since 47AD. Kathakali is primarily a Hindu performance form.

The principles and concepts of Hinduism

Hundreds of gods, goddesses, beliefs and practices and a wide variety of philosophies are included in Hinduism. Some of these are only recognized in particular geographical areas, others are popular right across the subcontinent. The earliest gods of Hinduism include Agni the god of fire, Surya the god of the sun, and Indra the chief god. More important is the later conceived trinity of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Shiva the destroyer. Vishnu is said to have had ten incarnations on earth, the most famous being Rama

⁶ Zarrilli, Phillip B. 2000. *Kathakali Dance-Drama: Where Demons and Gods Come to Play*. London/New York: Routledge, p 53.

⁷ Zarrilli, Phillip B. 2000. *Kathakali Dance-Drama: Where Demons and Gods Come to Play*. London/New York: Routledge, p 55.

⁸ Much of the contextual information about Kerala is taken from *The Rough Guide to India: Fifth Edition*. Travel guides are a good source of basic cultural information.

and Krishna. Shiva's consort is Parvati, the great goddess also known as Durga, Kali, Chamunda, Muktakeshi. Their first son is the extremely popular elephant-headed Ganesh, "the remover of obstacles".

Some of the important Hindu concepts are:

Samsara: a cyclic round of death and rebirth characterized by suffering and perpetuated by desire.

Moksha: liberation from *samsara*.

Karma: the certainty that one's position in society is determined by the effect of one's previous actions in this and previous lives.

Dharma: fulfilling one's duty to family and caste and acquiring religious merit through right living.

Caste system: There are four hierarchical classes in Hindu society:

Brahmins (priests and teachers), *Kshatriyas* (rulers and warriors), *Vaishyas* (merchants and cultivators) and *Shudras* (menials). Below all four categories are the untouchables whose jobs involve contact with dirt or death (such as undertakers, leatherworkers, cleaners). Although it is now a criminal offence to discriminate against untouchables, they still have a difficult time.⁹

The *dharma* of the *kshatriyas* is of central importance to Kathakali. Kathakali was sponsored by the ruling classes and the plays tend to be in-depth explorations of the spiritual dilemmas of royalty. Most Kathakali plays were written by *brahmins*.

Kathakali terms¹⁰

Abhinaya: the performance is presented to the audience using four elements:

1. *Aharya*—the costumes, make-up and properties
2. *Vacika*—the vocal element
3. *Angika*—the embodied, "expressive" element of acting
4. *Satvika*—the expressive subtle, or "internal" element of acting

Bhava: state of mind, being, disposition. Refers to the actor's embodiment of the character's emotion/being.

Mahabharata: India's great epic, which serves as a source of traditional oral narratives and teaching stories, tells the story of the enmity and conflict between two sets of princely brothers, the Kauravas led by Duryodhana and the five princely Pandavas.

Mudra: hand-gesture—Kathakali's gesture language includes 24 root *mudras* used singly or in combination literally to speak the dialogue of the play text, and also used decoratively during pure dance.

Prana vayu: the breath or wind understood to circulate within the body. Also refers to the "life force", or "breath of life". Implicit in Kathakali training since the actor must learn to circulate control, and use the "breath" or "wind" when performing facial expressions, hand gestures and so on. It is the enlivening element of performance.

⁹ Definitions taken from Abram, David, Sen, Devdan, Edwards, Nick, Ford, Mike and Woodridge, Beth. 2003. *Rough Guide to India: Fifth Edition*. London/NewYork/Delhi: Rough Guides Ltd.

¹⁰ Adapted from Zarrilli, Phillip B. 2000. *Kathakali Dance-Drama: Where Demons and Gods Come to Play*. London/New York: Routledge.

Ramayana: The other great epic poem. This tells the story of the trials and tribulations of Prince Rama, his wife Sita, and his brother Lakshmana. One of the principal parts of the epic story occurs when the ten-headed demon king Ravana captures Sita and takes her to his island abode Lanka. The monkey-god, son of the wind, Hanuman, leads the monkey armies as they assist Rama in securing Sita's freedom.

Rasa: the goal of theatre is to allow the audience to taste aesthetic pleasure.

Rasika: literally a "taster of rasa"—a connoisseur educated to appreciate the nuances of Kathakali poetry, imagery, gesture language, music and so on and therefore able to achieve the ideal aesthetic experience when watching performances.

Tala: rhythmic patterns to which the dialogue and dances are set.

Kathakali in performance

- On stage there are two singers who keep time and sing the "text".
- Two drummers provide rhythm and use their drumming to accentuate the actors' movements.
- The only other stage properties are normally a small stool and a hand-held curtain.
- The actors perform in huge and heavily decorated costumes.
- They dance and enact the text using a complicated hand gesture language.
- Kathakali performances are preceded by a pure dance sequence sometimes performed by students, and an extensive drumming and singing demonstration.
- The "dramatic" performance begins at 10pm and finishes at 5am.

Kathakali training

There are no rehearsals and performers sometimes only find out what part they are playing when they arrive at the venue. The actors have already memorized hundred of hours of intricate hand gestures and dance steps. This amazing feat is the result of an exhaustive ten-year training process starting as young as seven years old and a lifetime of dedication.

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Claire Lindsay has a first degree in theatre performance. She has trained extensively in India and with Phillip Zarrilli and has worked professionally as both a performer and director. Claire is currently the physical theatre tutor for Bird College.

The legacies of Trinidad Carnival

Focus

Theatre in the making, Theatre in performance, Theatre in the world

Description

This project traces the roots of *Ole Time* Trinidad Carnival characters (*mas'*) and presents the process of recreating a traditional *mas'* character for a street theatre parade or a commedia-type presentation. The festival of Carnival was originally brought to Trinidad by late 18th century settlers from France, Spain and England. It evolved through the combinations of memories from the old homelands and the reactions or needs of the current times. Ultimately, like other elements of culture, Carnival changed its expression and developed into its present unique and ever-changing format, which was especially influenced by African slaves and their descendants.

Aims

- to introduce students to *Ole Time* Trinidad Carnival characters
- to give students the skills to recreate the costumes and props for carnival characters
- to give the students the opportunity to learn the walk and dance steps associated with each character
- to develop the students' ability to interact with an audience in a way that is appropriate for each carnival character
- to give the students the opportunity to create and perform their own contemporary speeches for the characters
- to develop the students' understanding of the elements of production and performance, present in a street carnival

Activities

Part 1: Introduction

The evolution of a society and its culture is more often than not based on the subliminal borrowing and absorption of other cultures. The outcome may be cross-cultural interchange or synthesis of diverse cultural elements, merging, submerging, and resurfacing, or mutating, into a new acceptable identity.

Exercises

- Multicultural greeting game: based either on stereotypes or research, greet each other in gesture and movement as, for example, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, inner-city gangs. Discuss these gestures and their implications: research the traditions (geographical, cultural, and religious) and social context of each group.
- Research and discuss maxims or proverbs such as: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do", "Don't wear a brown hat in Friesland", that is to say, conform to the manners and customs of those among whom you live.

- Research and improvise scenes which contain actions and dialogue to show:
 - a slave trade transaction, the arrival, dispersal to various plantations and then the involuntary requirement to adapt to the slave owners' work, dress, language and religion.
 - the indentured labourers' hostile cultural environment (see the Resources section at the end of this scheme for a web site detailing slave trade transactions).
 - storytelling is the oldest art form. In a traditional storytelling circle, share or create stories about your family history.
- Play out the following scenes:
 - become the animal that wants to hunt you
 - mimic and create a dance reflecting the natural elements of fire, water or air in order to appease their destructive forces
 - show how the stance, bodily gesture and even the voice of a person is altered by various types of face and head coverings which depict professions or religious affiliations, such as sailors, policemen, doctors, chefs, cowboys, racing car drivers, football players, Indian chiefs, Muslim women, nuns
- Carnival and masquerading have their roots in antiquity. Research the roots of carnival in antiquity (see Resources at the end of this scheme).
- Review the historical origins of carnival in Trinidad (see Resources at the end of this scheme).

Part 2: Research

The students are given the notes on **Trinidad Carnival in context**. The different aspects of the carnival referred to are then divided amongst the individual, pairs or small groups. They are then asked to research that aspect and do a short presentation to the class of their findings with a critique of their sources.

Part 3: Developing character

1. Research and present an overview of Trinidad Carnival.
2. Choose one *Ole Time* Carnival character from the Carnival *Mas'* character and information list (see the Resources at the end of this scheme). Identify its origins and share findings with the class.
3. Using your choice of *Ole Time* Carnival *mas'* characters and Aristotle's key concepts of plot, language, spectacle, music and movement/dance, design, build, and learn the movements and/or speeches of the chosen character.

Part 4: Creating a carnival performance

Using the following approach, prepare and present "performances" with and for audiences at, for example, elementary schools, other theatre classes, open lunchtime street performances, community parks/playgrounds/village spaces:

- identify a theme or overall concept (historical or contemporary)
- develop costume illustrations and methods to make costumes (sewing, wire-bending, papier mâché, foam, and decorations: natural or man-made materials)
- design the make-up necessary to complete the full costume if no mask is required
- build the costume: the costume must be able to move and dance across the stage/in the streets and not fall apart
- learn and practice the dance steps, incorporating the appropriate props
- perform with other *Ole Time* Carnival *mas'* characters in a street parade.

Assessment

Journal

Students should maintain writing in their journal throughout the process. The teacher could help with this process by assigning some journal questions. Remember questions that you ask need to be answered through practice and practical research to avoid a purely theoretical approach.

Tasks

- Students prepare a presentation of a *mas'* character and demonstrate the way they have put theory into practice.
- A research paper comparing the experience of this practice with other improvisational theatre practices, such as Commedia dell'Arte and clowning.
- Reflection and discussion on the experience of performing in the street and the challenges of working in this way.
- Research into street theatre and the devising and presentation of a workshop to peers.

Theatre in the making

Students can be graded on how they developed during the exercises focusing on the acquisition of skills, and the practical application of their research.

Theatre in performance

Students can be graded on implementing and using the design process and on their organization and staging of a street carnival.

Theatre in the world

Students can be assessed on the knowledge and understanding they gain about the theatrical practice of the Trinidad Carnival and skills they learned in investigating its historical and cultural context. They can also be graded on the dramaturgical work they do as a research exercise and the sources they use to gather the information.

Resources

The context

Roots of carnival

- Bacchanalis: Roman festivals in honour of Bacchus, the equivalent of the Greek Dionysia.
- The month of Phallus during the orgiastic Roman feasts of Saturn or Saturnalia.
- The festival of Carnevalle ("farewell to flesh") established by the early Roman Catholic Church in Italy and still "celebrated" around Europe during the two days prior to Ash Wednesday.
- African traditions of parading in costumes and masks and moving in circles around the village in order to bring good fortune or to placate angry ancestors.

History of Trinidad Carnival and festivity

After the 1783 Cedula of Population, the French plantocracy celebrated by driving along the streets in carriages and house-to-house visiting, serenading each other with flutes and instruments from the African and Spanish traditions. They also entertained with elaborate masked balls in which they themselves played characters such as Grooms, Priests, Brigands, Pierrots, or the African "mulatress". The English celebrated with their exclusive Governor's Ball where social dances were the highlight of the event.

The oldest Trinidadian carnival characters have their roots in this era—the early 1800s—as the plantation and house workers mimicked and “mamagued” the colonial authorities, their masters, with an incomprehensible patois and the use of extravagant masked costumes. After emancipation (1834), the liberated slaves took to the streets as *jab molassie* and *jab-jabs* (from the French “diable”). At Christmas and during the pre-Lenten period the Spaniards also engaged in house-to-house visiting, singing *Parang* (songs of the Nativity and the Virgin Mary brought to Trinidad from Venezuela) and accompanied by quartos and *chac-chacs*. By the 1860s the *jamets* dominated carnival—the African-based singers, drummers, dancers, stickmen, prostitutes and bad-johns—with rituals of stick-fighting and Canboulay (French: *cannes brûlées*—burning cane).

The Canboulay Riots in Trinidad of 1881 and the subsequent banning of the use of drums and the carrying of sticks brought about a turning point in the development of carnival: the government recognized the importance of the people’s festival and its implications. The intervention prompted the commercial class, who were in support of the black *creole*, to identify with carnival and initiate the competitive element into carnival. The result was that glittering fancy costume balls were reinstated. The late 19th century carnival consisted of combinations of communal backyard “tents” of bamboo and thatch, which were rudimentary “*mas’ camps*” and calypso tents in one. These were presided over by prototype kings and queens (the most elaborately costumed *mas’* characters of the “band”). Small bands such as *Dame Lorraines*, *Sailors*, *Burrokeets*, and *Red or Wild Indians* paraded the streets on Carnival Monday and Tuesday. They were joined by individuals such as Poetic Bandits, Midnight Robbers, Literary Clowns (called *Pierrot Grenade*), giant stilt walkers or *Moko Jumbies* (possibly derived from a traditional West African folk character, Spirit “Moko”, the god of fate and retribution). The music leader or *chantuelle*—the forerunner of today’s calypsonian—would rehearse the carnival music and lead the band on the streets.

Calypso is rooted in the praise and satire songs of West Africa. It has functioned as a sort of popular press, a source of information and commentary, as well as a way to scandalize the white establishment and to prick pomposity. In the late 19th century the language of calypso changed from French patois to English and shortly afterwards the first calypso tents were established. The *steel pan* was a direct legacy of the suppression of all types of drumming (even at East Indian and African religious meetings) in 1883. Initially, the drummers produced a rhythmic percussive ensemble consisting of different lengths and widths of bamboo joints beaten together. These percussive bands were called *tambo-bambo*. Subsequently around 1935 a variety of metallic drum substitutes, such as biscuit tins and car parts, were incorporated. Finally, during the second world war the performers learned to cut, shape, and tune oil drums.

By the early 20th century, carnival *mas’* bands paraded the streets representing historical eras, events and people, with a variety of other “individuals”, “kings” and “queens”.

Ole Time Carnival Mas’ characters and information

The carnival characters include:

- Red Indians, Wild Indians
- Midnight Robbers (poetic bandits)
- *Jab Molassie* (molasses devil)
- *Jab Jabs* (devil, devil)
- Beast or Dragon and Bookman
- Sailors
- *Pierrot Grenades* (literary clowns)
- *East Indian Burroquite* (Burrokeets) (human donkeys)

- Baby Dolls (unwed young mothers looking for their child's father)
- *Moko Jumbie* (giant stilt walkers)
- *Dame Lorraines* (big-bellied, big-buttocked, big-breasted characters)
- Minstrels

Carnival *Mas'* character information

Sailor

- History: introduced during the 1880s when American and French naval ships came to Trinidad. While Sailor *mas'* is syncretic, it has been clearly influenced by the US military and movies. In modern carnival it is one of the most popular categories.
- Bad behaviour sailors: they mimic the rough, rowdy, drunken behaviour of American sailors on shore leave.
- Movement/walk: typically they walk on their heels and their toes alternately, with their hands in front, performing a rolling, drunken gait. Sometimes they become acrobatic and perform somersaults and tumbles. They perform mock drills or form lines moving in opposite directions mimicking the rocking ship.
- Song/music: satirical or navy songs such as "Anchors Away".
- Costume: tight-fitting jumpers with an insignia on the right sleeve; wide collars and neckerchiefs bearing the name of the band and the ship crew or emblazoned with slogans such as "sailors astray"; exaggerated white drill bell-bottoms decorated with suggestive smudges; black shoes and tie, and a white sailor cap worn over the eyes or tilted on the back of the head.
- Props: these characters usually smoke a pipe and may use either a walking stick or an umbrella. They carry a fan, wear a Hawaiian garland around their necks, hold a pair of dice, or a large chamberpot fastened to their wrists and used as a drinking vessel, while throwing white powder in the face of a passer-by.

Midnight Robber

- History: inspired from the African oral tradition and influenced by many cultures, including the cowboys in American and Mexican movies, a Midnight Robber is well-read as his speeches are laced with references from literature and the Bible and are fast-moving, topical, social commentaries.
- Movement/walk: typically they stride powerfully and swing their flowing capes in wide arcs while brandishing their weapons.
- Speech: "Robber Talk" is the Midnight Robber's most powerful weapon. He summons and then dismisses his audience with a blow of his whistle while threatening them with a gun or a dagger. His blood-curdling speeches are dangerous, confrontational and characterized by a boastful, mocking style.
- Costume: a large oversized hat with a fringed brim (believed to have been borrowed from the Yoruba Oweri male fraternity) decorated on the crown with different shapes and symbols (such as a skull and crossbones, a graveyard, or models of the Houses of Parliament). One type of Midnight Robber wears a satin shirt; black or white pantaloons; a flowing cape emblazoned with symbols of death and destruction; and a face masked with make-up emphasizing his meanness. Another wears pants made of hemp cocoa sacking that has been cut in strips, sewn onto an old pair of trousers and then had the edges frayed. It is finally dyed black with a little oil to give it a shine and sprinkled with coal salt to make it less inflammable. Shoes or boots are worn, carefully crafted with an animal's face and moving eyes.

- Props: this character's accoutrements are a whistle to summon his victims, a gun or dagger to threaten them, and a sack to hold the swag, which at carnival time is "pounds" or pennies.

Pierrot

- History: a direct descendant of the jesters in European courts, the popular, elegantly dressed, melancholy character of the Commedia dell'Arte. In the Trinidad Carnival two *mas'* characters exist, neither of them "clowns".
 - King Pierrot, which may have evolved from the island of Cariacou and its "boast *mas'*": witty and prankish literary battles where King Pierrots show off their knowledge of literature and history by reciting long passages from Shakespeare and history books.
 - Pierrot Grenade (Grenadian Pierrot), who pretends to be learned, and performs theatrical mocking scenes between a teacher and his pupil.
- Speech: the King Pierrot has a wide repertoire of grandiose speeches, especially those from Shakespeare or Victorian history books. Pierrots challenge each other to speech duels, which often lead to physical duels with their sticks. The Pierrot Grenade is the scholar of *Ole Time mas'* as he can spell any polysyllabic word in his original way, with style, imagination and creativity, normally weaving a story around each syllable.
- Costume: the King Pierrot is a finely dressed masquerader who wears a satin gown covered in bells, a velvet shaped breast piece bordered in swansdown and decorated with sequins, mirrors and bells, stockings and light shoes. On his head he wears an iron pot camouflaged by his velvet beret, and sometimes a cape well padded with old brown paper and sacking, both to protect him from the whipping he will receive if he loses his speech battle. Pierrot Grenade is the King Pierrot's alter ego; a poor man who has retained his scholarship but changed his princely dress to a long ankle-length crocus bag gown decorated with strips of multicoloured cloth sewn with small pebble-packed tins and other paraphernalia; his head tied with a coloured head tie or a hat.
- Props: an opened parasol, and a short steel- or lead-lined whip, or bull pistle is carried to fight his speech competitors.
- Movement/Walk: the Pierrot had the walk of a bravado whose absurd rhetoric and complex oratory skills initiated many rather aggressive fights, ultimately curbed by the authorities.

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<http://www.allahwe.org/History.html> (Trinidad Carnival history)

<http://www.seetobago.com/trinidad/pan/ref/sbveaniv.htm#em1> (Steelband [pan] history)

<http://www.vgskole.net/prosjekt/slavrute/primar.htm> (Slave Narratives)

<http://www.Caribseek.com/>

See also: Haley, Alex *Roots*; Olaudah Equina (1798); *Mary Prince, a West Indian slave* (1831); *Narratives of Louis Asa-Asa*.

Dani Lyndersay worked for 19 years in Nigeria in theatre and cultural research and has worked for the past 15 years in Trinidad and Tobago. She is the founder and director of Arts-in-Action, currently the foremost interactive theatre company in the Caribbean, and senior lecturer and coordinator of theatre arts at the Centre for Creative & Festival Arts, University of the West Indies.

The one-person show

Focus

Theatre in the making, Theatre in performance

Description

I went on this amazing journey and I want to take you along.

Mark Travis

This project begins with the student researching one-person shows and ends with a performance of their own one-person show. Through this project the student learns and experiences the various roles required to make theatre and, indeed, the very nature of theatre itself.

The first concept the student needs to grasp is that there is no such thing as a one-person show. It is true that the development of the one-person show relies heavily on the student writing and developing the piece, but theatre is a collaborative art, and this collaboration is essential to bring the piece to life. Once the piece is in the final editing stage, it is important to have another perspective or a director to help stage the piece. The performer should also be encouraged to work with a designer, or to take on some of the design responsibilities. Lights, set, costume, props, sound, should be explored, thinking about how each element can help support the final production.

Exploration and discussion of art, religion, socio-political, historical movements, current events as well as personal anecdotes that helped to influence and shape the one-person show should also be explored. The students will also examine how the elements of production, as well as the dialogue, help to communicate the influences that have shaped the piece.

The actual writing of the one-person show could take up to one semester (three to four months) with a number of writing exercises, rough drafts, teacher and peer feedback. The student should be working for a 20- to 30-minute piece.

Stimulus

The stimulus can come from a multitude of sources as long as the student has a clear point of view and/or passionate connection to the material. The one-person show can be fiction or based on fact. The stimulus could be a historical or current event, an image, a person, a piece of art, a poem, a character from a play, novel, short story, or fairytale. Most one-person shows originate from personal events.

Writing

After the choice of the stimulus, each student should brainstorm ideas and initial responses to this starting point. These should be recorded in the student's journal and also form part of class discussion. The student should then research, write, and explore the particular point of view. Discussions about target audience (who this will be performed to) should be part of the early discussions.

Outline

The student begins researching one-person shows, perhaps interviewing artists who write one-person shows.

The student chooses a stimulus and begins a process of brainstorming.

The teacher conducts exercises to help students discover writing, use of language and different styles. These writing exercises are sometimes performed in class so that the student can receive audience feedback and constructive criticism.

The student decides on the subject matter, selects a target audience, and communicates their vision to the teacher.

A multitude of rough drafts and evidence of editing are presented. The student explores how elements of design—sound/music, lights, costume—might enhance the one-person show.

If possible, the student could be given a budget for the final production of their one-person show. This can be a budget as small as US\$10. All receipts must be kept and submitted to the teacher for reimbursement.

Aims

- to encourage students to explore different types and styles of one-person shows
- to provide a performance/production opportunity for students
- to give students the opportunity to learn the process of creating theatre through practice
- to develop the students' writing and editing skills
- to develop the students' specific performance/production skills
- to develop the students' ability to research history, art, music, religion, current events and the socio-political influences that may play a part in selecting material
- to give students the opportunity to explore the relationship between the actor and the audience

Activities

Part 1: Exercises to encourage writing

There are a number of ways to get students writing in preparation for their one-person show. To free the process make sure it is clear that spelling and grammar should not become obstacles.

Your voice, your truth

This exercise is a good starter for getting students to open up and allow themselves to be vulnerable.

- Write about your “most embarrassing moment”; read your story to the class.

Gender swap

- Write about your feelings on a certain issue, but pretend you are the opposite sex. Getting in touch with our masculine and feminine sides sometimes helps in finding the right tone for the piece. This exercise also helps to develop performance skills when the performer is portraying a member of the opposite sex as a character.

The metaphoric, the literal, and mixing the two

The very nature of theatre is metaphoric. Just by adding coloured gels to lights and music to underscore a moment in a play, we take away the idea of “real”. Many of these are elements that are added to help the audience believe. Ironic, but true.

In John Cariani's play *Almost, Maine* he uses literal metaphors to generate laughter. One character has had her heart broken and is literally carrying it around in a paper bag, when she happens to run into a repairman. In another scene, a married couple who are at a crossroads in their relationship are busy looking for a missing shoe while discussing the fact that they do not know if they should divorce. One character states,

“What are we waiting for?” At that point, the missing shoe falls from the sky (highlighting the metaphor “waiting for the other shoe to drop”).

- Read plays that use metaphoric elements, such as *Equus* by Peter Shaffer.
- Write a personal story about a favourite family occasion or a sad family incident. Try to keep the story literal. Explain exactly what happened from your point of view.
- Rewrite the story using metaphors to describe the occasion or incident.
- On the third rewrite, mix the literal and metaphoric.

Belief systems

As the student writes from their point of view, it is also important to tap into the morals and ethics of other characters.

- Create or choose a character or person with completely different opinions about an issue that is important to you. Write from their perspective while commenting on it. Give that person credibility, but also communicate your own thoughts and opinions.

Stimulus starter

Students are given one week for the first part of the assignment and two weeks (no more than three) for the development of the piece.

- Bring in a stimulus (an image, a character from a recently read play, a current event, or a personal turning point in your life). Write and perform a 90-second to two-minute monologue. The teacher and other students can give feedback and thoughts about how the monologue could be developed.
- Take this idea(s) and develop a five-minute piece. Add music, lights and costume.
- In your journal record your research and your ideas and reflect on the process of writing.

Part 2: Creating a one-person show

Start with truth and depth, don't try to be funny

One-person shows should evolve from truthful writing and with a commitment to exploring the depth of a topic and not just the quick, easy, one-liner method of getting a laugh. The comedy should come after the student has explored an issue in depth and found the truth of it and his/her own personal point of view.

- If you choose to write a one-person show about your life, start with listing turning points and memorable moments in your life. Once the list is completed, create mind maps.

Every detail matters in the beginning

- After you mind-map a few subjects, choose which experiences you want to focus on and begin to write. **Detail** every moment. What was the day like? What were you wearing? What did others look like? How did they behave?

When I wrote about joining a cult, I described the place, the pastor and his wife, the other members, what we wore, how we behaved. Comedy comes from details.

Some writing tips

- Just write. Don't worry about spelling, punctuation or grammar. The most important thing is to keep on writing. You can make sense of how it all fits together in a later draft.

- Do not worry about how it will all transfer to the stage. Go for it. Even if something dramatic happens that requires a crowd, just write it and worry about how it is going to be staged later. A director may well have some ideas about this.
- Make it immediate. Write in the present tense as this helps the audience to connect with your ideas and engage with the experiences that you are describing, for example, “I **was walking** down the street when suddenly I **saw** the strangest thing” is less immediate than “I **am walking** down the street. Suddenly I **see** the strangest thing.”

Part 3: Developing your one-person show

Exposition

- Now that you have written about a turning point in your life, discover what led up to that moment. Why is this moment so important? What does the audience need to know in order to better understand it?

When I, for example, joined a cult, people wanted to know why. It was important for me to be very honest about my struggle with my fear of being gay that led me to join a cult, get married, struggle with my family, until I could finally find acceptance.

Three-dimensional characters

- Write down every tiny detail about the people you are talking about or the character you are presenting. Focus on how they move, their speech, what they wear, how they sit, mannerisms and quirks. Creating fully developed characters is about showing the person’s nature not only by what they say, but also through their physical expressions.
- Create a character breakdown and detail the descriptions in your journal.
- Put all the characters and all of their details onto an index card.

One of my favourite characters to play is this little “nerd” Lavenia. I started with a pair of cat-eye glasses and examined how would she wear them, how would she stand, wear her clothes, her hair, what would she do with her hands, how would she walk, what would her speech be like, what would she want, where would she work, whether she would date, how would she relate to others, what would her background be, the way she would sing, dance and so on.

Finding the through-line: Where’s the show?

- Look through your material. Begin to edit.
- To help find the story, bullet point specific moments. Arrange them in an order that helps to move the story along. Write each bullet point on an index card and then detail each scene. Ask questions like: Who is in the scene? Where does it take place? What happens?
- Organize the index cards into an order that tells the story you want to tell and then practise it out loud. If a scene feels out of order or does not work, trust your gut and rearrange it or delete it (but never get rid of anything permanently).

When I wrote the first draft of Don’t Make Fun of Jesus, it was 33 pages long (about three or four hours of material). It was just a bunch of stories and characters that had no relationship to each other, disorganized, unedited mess. My first goal was to find the story.

What’s the theme?

You may have a show but you need to know the theme.

- Start looking for the theme. Themes are usually universal and can be found throughout the piece. Ask yourself: What is this story about? Can the main character tell the through-line of the story? What is the conflict in the story? How does the main character change? What makes this story interesting and worth hearing? Don't preach to the audience about the theme. Be in the moment. Be in the story. Trust the audience (they are smart and want to question, wonder what comes next, and think).

*After I edited down my final last draft (about 13 pages and right at an hour), I then had the difficult task of finding the theme. I looked at each story, each character, and ultimately, myself, and realized that my show was about **denial**.*

Take a second look, get a new pair of eyes

After you have decided on the story and theme, **put it away** for a little while. Give yourself a break from the piece (maybe two or three weeks) and then reread it as if for the first time. I also think having a trusted director or another writer look at the piece and give some notes is a good idea. Keep an open mind. It is not necessary to make every suggested change, but pay attention to notes others give you and see if they make sense. Pick up the script again and make some changes.

Part 4: The rehearsal process

It is recommended that the rehearsal process should be a minimum of four to six weeks with rehearsals three to four times per week. The rehearsals should be 90 minutes to two hours each.

If the student will be performing the one-person show, then it is necessary to have another artist to give their perspective—that is, a director. The student (playwright) is responsible for finding another student to take on the role of a director and/or a designer(s) for the production to help with staging ideas and transitions. It is recommended that other students take on the roles. The director and designer will also have ideas about the concept and how production and design elements could be used to support the piece. The director, designer and performer should be in constant communication.

If possible, the student should be given a specific budget by the teacher to use on the production in any way they think appropriate to their piece.

Part 5: The design and production process

The designer is required to:

- oversee all production elements such as set design, sound design, costumes, props, and so on. Samples, sketches, ideas should be explored at least a month before rehearsals begin. Final design ideas should be completed before the first rehearsal so that the performer knows what sort of space they will be performing in and what costumes and props will look like.
- work within the allocated budget
- have rehearsal props and costumes available by the first week of rehearsal
- collaborate with the performer, director and playwright
- manage a technical team to handle all production elements and demands.

Part 6: Performance

Bear in mind that most one-person shows rely on the person telling the story and little else.

Remember that just because the show is performed once this is not the end of your work. It is just a beginning. A one-person show sometimes runs for a couple of years, so the staging and the text should be constantly worked on in order to strengthen the piece and keep it fresh.

Pay attention to audience responses.

Assessment

Journal

Students should use their journal to question, respond to the chosen stimulus and make connections to playwrights, theorists, socio-political historical movements, and current events that inspire them. The student must reflect in his/her journal about the specific skills that are being developed. What was learnt about the **process** of writing/developing a one-person show?

Tasks

- Research: evidence of research from books, films, web sites, theorists, other productions, theatre companies, plays, art, music, historical influences, current events, architecture, images, or famous quotes should be included in the student's journal.
- Writing: the writing and development of the writing should be assessed. Examples of rough drafts, edits, the ideas that were developed as well as the ideas that were not. All writing assignments should be assessed. Deadlines for writing are important. "Writer's block" is usually an excuse for not doing an assignment. Never assess a written assignment based on grammar and spelling.
- Performance skills: the final performance as well as participation in class, working individually and in collaboration would be assessed.
- Reflection and discussion: communication between student and teacher, student and director, student and designer should be assessed in both action and in the journal. Students should reflect on this process of communication and it should be clearly recorded in their journal.
- Observation: students should be encouraged to attend a one-person production. If that is not possible, then the student should be encouraged to read a one-person play and/or watch a video that demonstrates this form.

Theatre in the making

Students can be graded on how they developed during the exercises that dealt with the acquisition of skills, and the practical application of their research and their skills.

Theatre in performance

Students can be graded on implementing and using the design process and on their staging of a production of their one-person show.

Resources

Example of a starting point

How I approached my one-woman show

In my show, *Don't Make Fun of Jesus*, I made a list of several turning points and memorable moments.

Family's poverty

Being a Southerner (USA)

Religion

Fear of being gay

Joining a cult

Married

Coming out

Education

My mom

My dad

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Carter, Judy *The Comedy Bible* (Fireside Publications, 2001)

Shaffer, Peter *Equus* (Penguin Non-Classics, 1984)

Sutton, Sherri D *Don't Make Fun of Jesus* (unpublished)

Travis, Mark *Directing Feature Films* (Michael Wiese Productions, 2002)

Web site

www.sherridsutton.com

One-person shows

Brady Of Broadway—view scenes from the acclaimed one-man play about civil war photographer Mathew Brady as it was performed at the Smithsonian Institution.

The Charles Dickens Show—Argonaut Theatre Company. With Geoffrey Harris/David Horne as Charles Dickens. Compiled by Dr David Parker and John Greco.

Darwin Remembers: the Life and Work of Charles Darwin—A one-man, one-act play written and acted by biology professor, Floyd Sandford. The play shares information about the scientific contributions and personal life of Charles Darwin.

Edgar Allan Poe: Once Upon A Midnight (<http://www.astin-poe.com/>) Official site for the critically acclaimed one-man play starring John Astin as author Edgar Allan Poe.

Goy Vey—The saga of a poor Chinese bastard who leaves his Chinese Opera diva mother for New York to look for his Jewish father, who abandoned her.

Hey Gringo!—A stand-up trilogy of one man's adventures in Latin America; synopsis, reviews, and biographies of the writer.

The Hollywood Legends—A catalogue of one-person and multiple character plays and musicals for the professional, college, and amateur theatre.

Journey to Ithaca—A one-woman show performed and devised by Vicky de Lacy in central London after a successful season at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Looking For Louie—A solo touring performance about an immigrant family and its secrets.

Sal Mineo: A Play by Carlos Ferro—Carlos Gonzalez Ferro brings legendary star Sal Mineo back to life with his critically acclaimed production, "Sal". Production notes, press releases, biography, and photo gallery are featured.

Tesla—A one-man play co-written by J Michael Newlight and Frank Tabbita about the life and work of the brilliant Croatian scientist Nikola Tesla.

Tim Miller (<http://hometown.aol.com/millertale/timmiller.html>) A web site devoted to the solo theatre work of performer Tim Miller. The web site has links to all of his performances, his book *Shirts & Skin*, videos, Highways Performance Space, and related articles on Tim Miller's performance art.

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Masks: Actor training and character development

Focus

Theatre in the making, Theatre in the world

Description

In this scheme of work students are led through a series of preparatory and explorative workshops using neutral masks, which playfully strip away habitual “acting” habits and bring students to a point of readiness for performance. Students, then, either make or use existing expressive masks to create a character. These individual characters meet, interact and scenarios are born. These scenarios lead to performance moments in front of an audience of peers. Students alternate between performing and observing, registering and recording their discoveries from an external and internal perspective, and developing understanding of the role of the masked performer and the audience.

Students and teachers may choose to research mask traditions from around the world such as Balinese mask theatre or Commedia Dell’Arte (as a link to “Theatre in the world”). Technical and design aspects can also be researched and where facilities exist students may benefit from going through the process of face casting, designing and making their own mask for use in performance. This series of workshops may be used as the stimulus for creating a production using masks or developing students’ skills for the practical performance proposal or research investigation. There is also scope for this project to form the basis of a research investigation or an independent project, focusing on how to make or use a mask from a particular theatre practice.

Throughout the scheme there are key words and quotations that can be used as:

- stimuli for practical exercises and research
- an inspiration or point of reference for students writing their journal.

The article is written for teachers with instructions to students included. Questions for reflection and discussion are marked in *italics*.

Aims

- to help students to develop a keen personal sense of the relationship of body/mind/spirit as a performer
- to give students an understanding of the origins and purpose of the neutral mask
- to give students knowledge and understanding of masking techniques
- to develop the students’ ability to create a mask character and to design and source a costume for their character
- to give students the opportunity to build responsive, authentic relationships with fellow performers, company members and the audience
- to develop the students’ ability to reflect in their journal on experiences of transformation and discovery

These aims are achieved through a reciprocal process of action and reflection, practice and theory.

Activities

Pre-project preparation

Prior to beginning work on the project students are asked to collect images and ideas related to:

- a. Preparation: people preparing for something, for example, an athlete, a cook, a musician.

What is the desired outcome? What are the stages they go through to prepare to achieve that outcome? What qualities do they demonstrate in the process of preparation?

- b. Masks: for example, tribal, half-masks, full masks, body masks, “everyday” masks—free interpretation of a “mask” should be encouraged, as this is a personal response.

Materials:

Part 1: garden canes—2ft–5ft (0.5m–1.5 m)

Part 2: large paper bags of the same colour and make (big enough to go over a head), a set of neutral masks, miscellaneous objects

Part 3: a set of expressive or character masks; a collection of hats; costume accessories (oversized or small items are good for comedy); miscellaneous objects, music of different moods

Mask-making materials:

- paper bag masks—large paper bags, scissors, marker pens (preparation time: 5–10 mins)
- junk masks—variety of recyclable rubbish, for example, cardboard boxes, plastic pots, tubes, string, bottle tops; masking tape; scissors; PVA glue (preparation time: 30 min–1 hour)
- brown paper tape masks—1–2 rolls brown packing tape, gummed on one side, primer paint and coloured paints for design (preparation time: 3 hrs)

Part 1: Physical preparation

These exercises are about developing the performer through the use of masks. They focus on the need of the performer to be open, playful, responsive, willing to explore and to truthfully connect with an audience. The students’ creation of their own masked character will mark the culmination of the project. This first phase is about laying the foundation for mask work, a process of discovery and preparation.

Key words: play; developing awareness; self-discovery; body; mind; spirit; fitness; energy; joy; balance; connection; coordination; precision; communication; trust; openness; individual; ensemble; building skills; creating possibilities

Journal exercise

Over the course of the project **write down** a key word in the middle of a page, draw lines from it and jot down how this word is explored in practice in a workshop.

What games or exercises did you do? Was it individual or group work? How did you feel? Is the word a stimulus or an outcome? How are these key words linked to each other? What role does “play” have in generating communication, trust and openness?

Draw shapes, figures, diagrams that **map** the way you put one or more of these words in action.

Try to **reflect and capture** in your own way the dynamics of movement, interaction, space and the shapes made in your practical exercises.

Exercises for energizing and sensitizing the group

Using this statement as a starting point, invite the group to play and respond to each other and the rules of the games:

To be brave and open requires a sentient and responsive body free from the limitations imposed by self consciousness or fear.

Dymphna Callery, *Through the Body*

- **Inhabiting the space: developing 360 degree awareness**

Walk with purpose about the space, fill in gaps, weave between people, look ahead not at the floor. When I clap I want you to stop. (CLAP) Feel the stillness. Breathe. When I clap I want you to go. (CLAP) Look for spaces to fill. Listen. (CLAP) Stop. (CLAP) Go. (CLAP) Stop. (CLAP) Go.

Now when you hear the clap to stop, look for someone and hold their gaze. Keep this eye contact. (CLAP) When you hear the clap to go, start to move but maintain eye contact across the space. Listen. When you hear the clap, stop and change partner. Make new eye contact. (CLAP) We will repeat this a few times.

To develop this, try it with the teacher not clapping and the group sensing together the moment to **stop**, make eye contact and **go**.

- **Bomb & shield**

Without revealing who it is you choose someone in the space to be your “bomb”. Your aim is to keep as much distance as possible between you and your “bomb” and continue moving about the space.

How do the dynamics of the space change?

Now, choose a “shield”, without revealing who it is, you need to keep your “shield” between you and your “bomb”. Keep moving. I will count down from 10–0, when I get to 0 I want you all to freeze.

How are people positioned? Who’s in range of their “bomb”? Who’s got their “shield” in between them?

Replay this exercise adding a situation that demands a particular type of behaviour or code of conduct, in addition to the “bomb and shield” rules of the exercise—for example, in an art gallery, a museum, at a party, or while ballroom dancing. It’s important for them to stick to the rules, but to also let the ridiculousness of the opposing demands be played out. Introduce the idea of an audience. Ask them to play the game to the audience. What happens when it all gets too much—the “bomb”, the “shield” and the ballroom dancing? Ask them to “report” to the audience by playing to them.

- **Copy cat**

This is an exercise in “doing” nothing, observation and copying. The group gets into a circle. Instruct them to “do nothing” but observe a person across the circle from you and copy anything they do. This can also be done by giving everyone their own secret instruction note, once they are in the circle, with everyone thinking they have their own set of rules to follow. This can increase anticipation and alertness.

Let the exercise run. When the game rules become apparent to the group, ask them to reflect on the change in the way that they begin to play.

Do they respond to being copied? Do they try to do less and become invisible? Does everyone end up doing the same thing? Does the game need to grow outside of the circle?

- **Partner copy cat**

Find a partner. One of you will initiate, the other will copy whatever their partner does in the space and however they do it. Start simply. Little gestures. Initiators, you are taking your partners on a journey. Play. Try out variations in tempo, levels, shapes in the space, ways of travelling. Copy Cats try following at different distances, up close and from far away. Keep eye contact. Try out stillness. Sit together. Watch others. Switch. Swap roles. Play more. Keep switching.

Which role do you prefer? Initiating or copying?

- **Freestyle copy cat**

Using the whole space, you may choose any other person to copy or you may choose to initiate something yourself. Play. Rest. Run. Roll. Slide. Dance. Be still. Be an observer. Be free.

Reflection: Relate your own and others' experience playing the practical games/exercises. How do they affect you? How do they affect the group? In what ways do they free you and make you more open?

If you were a director, what other games/exercises might you invite your company of performers to play?

Try out a couple.

Exercises for developing awareness and complicité

These exercises develop individual flexibility and sensitivity.

Sharing research Share the images and ideas you have collected in relation to the **preparation homework task**. Draw out key qualities and attitudes that are vital to successful training and preparation.

Link Make reference to Jacques Lecoq's beginnings in sport and how he carried over the techniques for training athletes into training actors during the postwar period in France. (Lecoq, Jacques *The Moving Body* (Methuen, 2000), Pp 3–13)

Using the following quotation as a starting point, the teacher takes the students through the following sequence of exercises. They are encouraged to move away from "everyday" movements that rely predominantly on hands and face. The students should be pushed to connect with every inch of their body and explore these movements.

Suppleness, flexibility and sensitivity are the key aims for actors. Peter Brook points out that it is easy to be sensitive in the fingers and the face, but the actor needs to be sensitive throughout the body, constantly in contact with every inch of it. Sensitivity begets precision. And stage movement requires definition and clarity.

Dymphna Callery, *Through the Body*

These deceptively simple exercises have the potential to develop a performer's awareness on the two levels by encouraging them to reflect **inwards** (feeling/sensation) and to observe the movement from the **outside** (body image/audience perception/how it looks). This is the "dialogue" that exists when a performer wears a mask. Developing understanding and articulation of the inner experience and the outer appearance of a performance is useful for mask training.

The exercises can all be supplemented by the teacher's own exercises used to develop and to enhance balance, stance and sense of weight.

Articulations and isolations: feeling how each part moves

Find your neutral stance. Stand. Centred. Relaxed. Upright. Move through the different planes of movement with your head and neck. Side to side, up, down, circle rotations, inclinations. Always move through neutral to arrive at the next position.

How does each position feel? How far can you safely extend the movements beyond "everyday" gestures?

Being able to move the head and neck clearly and with definition is vital for successful mask work. These simple differentiations in head/neck movements are often what bring a mask to life.

Make a sequence of movements over two, then four, then six counts. Move precisely on each count. It is OK if this feels mechanical at first, you are breaking down the movements. You are not deciding to look at the cat up in the tree, but the movements you make may suggest that is what you are doing. Begin with the mechanics of the movements. Then let imagination/interpretation follow.

Start moving about the space in neutral. Play. Stop. Go. This time each **stop** should be followed by a head turn and a look. Then on **go**, move in the direction of the look. The head and the eyes are leading the movement. Each head turn and departure should be crisp and purposeful, not ambiguous or sloppy.

Giving focus: Look see

The group divides into performers (A) and observers (B).

A performance area is decided upon. Make sure there are at least three metres between the front of the performance space and the audience so the entire body of any performer is visible to the audience. Any closer and you lose the feet of the performer in one frame of vision.

Group B observe what looks effective, where they feel drawn in, where focus is clear.

Group A move about the space. This time seek out places in the space to focus on, for example, cracks on the ceiling, pins on a noticeboard, lines in the floor, corners of the room (avoid the point of focus always being at head height, play with levels and angles). When someone finds something of particular interest, point to it and move towards it, led by the head, neck and extended arm/finger. The rest of the performers rush to follow so that a group forms around the point of focus. Imagine eyes in the body. You are looking attentively with every part of you.

Now follow this sequence of actions: look at the point of focus (POF). Look at each other. Look back at the POF. Look at the audience. Register the audience. Share the look. Let them return the gaze.

The performer who initiated the sequence should now move off back into the space and the group break up.

Repeat this with different people initiating, looking at different things.

Repeat the exercise with Group B as performers and Group A as observers.

Share observations and discuss: *What draws the audience in? What happens if movements aren't clear or precise? What happens if the whole body isn't engaged in the looking?*

Discovering the space: "Ecoute le baton!"

Materials: 5ft (1.5 metre) canes per pair, music (optional)

Inspiration:

To start from silence and calm. That is the very first point. An actor must know how to be silent, to listen, to answer, to remain motionless, to start a gesture, follow through with it, come back to motionlessness and silence, with all the shadings and half tones that these actions imply.

Jaques Copeau (1970) "Notes on the Actor", trans. Harold J. Salemsen, in Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy (eds) *Actors on Acting* (New York: Crown Publishers, Pp 216–25)

This exercise derives from Claire Heggen, co-founder of the Decroux-inspired French mime and physical theatre company, Theatre Du Mouvement (www.theatredumouvement.com). She taught this exercise in French, using physical demonstration to guide students through each stage. The only words she would use were "Ecoute le baton!" meaning "Listen to the stick!" The "baton" is the coach, it leads the performer, taking them out of their usual physical comfort zone.

The purpose of the exercise is to extend the performers' sense of physical space, to go beyond everyday movements, to discover their capacity to utilize 360 degrees of movement, to explore tempo and rhythm. It helps them to learn to capture a dynamic of movement in stillness, by exploring the "space" between the beginning and the end of a movement or gesture. It integrates the idea of the inner and outside eye.

It begins as a solo exercise and is then developed into pairs work to create complicité and reciprocity between performers:

Find your own space. Hold the baton between your thumb and your index or middle finger. Begin moving it to and fro. Get a sense of its weight. Focus on the baton. Now begin to let the baton move you. Let it "describe" the space around you; let it take you to the outer limits of the space **around** your body. It leads you in all directions, it stretches your body, it pushes you to move every part of your body, not just your arms, it reaches behind you, through your legs, down to the floor, up to the sky. Just follow the baton. Your body is plastic, continually morphing and changing. It moves quickly through space, it moves slowly, it accelerates and decelerates at different intervals. It freezes in space, but never just at the beginning or end of a sequence. Invite stillness.

What does it feel like to be held in the middle of a movement? How are your muscles working? What is the dynamic of the movement?

Continue moving being led by the baton, now you take your focus away from the baton and your own space and make eye contact with someone else across the space. Your focus moves between the baton and your partner. You do not move towards each other, the connection is with the eyes.

How does this affect the quality of your movements? What emotions emerge? Does a relationship start to emerge?

Now work with a partner.

Imagine the two batons are magnetic. They pull you towards your partner. Maintaining eye contact, let the batons fall to the floor. Notice the sound. Pick up the longer baton that has been placed between you. Rest the tip of the baton between your and your partner's middle finger. Begin moving it between you, as before let the baton lead you both. Listen to it. Explore the space around you. Explore tempo, rhythm, stillness, shapes.

Devise a series of between four and six movements that flow together as a sequence. You need to have a clear beginning and end. Acknowledge the audience at the end.

The pairs show sequences to each other. They reflect on what shapes emerged and what drew the audience in.

They then repeat the sequence with their partner, this time without the baton but making sure that they maintain an equal distance between each other.

Again they show these to each other and discuss or reflect in their journal on the following questions: *Do any narratives begin to emerge? What "relationships" are suggested through the shapes, dynamics and tempos of each sequence? How can complicité between partners be recognized?*

The group sequence

This is an opportunity for students interested in direction to try "conducting"—shaping material that has been created to compose a group sequence.

The teacher appoints a "conductor". The "conductor" brings each pair into the space to begin their sequence and then takes them out. The conductor explores the composition of moving stage pictures. More than one pair can be in the space at any one time.

Journal reflection

In their journal the students are asked to reflect on the way they have practically explored the following statement:

the actor needs to be sensitive throughout the body, constantly in contact with every inch of it. Sensitivity begets precision. And stage movement requires definition and clarity.

Dymphna Callery, *Through the Body*

Part 2: Training with the neutral mask

Key words: neutrality; economy; simplicity; presence; rejecting limiting habits; masking/unmasking; physical/emotional integration; space; awareness; state of discovery; readiness; openness; receptiveness

Sources and quotations: as stimuli for written work and to assist performers to be able to articulate what they are practically/physically exploring within a theoretical and historical context

Link to: journal, research investigation, independent project portfolio

The neutral mask is a way of understanding performance, not a way of performing.

Sears Eldredge and Hollis Huston "Actor Training in the Neutral Mask" in Philip Zarilli (ed.) *Acting (Re) Considered* (Routledge, 1995) p 127

When placed on the face [it] should enable one to experience a state of neutrality prior to action, a state of receptiveness to everything around us, with no inner conflict... When a student has experienced this neutral starting point his body will be freed, like a blank page on which drama can be inscribed.

Jacques Lecoq, in *The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre*, David Bradby (trans.) (Methuen, 2000) p 36

The student must look for the condition of neutrality within himself. Since bodies are unique, each person's neutrality is his own: there is no single pattern... The student must examine his self-use, because neutral action is performed as if for the first time.

Sears Eldredge and Hollis Huston "Actor Training in the Neutral Mask" in Philip Zarilli (ed.) *Acting (Re) Considered* (Routledge, 1995) Pp 124-6

Preparation

Research the origins of the neutral mask (by artistes such as Jaques Copeau) and recent developments in actor training (Jacques Lecoq).

Why was the neutral mask developed, for what purpose?

How is it used as a "learning instrument"?

What do you understand a neutral state to be?

Exercises in neutrality and energized stillness

Materials: a set of neutral masks

Clothing: black base clothing is most effective with neutral mask work, giving focus to the mask and body shapes.

Space: try to work in a neutral, uncluttered space. Cover noticeboards with blacks, providing a clean backdrop for the masks to work against.

- **Adopt a neutral stance**

Place feet parallel, legs slightly apart with knees slightly bent, hands by the hips, fingers relaxed and pointing to the floor, eyes look forward to a point in the distance, weight is slightly forward, more on the toes than on the heels.

- **Balancing a cane**

Materials: one cane per person

Place a cane horizontally on the top of your head. Find its balancing point. Walk about the space. Be aware of those around you. Find a rhythm. Be conscious of being neutral. If the cane wobbles try looking at the tip of it as a point of focus. Try stopping still. Find a balancing point.

- **Walking in neutral**

Remove the cane and walk about the space, maintaining the sense of balance and equilibrium. Come to rest. Find your neutral stance.

Find a partner. Help them to achieve a neutral stance. If necessary, gently manipulate parts of the body that are out of alignment. Is one shoulder higher than the other? Are they relaxed? How can they correct their stance? Take it in turns to walk and to observe. The physical effect should be a state that is poised and ready for action.

Discovering the basic rules of mask-work: the brown paper bag

Learning by doing **and** observing is very important in mask work. This exercise sets up a way of working and learning together as a company. It relies on feedback from the “audience” to help find what are the most effective gestures or moments. Dymphna Callery talks about the emergence of “consensus” and how a group can just sense what works and what does not. This is an essential part of the process of creating an ensemble and a common vocabulary for devising theatre, especially mask theatre.

Materials: a brown paper bag, large enough to go over a person’s head

Rules: keep the mask facing the audience; keep gestures and movements slow to make them more effective; keep hands away from the mask

Give the students the rules. A volunteer sits in a chair, facing the rest of the group. They sit in a neutral stance with their back firmly against the back of the chair, feet flat and parallel on the floor, hands resting on knees, head upright with eyes looking forwards.

Once they are comfortable, place the bag over their head. Wait, then ask them to raise an arm slowly and to point it in any direction and then to return their hand to their knee.

What does the group observe about the power of this gesture?

Ask the volunteer to raise their arm again and point in the direction of the group and hold the gesture.

How is the quality of this gesture different from before? Is it more threatening?

Remove the bag before discussing and analysing what happened.

Cut two eye holes in the bag and repeat the exercise with a new volunteer.

How is it different? What do you notice about the eyes? Does the mask appear to be looking more directly at us?

Introduce the following technique that demonstrates the idea of the mask’s “gaze”. They move the head slowly from right to left, as if the eye of the mask is at the end of the nose. The chin should naturally be lifted.

With other volunteers explore **simple** gestures that suggest or project different emotions and states of being, for example, joy, despair, desire, hunger. The focus is on simplicity and economy of movement.

How is the idea of joy, despair and so on conveyed through the body?

Which gestures are effective? How can “despair” be projected without the wringing of hands? How is the exercise not about acting?

Introducing the neutral mask

A volunteer takes the mask and with their back to the group takes in the features, lets their face relax, then puts on the mask. They make sure they are comfortable and in a neutral stance, breathing regularly. Slowly they turn 180 degrees to face the group. First the head, then the neck, then the shoulders, followed by the chest, the pelvis and the feet. The spectators observe the stance of the body and may suggest adjustments to bring it into balance and alignment.

In the neutral mask the wearers may not appear to be themselves. Ask the group to observe their “presence”.

What is the effect?

The volunteer turns back slowly, leaving the head until last.

Repeat with everyone trying this exercise.

This exercise is then developed by asking a volunteer to put on the mask and turn as before. Only this time they imagine they are walking through a mist, that they then come out of the mist and see the sea. A variation may be to walk through a dark forest and to then come to a clearing where they can see the sun.

Ask the students in each instance to focus on becoming the elements—the sea, the mist, the light—not of showing or acting them. It is about exploring the state of becoming what you see, as if for the first time.

How can you encompass the volume of the sea in a gesture?

Exploring an object and capturing the innocent state of discovery

Materials: three identical, malleable objects—for example, newspaper, plastic bag, cloth

Invite three volunteers to lie down on their sides at the back of the “performance” space, with their backs to the spectators. Place each object on the floor, in line with each volunteer, between them and the spectators. Ask them to put on their masks. Ask them to imagine they have been asleep for a very long time and that they do not have any memory. When they hear a clap they wake up and slowly turn 180 degrees. Their only instruction is to explore whatever they find on the floor as if they are encountering it for the first time. As with the previous exercise the emphasis is on being in the moment, moving with precision, simplicity and economy of gestures. It is about the discovery of the object, not demonstration of what the object is to the audience. When each mask is ready to stop they return to their sleeping positions and remove their masks.

The spectators are asked to observe particular performers, noting moments of effectiveness and truthfulness.

What were the “magic” moments for the spectators? How did the performers feel about encountering the objects? Were there challenges or blocks? How does what the spectators “see” relate to what the performers “feel” in this exercise?

Journal reflection: How does your own experience as a performer and as a spectator relate to this statement?

“The neutral mask can lead an actor to reject his habitual identifications in favour of a deeper, simpler understanding of his powers of expression.” Philip Zarilli

Part 3: Creating a mask character and scenarios

Key words: character/expressive masks; developing a physical vocabulary; improvisation; spontaneity; creating a character; relationships; eye contact; stage dynamics; scenarios; audience

Sources and quotations: these are stimuli for research and reflection.

The performer who wears an expressive mask reaches an essential dimension of dramatic playing, involving the whole body, and experiences an emotional and expressive intensity, which... will become a permanent point of reference for the actor.

Jacques Lecoq *The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre*, David Bradby (trans.)
(Methuen, 2000) p 53

In masked performance, gestures are expanded or reduced and the eyes, so important in psychological playing, are replaced by the head and the hands, which assume great significance.

(*Ibid.* p 60)

Homework feedback: create a wall of images and words that describe what individuals in the group have researched about masks. Discuss the choice of images and what a “mask” is in different contexts, cultures, times and traditions. Link this to the “Theatre in the world” component.

Charging the mask

Materials: Either acquire or make a set of full, expressive masks. Make available a selection of costumes, hats, objects for the students to play with.

Following the same rules of use as the neutral mask, a volunteer turns and faces the group. With the expressive mask, however, the body is responding to the “character” of the mask and needs to be in contact with the audience, sharing every movement, glance, and discovery with them.

With “coaching” from the teacher the volunteer explores gestures and ways of moving with the mask. The emphasis is still on simplicity, economy and truthfulness.

Spectators are asked to provide feedback.

What gestures are effective? When is the mask most alive? When does it “die”?

Each performer finds a mask that “speaks” to them and goes through the process of “charging” the mask with life. They begin to discover the physical repertoire of the mask—the way it moves, walks, rests, sits and how it engages with the audience.

Replay the exercise and ask the performers to try to discover the opposite of what the mask appears to suggest. This is called the **counter mask**. For instance, the grumpy old man mask may also be a mask that is naughty and wild, one that has a secret side that loves to dance like Elvis. Or the low-status servant mask may also have the characteristics of discernment and refinement.

Being able to perform using both levels—the mask and counter mask—gives depth to the mask character and provides the performer with more interesting possibilities for devising a character and mask scenarios.

The students now replay the object discovery exercise used with the neutral masks. This time the instruction is that each mask must continually “report” to the audience, that is share each discovery, feeling, failure, frustration and celebration with them. To begin with each mask works as if alone. The audience can see all three masks, but the masks themselves are unaware of each other.

Discovering the other masks

On a signal the masks are invited to notice the other masks in the space. They may begin to interact and play with each other. An improvisation with the objects emerges.

What kind of dynamics come into play? What happens if the masks stop “reporting” to the audience?

The challenge is simultaneously to keep the relationship with the audience, to give focus to the objects and to know when to give focus to the other masks in the space.

Spectators observe and feed back—when does the scene “die”? What happens when a mask shares with the audience? Which masks relate well to each other? What kind of characters and scenarios start to develop?

Developing the capacity to take focus and give focus

Throughout the project performers need to play games and exercises that enable them to know when to take or give focus in improvisations and performance. The use of the whole body, in particular precise head/neck/chest movements to mark shifts in focus, is an important concept for them to learn.

The following exercises help to develop these skills:

- **Group juggling**—catching from and throwing to different people while keeping a set sequence
- **Cat and mouse**—quick and definite switches between being chased (the group as mice) and being the chaser (an individual as a cat)
- **My chair**—two masks (A & B) are on opposite sides of the space. One chair is placed in the centre. The objective for each mask is to sit in the chair. The rules are that only one mask may move at a time and may only make two moves, constantly reporting to the audience. The other mask gives focus. When A completes their two moves, the focus is switched to B and B switches their focus to the audience and makes two moves. The challenge is to stick to the rules of play and achieve the objective. It is an opportunity to explore counter mask, reporting to the audience and to begin to develop a comedic scenario with another mask.

Mask improvisation

The aim of this exercise is to discover the life, character and counter mask of your individual mask; what it does, how it reacts and its particular quirks. In addition, each individual mask will develop relationships with other masks that form the basis of dramatic or comedic scenarios.

In groups of three improvise a meeting of masks, inspired by the title “lost and found”. Choose a location, an active reason for each mask to be there, and decide what each mask wants (that is to say, your motivation). Let the masks play within the chosen context. Make entrances and exits clear. Practice giving and taking focus.

Performance scenarios

- **Personal ads**—ask each student to write a personal advertisement for their chosen mask. Based on their experience of the mask, ask them to try to capture in 100 words the essence of their character and what type of character they might be looking for as a companion. They may give their character a name. They need to “sell” their character but must also remember that masks always strive to be truthful. This may be a homework task.
- **Design costume and props for the mask**—students explore costuming for their masks. What does the mask wear? Does it wear clothes that are too small or too large? Are they a particular colour? Do they have pockets? Does the mask do a particular job (for example, a cleaner or a politician)? Do they dress in the uniform of their job? Might they subvert their “uniform” and dress to their counter mask? What kinds of objects do they use/need? Are they functional or fantastical? What object or item might they have with them that they can use to engage with others, either another mask or the audience (such as a feather duster for a cleaner, a ball of string for a handyman, a briefcase for the politician)?

What potential do the costume and object have for transformation? What are the performance possibilities of the costume? Make sketches or a collage of your designs in your journal and begin to source costume pieces and props.

- **Developing scenarios**—the students share character personal ads and put costume/prop designs up on the wall. They discuss as a group how they might develop the “lost and found” improvisation, costume the masks, add music, create and rehearse new scenarios.
- **Performance**—in small groups of three or four students perform their scenarios to their class.
- **Evaluation**—the teacher leads the students in a discussion evaluating their experiences, their performances and their learning, as well as discussing and critiquing each others work (see under Assessment at the end of this scheme).

Assessment

Journal

Students should maintain writing in their journal throughout the process. The teacher could help with this process by assigning some journal questions. Remember questions that you ask need to be answered through practice and practical research to avoid a purely theoretical approach.

Tasks

- A 30-minute group evaluation/discussion of the project is facilitated by the teacher and recorded on video/DVD. The students then watch this and reflect on how they participated in discussion and the process of evaluation.
- Students create an A3-sized montage of edited entries charting the development process. This could include personal discoveries, records of practical exercises, observations as a spectator, images, written notes, annotations, diagrams, pictures, quotations, and links of practical work with theory.

Theatre in the making

The development of performance/creative skills through three stages: physical preparation, training with a neutral mask and character mask work and scenarios.

Theatre in the world

An essay analysing the importance of progressive stages of preparation for performing with masks. The essay should be inspired by the student’s own experience and discoveries in relation to the theories and practice of at least two mask practitioners or mask companies.

Resources

Mask makers

Tiffany Strawson: 14 Manor Court, South Brent, Devon, TQ10 9RA, Tel: +44 (0) 136473026, e-mail: typt@fuseform.entadsl.com

Trading Faces (Arts), 28 Brick Meadow, Bishops Castle, Shropshire, SY9 5DH Tel: +44 (0) 1588630555 E-mail: admin@tradingfaces.org.uk Web site: www.tradingfaces.org.uk

Trestle Theatre Company, Birch Centre, Hill End Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL4 0RA Tel: +44 (0) 1727 850989

Please note that Trading Faces and Trestle are also performing mask companies and provide educational resources for mask work.

Training

Circomedia Centre for Contemporary Circus and Physical Performance Tel: +44 (0) 117 947 7288
E-mail: info@circomedia.demon.co.uk Web site: www.circomedia.com

Dell'Arte International School of Physical Theatre, P.O Box 816, Blue Lake, CA 95525, USA Tel: +1 707 6685663
E-mail: dellarte@aol.com Web site: www.dellarte.com

Ecole Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq, 57, rue du Faubourg St Denis, 75010, Paris, France

Short courses, articles about contemporary practice in physical theatre in *Total Theatre* magazine

Total Theatre Network, The Power Station, Coronet Street, London N1 6HD Tel +44 (0) 2077297944
E-mail: felicity@totaltheatre.org.uk Web site: www.totaltheatre.org.uk

Books

Callery, Dymphna *Through the Body* (Nick Hern Books, 2001, www.nickhernbooks.co.uk)

Eldredge, Sears & Huston, Hollis "Actor Training in the Neutral Mask" in Zarrilli, Phillip (ed) *Acting (Re) Considered* (Routledge, 1995)

Lecoq, Jacques, *The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre*, Bradby, David (trans.) (Methuen, 2000)

Jessica Naish has diverse international experience as a director, performer and university lecturer. She is currently project director of an alternative creative theatre education programme for teenagers run in a professional theatre. She is a tutor in Masks and Performance at the Baha'i Academy for the Arts UK.

Stage and costume design

Focus

Theatre in the making

Description

This is an exploration of design and the way it influences and enhances the emotional response of an audience as well as inspiring and supporting performers. The students work with a brief to produce a practical and creative design for set and costume. The project culminates in a personal design interpretation of a chosen script that will then form the basis of a design presentation to the class.

Aims

- to encourage the students to explore a variety of research techniques
- to give the students the opportunity to create a personal response to a performance text using set and costume design
- to give the students the understanding of what it means to work within the specific requirements of a design brief
- to develop the students to present ideas and workings to an audience (this could be teacher and peers)

Activities

Part 1: Stimulus and pre-project preparation

- Students begin by researching set and costume design and brainstorm what a set and costume designer needs to consider. They also research into different styles of set, different audience configurations (such as thrust, proscenium, site-specific and traverse) and costume design (abstract, minimalist or naturalistic).
- The students are introduced to *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov.
- Students should, in the form of a journal, demonstrate their initial reactions to the text through a collection of images, textures and words with the intention of exploring these early thoughts further before arriving at a final design for the space. Before reaching a design concept students must show varied forms of research, using both primary and secondary sources.

Design brief

The students are given the following design brief:

“You must develop a conceptual set and costume design for the given text. The performance is to take place within a small studio theatre and you must produce an aesthetic and practical design in this space. The dimensions of this studio are: width 8900 mm, length 1200 mm, height 3100 mm.

The audience may be seated anywhere and in any configuration. The design must pay attention to sightlines.

There are no budget limitations or any technical restrictions (for example, projection, lighting states, sound) so you have the freedom to adopt any style.”

Note: The teacher is free to change the dimensions to reflect an available or pre-existing space.

Part 2: Unitizing

The student begins by **unitizing** the text. This means breaking up the text scene by scene and using a table with vertical columns and the following headings.

Act: number or name

Scene: number or name

Setting: where the scene takes place, time of day

Action: what is happening in the scene

Characters: who is present

Costume: costume references in the text

Set/props: note any set/prop references in the text

Mood: the mood of each scene. This will encourage understanding of the play and an awareness of the action and how it contributes to the atmosphere.

Key words or phrases: anything that the student finds inspiring or important.

Part 3: Research

With the information gathered from initial reactions and unitizing, students must employ an assortment of research techniques to find resources (images, text, sounds, experiences) that reflect the emotions and practical considerations of the text.

Research techniques include:

Books: theatre design, art, history, fashion, photography, interior design

Internet: looking at companies who have previously presented the play, research into period, history of the play, playwright’s background and ideas, country where the play is set, journalistic photography sites to explore the social context of writer and play

Photography: an opportunity for primary research, as students are encouraged to photograph anything that influences and inspires them related to the play

Past experiences: memory of emotions and experiences that connect to the play

Current observations: primary research of objects, people and situations that relate to the play

Theatre visits: inspiration and valuable research of another company’s interpretation of text through design, an insight into personal conclusion of what is effective and ineffective design, a look at different performance spaces

Art galleries: to gain an understanding of modern and classical art and architecture which can inform the design; observation of the art work of different periods of history, new ideas in art, form, colour, texture, the way artists create atmospheres through paint, sculpture and installations

Newspapers and magazines: to find images that capture the essence of the play and characters

Own work: doodles, drawings, charts

The students prepare a portfolio to contain all their research, their initial reactions and the unitizing exercise.

Students now begin to play with all the information, combining influences from the varied research, fusing and distorting ideas, deciding whether to adopt a minimalist, historically accurate, abstract or realistic interpretation of the text. Using this they begin to develop a broad vision and concept of the look of the play that is true to the essence of the play.

Part 4: Life drawing

The focus now changes to body language in order to assist the designer's understanding of movement and the way it enhances and supports a performer's character.

- Students walk around the room and are asked to lead themselves by various body parts—nose, chest, stomach, hips, feet. Note the way that posture and facial expressions that relate to being led by each section gives an indication of a character's qualities, for example, chest leading suggests being proud, stomach leading suggests being sloth-like.
- Discuss the emotions and reactions after each movement.
- Students are divided into pairs. One sculpts the other into a shape that depicts a particular emotion. Discuss how posture and expression could be conveyed through body language and facial expression.
- Students are given no more than five minutes to draw each emotion. This should give students time to capture the essence of the emotions without the complication of worrying about detail.
- Develop this by asking the students to do the same exercise with clothing and costume, examining how clothing shapes a person and how clothing affects movement, emotion and characterization. Record these explorations. Use corsets, jackets, waistcoats to explore restriction, overcoats, heavy and bulky materials to explore mass, and silks and lengths of fabric to explore length and line. This exploration will improve students' understanding of clothing and character.
- The students now combine their knowledge of body and clothing with their chosen vision and concept of the look of the play, information gathered through research and the unitizing exercise to develop costume drawings for each character. The student should pay attention to the requirements of the text to allow for quick and efficient changes of costume for the actors.
- The costume designs may be drawn, collaged, painted or photocopied. They can be graphic or abstract as long as they are clear and can be explained. Students should be encouraged to attempt an assortment of techniques to discover a method for recording the costume design that suits their individual approach and skills. Their task is to capture the distinct characters within the play through their designs.

Part 5: Stage design

Research for stage design must be as thorough as that for costume. It may only take one image to spark an idea, but all avenues must be explored thoroughly so that the designer gains a greater knowledge and understanding of the world of the play and creates a design to support the final concept. Their explorations should be recorded in their journal.

Stage design can be divided into three areas:

- elements of design which create atmosphere
- elements of design which communicate the concepts and emotions of the play
- elements of design and practical considerations determined by the script for the staging of the action.

Students experiment with each of these areas using images, textures, words, colour and shapes, bearing in mind that the aim, above all, is to communicate the world of the play, their interpretation of the script and the design concept designed to elicit an emotional and intellectual response from the audience.

To be able to develop a final stage design, the students now consider: the space, cast numbers, locations within the text, the ideas within the play and their research. The design is not static but fluid, as the play moves from one action to another. Students should work methodically scene by scene, looking at how they can enhance the changing action, space and props of each scene. Students will use their thorough research to decide what style they will adopt and whether the set should be realistic, abstract, minimal and so on. Personal preference is also important and students should be encouraged to be imaginative, express their ideas and taste, as well as considering the practical requirements of the play. The final design should be in the form of drawings, sketches, collage or paintings to show the journey of the space during the play and how it is transformed from scene to scene.

Part 6: Presentation

- When the design is completed each student formally presents their ideas and concept to their peers and teacher using a variety of presentation methods to convey their decisions. They explain their journey from initial research and exploration to final design concept. Students should think creatively about how they will organize and present their material. Students must demonstrate an understanding of the text and the journey they have taken through research that has influenced their final design outcome.
- After the presentation the teacher chairs a discussion with the class, asking questions, offering constructive criticism, querying practicalities, suggesting alternatives and discussing the elements of design in the play.

Assessment

Journal

Students should maintain writing in their journal throughout the process. The teacher could help with this process by assigning some journal questions. Remember questions that you ask need to be answered through practice and practical research to avoid a purely theoretical approach.

Tasks

The students are assessed through:

- a journal, showing a variety of research techniques, into the play, art, design and the text
- a collection of finished designs to be assessed on presentation, the design concept and the required practical considerations
- a presentation and portfolio of material, which explains and illustrates their journey from initial research and exploration to final design concept
- participation in class discussions
- self- and peer evaluation.

Theatre in the making

Students can be graded on how they developed during the exercises that dealt with the acquisition of skills and the practical application of their research in the final designs.

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Developing the collective vision

Focus

Theatre in the making, Theatre in the world

Description

When a group gathers together with the intention of creating a piece of theatre an infinite number of questions hang in the air. However strong the ensemble may be these questions will remain and the director or ensemble leader is the person upon whom the group will rely to answer those questions.

Even if the process begins with a clear idea, the “formless hunch” that Peter Brook speaks of, it still takes time for the director to explore their initial ideas and develop a collective vision for the performers that will eventually be transferred into action.

For a director these early stages are similar to the process of developing a journal for the theatre course. Some initial ideas may be articulated through the collection and presentation of models, sketches, books or photographs in the same way that a visual artist may create a sketch/scrapbook.

Therefore, it is recommended that students think about directing from a variety of perspectives. There are things to be learned not only from writers of plays, but also painters, sculptors, architects, musicians, composers and choreographers and this should be kept in mind when beginning to consider how we might approach creating an original piece of work.

However, it must be remembered that artistic imagery or thoughts will have a different resonance for different people in the same way as when we look at a painting we see it very differently. In the early stages, therefore, it is important to begin by creating a collective vision for the cast that will eventually be communicated by the performer through the physical performance.

The activities are designed to galvanize the ensemble and create a productive working environment for the creation of new and exciting theatre as well as to introduce students to the concept of chorus that could later be developed into an exploration of Classical Greek Theatre.

Aims

- to develop the student’s skills as performers and their ability to apply these skills to the process of creating a performance
- to encourage the use of a range of performance styles and approaches to theatre making with particular emphasis on physical theatre and the physical performer
- to enhance the students’ awareness of the ways in which an audience might engage with a performance
- to explore the process of creating an ensemble with a common vision through chorus work
- to give the students a starting point for exploring Classical Greek Theatre

Activities

Part 1: Towards a common vision

This form of exercise is often used by companies for whom physical action is the chief method of communicating to the audience.

These exercises help to develop a strong sense of ensemble in the early stages of the rehearsal process. The group is able to use their bodies to create a collective vision of a fly moving around the space. Consequently, because of the level of commitment, concentration and focus given to the imaginary fly, an audience would be willing to accept the collective vision.

Exercises

- Each individual holds their right hand in a fist. On a signal, each member of the group opens their fist to reveal an imaginary fly. They then follow their own fly as it buzzes around the space encouraging them to use a variety of levels and speeds. This helps to develop their peripheral vision—an important part of an actor's spatial awareness on stage. Everyone stops when, on a signal, they all catch their flies.
- The group then move into pairs. Now only one of the pair has the fly in their fist. The fly is released and together they follow the fly's journey until it is caught.
- The students are split into small groups of three or four. Again, only one person in the group holds the fly in their fist but when they let go the whole of that group must follow that fly's journey by moving in complete unison around the space until the fly is caught. Eventually this can be tried with the entire group moving together to catch one fly.
- This exercise can be taken a stage further in order to encourage the students to really consider the possibilities for extending the movement of the whole body. The students begin by moving, led by the head, and imagining a bird in the distance. The bird rises vertically and as it does, it is followed with the eyes. As it prepares to swoop down a large lunge backwards is taken keeping the head and eyes focused on the bird. The bird lands on the ground and the head is now close to it with the body in an almost horizontal position (hands can go to the floor for support). Then the bird rises again and flies off in the distance followed this time only by the eyes, head and neck. Try this individually and then as a whole group.

Part 2: The art of self-awareness

The starting point for any performer has to be self-awareness. Society, to a large extent, shapes our physical behaviour. The performer needs to explore ways in which s/he can disconnect with those learned patterns that have become second nature and explore new physical possibilities that develop a more expressive physical language. Fundamental to "disconnection" is the ability to develop an awareness of what the body is doing at any one moment. Breathing is the first step towards this "self-awareness".

Exercises

- The performers begin by standing in a neutral position, eyes closed and listening to their own breath. This will allow the performers to create a mental image of themselves as a lump of clay to mould into whatever shape they need to be.
- They are asked to imagine that the lump of clay has been moulded into a very crude human form. The body has no idea what the limbs are for or how they function. Beginning by concentrating on the head and moving down the body they eventually arrive at the legs and feet where they discover how to travel.
- Ask the students to experiment with ways of travelling, not just putting one foot in front of the other but possibly sliding, moving on the knees or bottom, or on one foot only, constantly wondering what might happen next.
- They try and picture the top half of the body being symmetrical with the bottom half. They imagine that the shoulder joints are similar to the hip joints, the elbows are like knees and the hands are feet. With this in mind, ask them to explore the similarities and differences one at a time. The shoulders and hips should be loose and relaxed. Imagine the elbows are hinges and can only bend in one direction but the limbs can move in many directions. They try different movements.
- Ask them to try to make the feet do the job of the hands; stroke, clap, hold objects. Do the same with the hands, let them lead as the body bends over and walks on all fours.

When we begin to sense that our bodies can do more than we perhaps anticipated, we can begin to use the body as a method of creating meaning through physical communication. It may be worth repeating one exercise after exploring the outcomes of another in order to see if the group can apply this new found “self-awareness” to a group activity. Discuss the differences.

Part 3: Symbolic or recognizable motifs

To assist in the process of communication, the performer must be able to enter into and inhabit the physical world of the play as well as communicate that world for the audience. The creation of an environment on stage is essential to the communication of meaning. This is done not only through the physical presence of the actors, but also by a combination of lighting and sound, music, scenery and props, what might otherwise be described as scenography.

The third exercise combines the idea of a collective vision with the awareness of the physical self and moves into an exploration of the world of the play using this physicality as a method of interpretation and context building. The creation of a cohesive stage environment that combines inanimate staging with the physical presence of the performer can communicate a great deal of meaning to the audience. *The Tragic Story of Oedipus* will be used as a stimulus for a performance as it raises profound questions about human relationships to the gods and to our destinies, but other stories, myths and plays can be used in a similar way. Making some connection between the historical nature of the tragedy and the contemporary audience also becomes a challenge and a voyage of discovery for the students.

The following process explores the role of the chorus and how it is designed to act as the ethical and moral mouthpiece of the audience with, in addition, the responsibility of marking significant moments in the narrative.

Exercises

In this way we can repudiate theatre’s superstition concerning the script and the author’s autocracy. In this way also we will link up with popular, primal theatre sensed and experienced directly by the mind, without language’s distortions and the pitfalls in speech and words.

Antonin Artaud, *Theatre and Its Double*

- Begin by examining the narrative of *The Tragic Story of Oedipus* (see Resources at the end of the section). The narrative structure clearly leads the characters of Oedipus and Jocasta step by step towards fulfilling their final destinies.
- The group as a whole should discuss how they see their vision of the Oracle and create an “ensemble motif” for the Oracle. For example, it might be represented as a pit of snakes. The Oracle is omnipresent and the ensemble should recreate the motif as each proclamation comes true. This structure reinforces the idea of the inescapability of one’s fate—in this sense the structure itself has meaning even without any supporting dialogue.
- The student should then give each of these divisions in the narrative a new title. This use of Brechtian captioning techniques may lead students to research Brecht as a practitioner and also identify techniques that help to define the episodic structure of a piece. Each section can, to some extent, also stand alone.
- The group are asked to use their bodies both individually and collectively to create a montage of physical images visually marking significant moments to guide the audience through the narrative. These movements should be fluid and interesting, finding the body’s maximum potential for expression both emotionally and in terms of physical strength.

Part 4: Focusing the audience's attention using a Chorus

The Chorus always reacts to events and they assist the audience's understanding of the situation by responding in an appropriate manner, enabling the audience to see what the Chorus sees. For example, if you imagine a football match, a horror film or a bullfight, you would be able to ascertain what was happening merely by observing the spectators' reactions.

These exercises provide an excellent vehicle for an ensemble to explore a piece of theatre in a collaborative way.

Exercises

- Divide the class into small groups. Each group experiments with each of the sections in the Oedipus story. For each section the groups create a collective physical response as if they were spectators of the events. They watch one another's ideas and see if the situation the Chorus is responding to is recognizable. The students must find a language to communicate to an audience the dynamics and the emotions of the action and the events depicted.
- The Chorus should begin to develop a collective body of movement that can take on different forms and different groupings, sometimes in unison with and sometimes in opposition to the action, sometimes fragmented and sometimes in harmony as a collective.
- The movements of the Chorus are dictated by emotional responses, but these can be created by using metaphorical or analogous ideas to represent these emotions. For example, for sadness imagine a lump of sugar dissolving in water. With this in mind they are asked to create a journey for the Chorus through the narrative.
- Give each of the sections of the story to a small group and ask them to explore the Chorus's emotional response. Again, allow these responses to materialize into a physical, animated image that then reverts to the original image of the Oracle. Subsequently each image emerges from the Oracle giving the impression that the story is being pre-empted by the Oracle.

Assessment

Journal

Students should maintain writing in their journal throughout the process. The teacher could help with this process by assigning some journal questions. Remember questions that you ask need to be answered through practice and practical research to avoid a purely theoretical approach.

Tasks

- The subject matter as well as the practical exercises suggest areas that offer opportunities for further research into the work of practitioners and historical practices, such as Brecht, Theatre of Cruelty and Classical Greek Theatre.
- Students could research the changing face of the Chorus in Classical Greek Theatre from Aeschylus to Sophocles and Euripides and present their discoveries in a workshop/presentation to the class.
- This can lead to a study of Oedipus as a play text with a presentation of how the student might approach the Chorus.
- Students keep a record of their individual and collective journey, making note of differences and similarities in their journal.
- This work can be developed into choral speaking leading to an assessment of the development of both vocal and physical skills.

Theatre in the making

Students can be graded on how they developed during the exercises that dealt with the acquisition of skills, and the practical application of their explorations.

Theatre in the world

Students can be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of the theatrical tradition of Classical Greek theatre.

Resources

The tragic story of Oedipus

- Disaster is foretold: A son is born to Laius and Jocasta. The Oracle foretells disaster, saying that one day their son will kill his father and marry his mother. Laius and Jocasta send the baby away with orders that it should be killed.
- The child is saved: The servant cannot bring himself to kill the child and so abandons it on the mountain. It is discovered by a shepherd and taken to Corinth. There it is given to King Polybus and his queen who bring him up as their own son. He is named Oedipus.
- Oedipus seeks the Oracle: When he is older, Oedipus consults the Oracle and he is told that he is destined to kill his father and marry his mother. He leaves Corinth to avoid this fate.
- Murder at the place where the roads meet: Approaching Thebes on his travels, Oedipus meets a fellow traveller whose attitude and behaviour annoys him. In anger he kills the man and his servants. This man was Laius, his true father.
- The solving of the riddle: Arriving in Thebes, Oedipus finds a city in disarray—the king is dead and the Sphinx has wreaked havoc on the land. The Sphinx has set a riddle that no one can solve. Oedipus outwits the Sphinx and liberates the city.
- The reward: Oedipus is crowned king as a reward for saving the city and he is given Queen Jocasta's hand in marriage. He marries his mother without either of them realizing that the prophecy has now come true.
- The famine: In time the wrath of the Gods brings famine to the land. The people of Thebes beg Oedipus to help them again and rid the city of this evil. Oedipus consults the Oracle again and he is told that he needs to find out what is polluting the city.
- The Truth: Oedipus begins an investigation to find the murderer of Laius. Eventually the truth is revealed. Jocasta takes her own life and Oedipus blinds himself.

Bibliography

Artaud, Antonin *The Theatre and its Double* (Calder, reprinted 2001)

Brook, Peter *There are No Secrets: Thoughts on Acting and Theatre* (Methuen, 1993)

Howard, Pamela *What is Scenography?* (Routledge, 2002)

Sophocles, *The Three Theban Plays* (Penguin Classics, 2000)

Becky Patterson is a Senior Lecturer in Drama at Manchester Metropolitan University (Department of Education). Her previous incarnations include running a TIE company, being a head of drama in a performing arts school and working as a community arts officer. She also has an MA in performance practice.

Playing with images: an alternative approach to text

Focus

Theatre in the making, Theatre in performance

Description

The integrated nature of this project allows for a multilayered approach to the curriculum. The varied learning opportunities and experiences will be primarily assessed through the journal although some activities will feed directly into the practical performance proposal.

The final outcome will take the form of a performance of pieces from Sam Shepard's *Savage/Love*, which will be directed by the students. A lot of the earlier work in the scheme is teacher-led, introducing students to different ways of approaching the text, filming and editing, using iMovie editing software. The students will use these skills to work independently, directing their own performance piece and taking responsibility for an area of production.

Aims

- to introduce students to different ways of approaching the text
- to give students the opportunity to learn a variety of approaches to directing
- to develop a student's understanding of the collaborative nature of performance
- to help students to develop the technical expertise necessary for performance
- to help students to develop the practical skills of planning and researching
- to offer students the opportunity to respond critically to their own work and that of others
- to give students the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of their aesthetic and practical choices
- to introduce students to filming and editing, using iMovie editing software

Activities

Part 1: Preparation

This section introduces the central concepts of **neutrality**, **ensemble**, and **complicité** through physical exercises. Students will come to a growing awareness of the body and its mechanisms and of the relationship between the physical and the psychic.

This physical training can be developed further by getting the students to look at the theory and practice of Boal, Grotowski and Brook. Some of the exercises can be found described in detail in the books/manuals by Boal and Callery mentioned in the bibliography.

Materials

- CD player
- Music: chill out, dance, trip-hop such as the Kruder & Dorfmeister albums, Groove Armada, Thievery Corporation, De-Phazz

Exercise 1

The following exercises focus on the “demechanizing, de-structuring and dismantling” processes useful for physical-based approaches to performance.

In pairs, A becomes the hypnotizer and B the hypnotized. A holds out the palm of her hand in front of B’s face. B must keep that distance and angle as constant as possible. A’s role is to force B to twist, and contort their body while maintaining balance. A must not try to move in such a way that B finds it impossible, but must try to discern B’s physical limits and encourage B to activate dormant or forgotten muscle groups. After swapping roles a number of variations can be tried. A now controls two partners. These latter must not touch but must find ways of moving such that they maintain the distance between face and hand and avoid each other. While this exercise privileges the physical and intuitive approach to movement, the exercise can also be used as a way in to a unit on the theme of power.

Exercise 2

This is from Boal’s *Games for Actors and Non-actors* and is called “Minimum surface contact”. Individually, members of the group find ways of balancing while maintaining minimum surface contact with the floor. They must continuously shift that point of contact so that every single part of the body is in touch with the floor at some point. Students then work in pairs to find interesting and intuitive ways of doing the same exercise collaboratively. If there is time the group size can be increased. A further movement-oriented variation is to have minimum surface contact between pairs rather than the floor so that two are continuously moving and shifting points of contact. This is sometimes referred to as the **rolling point of contact**.

Exercise 3

This is a useful exercise for making students aware of their own and each other’s limits and preparing for ensemble work. Pairs face each other and lean against each other’s shoulders. They imagine a line between them and push against each other. At the point where A feels she is going to push her partner over the line she eases off so as not to win. Both use as much energy and strength as they can muster. This is a good way of introducing the notion of **energized stillness**.

Part 2: Introducing the text

This section develops from the last part and introduces students to the text.

Material

- Copies of *Absence from Savage/Love* by Sam Shepard
- CD player
- Music: Berg, Messiaen or similar

Exercise 1

The first student makes a shape with their body. The next adds themselves to the previous student with the intention of enclosing a part of the body, say arms around a leg. Each student adds themselves in turn enclosing a different part. Once the group sculpture is formed each student removes herself from the sculpture in turn noting the “holes” left. This is sometimes referred to as “negative space”. The exercise can be repeated, varying shapes and using different levels. Using a piece of music such as a Berg piano sonata or Messiaen’s *Visions de l’amen* students can be given the task to choreograph a short piece using the exercise as stimulus.

Exercise 2

The students are shown the short piece *Absence*. This can be explored using the same exercise, with students experimenting with dividing lines of text or adopting a choral approach. The emphasis is clearly on a physical approach, foregrounding improvisation and impulse rather than literary analysis.

Exercise 3

Discussion of tensions, themes, tone and texture may develop from the initial exercises. At the same time students are asked to find physical equivalents rather than interpretations of the text. Brook and Grotowski are especially interesting for further research into these ideas and higher level students might be asked to do some research or read articles by these practitioners.

Part 3: An alternative approach

The focus of this part is movement and dance as ways of interpreting text through abstraction. The subsequent choreography can be used in the final performance or as a method for working on other parts of the text. It encourages students to explore the elements of dance as approaches to making theatre and enables them to create spatial pathways and relationships. It provides opportunities for students to devise solo, pair and group improvisations using these structures to create and perform a composition using the piece entitled *Salvation* from *Savage/Love*.

Material

- Clear space suitable for movement/dance work
- Copies of *Salvation*
- CD player
- Music for part one such as Groove Armada's *Be careful what you say* from the album *Love Box* or Leftfield's *Black Flute* from *Leftism* which are based on repetition. For the second part of the class Thievery Corporation's *The Cosmic Game* (the tracks *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* or *Doors of Perception*) works well but teachers and students can choose any music they feel is appropriate.

Exercise 1

The class begins with traditional warm-ups or exercises developing work already carried out.

Exercise 2

Students recreate, in movement, a portion of the day before. It might be a routine such as getting up and getting ready for school or may be a school-related sequence of movements. The movements are worked on in an abstracted way, but the movement phrases should be clear and as precise as possible. These movement phrases (no more than 20–30 seconds) are then worked on such that they are made ten times bigger/smaller, faster/slower and so on. This begins the process of abstraction.

Exercise 3

Qualities (sad, happy, angry, excited, dreamy) may now be introduced to change the dynamic of the movement. This can be worked on using samples of dance/electronic music such as those mentioned above.

Exercise 4

Students find a spatial pathway to accompany their movement phrases. They perform the solo pieces at the same time in the same space, repeating the movement sequence until the teacher stops them. The exercise is repeated with variations. These can involve two students at a time or threes and fours. The students observing should look for patterns. Throughout this improvising period the teacher should encourage students to think about re-ordering movement, repeating phrases, inverting the movements or working on alternative planes and varying the pace.

Exercise 5

The group is ready to work on the next phase, which is to improvise as a group. While maintaining spatial pathways, students are encouraged to make contact with others on their journeys by imitating, mirroring,

reassembling others' phrases. This provides a more dynamic and improvised structure to the choreography and a number of motifs will emerge which may be used in the later stages of the work. Students are encouraged to use symmetry and asymmetry in their movements. The teacher may wish to introduce concepts such as balance, harmony, contrast, continuity, sequencing and repetition where relevant.

Exercise 6

After experimenting with such improvised choreography, the teacher introduces the text *Salvation*. Students are encouraged to focus on discovering the physical impulse of words such as "salvation", "being in parts", "wanting", "saved", "grief", "hoping". The search for physical equivalents or motifs for the words rather than narration is encouraged.

Exercise 7

Students can work in pairs for a time using an AB phrase method (that is, two distinct, self-contained sections of movement phrases) of structuring and then ABA where contrast and enhancement is encouraged. Canon and rondo forms (such as ABABAD) can be introduced. Students can create duets, trios and quartets depending on the size of the group. The importance is not for a finished polished product but to establish a possibility for exploring text in a physical way through improvisation within safe structures. That said, teachers may be surprised at the quality of the work produced after only a short time.

Journal

Students should write up their account of the workshop, focusing on the process of abstraction and structured improvisation. They should be encouraged to use key terms used in the lesson. The teacher could prepare a glossary in advance.

Part 4: Introducing digital video

These lessons are designed to introduce digital video for use in a multimedia approach to *Savage/Love*. Students may have knowledge of how to use a digital video camera. The emphasis here is not just on refining the technical skills required. It is also designed to encourage students to reflect on the composition of images for the text and the post-production methods of working with these images. The use of digital video in the production of *Savage/Love* is a way into researching contemporary theatre practices that go beyond traditional narrative methods. This experimental approach to performance work involves new media and the use of a variety of materials and methods different from conventional approaches to theatre making.

The student project is grounded in research on subjects like experimental film and video art, Dada, assemblage, *Fluxus*, kinetic art, conceptual art, performance, digital media and installation.

Students have an opportunity to learn the connections between historical avant-garde theatre, performance art and contemporary approaches to making theatre.

The final performance piece will draw upon the experience learned from all of the workshops.

This part highlights and explores the visual possibilities of a piece of text and allows the students to acquire video production skills that are transferable to other texts and that can also form the basis of a production skill, such as set design.

Material

- At least one mini-DV camera with playback cables to attach to a TV or directly to a computer with video graphics card and editing software. For the purpose of this scheme we will refer in detail to iMovie, the editing software which comes free with Apple computers. The work we are looking at uses a 12 inch iBook and G5s but there are PC equivalents.
- Copies of one of the texts, from *Savage/Love* (for example *Killing*), for each student.
- Short video clips to illustrate the grammar and vocabulary of digital video. These can be easily obtained from the web sites listed (see Resources at the end of the scheme) or from material prepared in advance by the teacher.

Exercise 1

The teacher shows the class a short movie clip or an advert to illustrate the nature of basic camera shots:

Figure 1

The long shot: a wide-angle shot, which establishes scenes such as a place or space where the action takes place (see figure 1).



Figure 2

Medium shots eliminate distraction from the general environment and focus on establishing a focal point. This might be the relationship between characters in the frame (see figure 2). Shots of people tend to be from the waist up, though in the work that follows we want to establish ways of subverting the grammar.



Figure 3

Close-ups reveal detail and may focus on a character's face, revealing emotion, or a movement (see figure 3).



Figure 4i



Figure 4ii

There are intermediate shots, of course, such as the **medium close-up** and the **extreme close-up** (see figures 4i and 4ii). The latter is particularly interesting in the work on *Savage/Love* because such images can have a startling impact in juxtaposition with other images.



Figure 5

Other technical terms should be introduced to describe the way the camera is used. Using examples from movie clips examine the way the **angle** of the camera affects how we see relations between people and objects. Shooting a shot from below a character, for example, may make them seem more menacing while a shot from above may make them appear less daunting. Try to create examples of shots that are made while lying down or standing above the subject (see figure 5).



Camera movement terms should also be introduced, such as **zoom**, which tries to simulate the focus of the human eye. This shot is the one most overused and should be avoided since it tends to suggest tension or animation, often where none exists.

The **pan** and **tilt** are similar shots. Usually using a tripod as a central axis on which the camera is turned to keep a moving subject in the centre of the frame, the pan moves horizontally, while the tilt is a vertical movement. Although there are many other terms and kinds of shots used, these are the basic ones and suffice for the work we are doing.

In groups students should be encouraged to read one of the texts of *Savage/Love* and to find physical equivalents for the text. By asking them to focus on images in line with the previous activity, they are being introduced to narrative in video: Can they “tell the story” of the text in terms of visual images?

They should also do some location scouting, perhaps outside the class time, looking for interesting and appropriate places to film. Working in images also builds a skill that is essential for the practical performance proposal.

Exercise 2

The principles of **storyboarding** should be introduced. There are many examples of templates available to teachers from web sites listed (see the Resources section at the end of the scheme). Essentially, storyboarding is pre-visualizing the scenario through imagining a sequence of images. This can be done with any text and does not need to be literal. It refines a director’s vision and saves time when shooting, which can be a labour-intensive period. Random shooting of images can be interesting, but may also be frustrating at the editing stage. Provided that storyboarding is combined with sensible multi-angle shots and repeated shots of different lengths the principles are sound. Students draw key frames of what they want to shoot. There does not need to be real technical ability here, but there are software programs available for those who wish to become more professional in their approach. Alongside these images are details of the camera shot, the angle, the length of the shot and details of any soundtrack (sound effects, music, narration, text). The soundtrack, most likely, will be added later in the editing lessons. Students then complete the storyboard and agree when to do the shooting. This should be outside the lesson allocation as they may wish to shoot at locations outside of the school premises and at different times of the day.

Storyboard and portfolio

Students will have to construct a storyboard and will have to shoot footage based on the text introduced by the teacher. The footage should be handed to the teacher before the next lesson for him/her to preview. In addition, they will need to consider how the soundtrack will be recorded.

Journal

Students can research the history of video art, Dada, assemblage, *Fluxus*, *arte povera*, kinetic art, conceptual art, performance, digital media and installation. Many physical theatre groups such as DV8 and Théâtre de Complicité use video material in their work.

Questions can be posed such as: *How can a single image tell a story? How does the narrative of the text change with the images? How do the images anchor or relate to the text?*

Part 5: Crash course in video editing

This part introduces students to the basic skills of video editing.

Material

- An Apple computer with iMovie software or equivalent
- A mini-DV camera
- A firewire cable

Exercise

The teacher should upload the footage prior to the lesson but for illustrative purposes should go through the process with the students. Where more resources are available (such as with Apple's Remote desktop software) students can follow the process on their own camera or iBook. The best advice is to follow the series of tutorials that the Apple support team provides online, but for illustrative purposes the main principles are outlined here.

The mini-DV camera is connected to the computer via a firewire cable and iMovie is launched. Once connected, the software detects the camera and the screen will show three areas: the **clip viewer** (with a series of tabs below which allow audio, still pictures, titles and transitions to be added), the **timeline viewer** and the **monitor** with control buttons beneath, similar to that found on a VCR or the camera in VCR mode. Pressing import allows the transfer of the original material to the clip panel. The shots will be split according to how they were originally shot. Once imported, the individual clips can be selected and played out individually in the viewing panel/monitor. These clips are then dragged and dropped into the timeline viewer (see figure 6).



Figure 6

These clips can be reordered into any sequence. The principles of cropping can be introduced whereby clips can be shortened. iMovie comes with an impressive set of transitions such as the **dissolve, fade in/out, push** and **wipes**. These are simply selected and dragged between the clips. It takes a little time for this process to render. The iMovie software comes with a number of special effects such as reversing the direction of the clip or speeding or slowing down the clip. Do realize that this will also affect any soundtrack previously imported. Once the clips have been sequenced and edited with transitions added, any soundtrack can be added. Most Apple computers come with an internal condenser microphone, but an external microphone can be plugged into an audio-in port.

iMovie is fully integrated with iTunes, a music and sound effects cataloguing program that allows any audio file on the computer to be viewed from within iMovie. Audio tracks can be imported like video footage, cropped and edited within the **timeline viewer** and the volume altered (see figure 7).



Figure 7

Once the basic principles are introduced students will need some time to practise. Remember this is an initial demonstration.

The final edited video can now be viewed in full screen mode or exported back to the camera on a new tape. This can be connected to a TV or burned onto a CD-Rom or DVD depending on the computer you are using. For the purposes of this workshop, students should watch in full screen mode and evaluate the success of their work.

Students will need to spend much more time on their own editing of any material they have shot. It should also be recognized that on average, depending on the complexity of the storyboard, it can take about one hour for every minute of final video. This will need to be built into any plans if they intend to use video in their final productions.

Presentation

Students will present the group's footage edited into a final sequence.

Part 6: Focusing on the text

At this point, the students are given a fourth fragment of text from Sam Shepard's *Savage/Love* to look at. The focus of this workshop is vocal delivery of text and identifying "voices" within the piece. It gives the students opportunities for devising of a short group piece, in preparation for the latter stages of the project.

Material

- Clear space, suitable for physical work
- Multimedia projector, laptop and screen (optional)
- Copies of *First Moment* for each student
- A tape recorder and blank tape

Exercises

- **Recap**

Remind the class of the work done on other texts so far, which have highlighted physical aspects and possibilities. Explain that the focus of the lesson is to explore the vocal possibilities in the text.

- **Breathing exercises/Choral hum**

Students lie down and breathe in unison, holding and exhaling as the teacher counts. It is possible to complete the exercise in a formation, with all students resting their heads on each other's stomachs.

Develop exhaling into a humming sound and then into an "ah" sound.

Encourage students to experiment with different pitches and breathing at different times in order to maintain and vary a choral sound.

- **Vocal warm-up**

Facial massage—in pairs, students massage each other's faces.

Consonants—repetition of consonants, mmmmm, mah, nnnnnn, nah, and so on. This can be combined with simple movement around the space and varied in terms of speed, so the pace of delivery matches that of the movement.

- **Word association**

Using specific words from the text such as "post office", "moment", "forever", "lost" and "eyes", the teacher initiates various rounds of word association, where, in a circle, students have to build chains of associated words, focusing on saying the first thing which comes into their heads, triggered by the previous word.

- **Introduction to text**

The text can now either be displayed on an OHP or multimedia projector or copies given out to students.

Text is read and discussed in terms of theme, content and different "voices" which can be identified.

- **Whole group reading**

As a performance task, the group are asked, without preparation, to read the text together, making instant decisions about whether parts should be read chorally or individually, variation in tone and delivery, echoes, repetition and so on.

The students discuss what was effective in the group reading and what didn't work as well.

- **Small group verse work**

Students separate into small groups of three or four and are assigned a part of the text to work on, focusing on identifying "voices" and using vocal delivery of the lines to create meaning and effects. This exercise should last around 10 minutes.

- **Recording**

Once each group has prepared their part, the whole class comes together to record the whole piece.

- **Reflection**

Preferably with the lights out, the group listen to the recording.

This can be followed by a discussion of the choices the students made, changes in mood and tone in the piece and critical evaluation of what was effective and what needed to be developed.

Journal

As a journal task, students could be asked to annotate their own fragment of text, with the decisions they made regarding vocal delivery and a short evaluation as to how and whether it worked dramatically.

Part 7: Decisions

At this stage, the students are introduced to the idea of a group performance of *Savage/Love*, with each student directing a piece and groups taking responsibility for the various production elements. It fosters an appreciation of the different technical requirements used in performance and develops “a knowledge and appreciation of the director’s role in realizing text”.

Material

- Full copies of text of *Savage/Love* for each student
- Production role descriptors for each production area (optional)

Exercises

- **Introduction to project**

Formally introduce students to the idea of a group performance of *Savage/Love*, where each student will direct one piece from the collection and each of them will also work as part of a full production team concentrating on specific production elements, such as lighting, set, filming, costume and sound.

- **Choices**

Give students some time individually to look through the text and decide which piece they would like to direct.

Bring the group together and as a group, make decisions as to who will be directing each piece. It is the teacher’s responsibility at this point to intervene and resolve any difficulties as to who is directing which piece.

- **Casting**

Once the directors have been decided, the casts are chosen. Again, the teacher should oversee this process and intervene if there are any disputes, making sure that the decisions made are practical and workable within the group.

- **Production roles**

Students are now introduced to the different production roles, which need to be fulfilled in order for the project to come together. The following are suggested areas of responsibility:

Publicity/front of house

Set design

Filming

Costume/make-up

Sound

Lighting

Stage management

Depending on the size of the group, these areas could be assigned to small groups or individuals. Students should be encouraged to work on an area they have an interest in. However, for practical reasons, certain roles may have to be assigned to individuals by the teacher.

Ideally, each group or individual should be issued with an outline of their area of responsibility, the kind of tasks they will have to complete and an idea of the schedule they will be working to. A good template for this can be found in *Practical Theater*, edited by Trevor Griffiths.

- **Checking for coherence**

At this point it would be useful to clarify whether the students want a coherent overall treatment of the pieces, in terms of focusing on a particular theme, image or idea which will be carried through the whole performance. Even if this is not the case, they should be reminded to bear in mind that they will have to work with a common staging and set.

Part 8: Treatment

During these periods, each student director will be given time to “pitch” their ideas to the rest of the group, whose responsibility will be to clarify, question and constructively criticize in terms of the artistic and practical nature of each proposal. It encourages students to clarify and order their artistic ideas, making them clear to others. It provides opportunities for students to reflect upon and evaluate both their own proposal and those of their fellow students.

Material

Any resources which students may need to present their ideas—multimedia projector, computer, OHP, whiteboard.

Exercises

- **Introduction**

The teacher should clarify both the format of the lesson and the role of the students in the evaluation of their classmates’ ideas.

Depending on the size of the class, this could be a whole group activity or, with larger numbers, the class could be divided into smaller groups, so the activity will fit the time frame. However, it is important that each student director gets an opportunity to present their ideas and receive feedback from their peers.

- **Pitches**

The students will then take it in turns to pitch their ideas, with the teacher encouraging the class when necessary to question the practical and artistic implications of each proposal. Each student director should take notes based on the suggestions given to them by their fellow students and the teacher.

- **Evaluation**

As a whole group, discuss and evaluate the process itself, with the teacher making direct links between this kind of activity and skills needed to complete the practical performance proposal.

A pitch

Each student director uses the notes they made in class to refine their original treatment and write it up in the form of a 250-word description, accompanied by images, storyboarding or sketches. This piece can be used in the accompanying portfolio of materials. The description and the portfolio link directly to section 1 and section 2 of the practical performance proposal.

Part 9: Rehearsals

During this time period, the students will work as directors and performers on the individual pieces, as well as collaborating within their production groups to prepare technical and design elements for the performance. It highlights the diverse nature of elements that contribute to a performance.

Materials

- if possible, access to more than one rehearsal space
- access to lighting/sound equipment
- computer access for publicity materials
- rehearsal log sheets (see below)

Exercises

- **Production meetings**

Throughout this stage, as well as overseeing rehearsals, it is important that the teacher, as production manager, calls regular meetings to check on the progress of the various production elements.

- **Rehearsals**

To encourage progress and development in rehearsals, all the student directors should be issued with rehearsal log sheets, where they record their aims for each session, decisions taken and action points for later rehearsals. A good template for this can be found in *AQA GCSE Drama* by J Morton et al.

- **Production work**

Time must also be set aside for the students to complete their production work. This will involve liaising with all student directors and keeping to the schedule established in the initial production meeting.

- **Evaluation and feedback**

It might also be helpful at intervals for the student directors to show their work in progress to the rest of the class and for the class to give some constructive feedback, regarding possible changes.

Production log

Throughout this stage all students should be encouraged to keep a production log in their journal. This should be individual in its nature and reflect the student's work in various areas, but the following could be given as suggestions of ways to record rehearsal and production work:

- diary entries
- brainstorming
- rehearsal logs/notes
- storyboarding for video work
- records of meetings
- annotated sketches/diagrams.

Part 10: Final preparations

This time will probably represent the final week of lessons before the performance and is a time for pulling together not just the pieces themselves, but also the production elements, such as publicity, set design, costume, stage management and lighting.

Material

- if possible, performance space itself to work in
- access to lighting/sound equipment
- computer access for publicity materials
- space and materials to construct set
- costumes/make-up

Exercises

- **Production meeting**

It would be best to start this stage with a production meeting, focusing on groups' specific areas of responsibility for the technical and design elements of the production. The teacher, as production manager, would run this meeting and check that appropriate progress has been made in all areas.

- **Schedule**

This is also an opportunity to establish a schedule for the production week, with deadlines being set for particular areas, problems identified and a time for a full dress rehearsal confirmed. It is also important for the students to be clear about what is rehearsal time for individual pieces and what is preparation time for the production—such as set and costume design—so that there is no clash.

- **Final rehearsals**

The rest of the lesson time this week should be devoted to final rehearsals and production preparations, with the teacher overseeing and monitoring progress.

- **Dress rehearsal**

This should preferably be run by the teacher in the performance space, with full technical and design elements in place.

Time should be available after the dress rehearsal to evaluate, discuss and address any problems encountered.

The project

Any ongoing diaries and rehearsal logs should be maintained, though at this stage the focus must be on the practical completion of the project for the deadline, rather than detailed recording of the process, which can be completed post-event.

Part 11: Final performance

Ideally, the performance should be for an outside audience, but an internal production for students is also a valid outcome. As much as possible, students should be given responsibility for all aspects of the event, with the teacher's role being to oversee and troubleshoot.

Material

- Performance space—access to set up and perform
- Access to lighting/sound equipment
- Resources for the final performance are dependent on availability and the nature of the performance decided upon.

The nature of the final performance will inevitably depend upon the resources and space available within the school. If possible, the performance should be recorded by the teacher for purposes of post-production evaluation.

Evaluation

After the performance itself, some time should be devoted to evaluation. Students should be encouraged to watch the performance and comment critically on their own and others' work both in discussion and in their journals.

Some good models for this can be found in *Drama and Theatre Studies at A/AS Level* by Jonathan Neelands and Warwick Dobson. The performance analysis questionnaire (p 224) is a comprehensive approach to analysing a performance. A structured set of guidelines for performance analysis can also be found in Sally Mackie and Simon Cooper's text, *Drama and Theatre Studies* (p 146).

Assessment

Assessment tasks can be determined by the teacher based on the range of activities in each part of this scheme. This could include research, recording of ideas in the journal, practical work, storyboards, organization of time, final production and development of production and performance skills.

Resources

Books

Brook, Peter *The Empty Space* (Penguin, 1990)

Callery, Dymphna *Through the Body* (Nick Hern Books, 2001)

Griffiths, Trevor (ed.) *Practical Theater* (Quarto, 1982)

Grotowski, Jerzy *Towards a Poor Theatre* (Methuen, 1975)

Mackie, Sally, Colin, Cooper, *Drama and Theatre Studies* (Stanley Thornes, 2000)

Morton, J et al *AQA GCSE Drama* (Heinemann, 2001)

Neelands, Jonothan, Dobson, Warwick (eds) *Drama and Theatre Studies at AS/A Level* (Hodder and Stoughton, 2000)

Pogue, David *iMovie 4 & iDVD: The Missing Manual* (O'Reilly Media Inc. 2004)

Shepard, Sam *Savage/Love in Seven Plays* (Bantam, 1984)

Web sites

<http://www.complicite.org>

<http://www.dv8.co.uk>

<http://www.franticassembly.co.uk>

<http://journalism.berkeley.edu/multimedia/course/storyboarding/>

<http://journalism.berkeley.edu/multimedia/tutorials/imovie>

<http://www.apple.com/education/imovie>

<http://atomiclearning.com/imovie3>

Please note: iBook, iMovie and iTunes are trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc, registered in the U.S. and other countries.

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Darren Scully is head of the faculty of creative and practical arts at St Julian's School, Portugal. He co-produced the Get Real! Project with Stephan Jurgens as an international internet-based approach to collaborative performance work. He is vice president of ISTA.

Collective Artistes—Collective theatre making for the world stage

Collective Artistes (CA) is an international black ensemble whose work focuses mainly on plays from and about the African diaspora. Our practice in creating these plays—often devised and scripted as the rehearsals progress—is based in values drawn from many African cultural models, in terms of both performance style and the theoretical interpretation of the theatrical process. But the reason we identify Collective Artistes' work as "African" is likely slightly removed from the "African-ness" perceived by many of its audiences in the UK. The vibrancy of dance and song, the colourful costumes, the richness of set and lighting design, the exuberance of village life portrayed on stage are all aspects of performance that, although based in African traditions, more importantly arise out of a philosophy of work drawn from our experience of African culture: namely, **Community, Collectivity and Inclusion**. The unique practical process that Collective Artistes employs from audition through performance forms the basis of our stage work and allows for the vibrancy of performance often classified as African theatre.

Community

Collective Artistes works through ensemble casting, a process that both serves the plays that we create and nurtures the highest possible quality of work. The community of artists that make up the ensemble is formed both on stage and off through a careful process of company building that continues from auditions throughout the rehearsal and performance process.

There are no one-on-one auditions to cast actors in a particular part. Instead, we hold workshop auditions that include dance, song, improvisation, drumming, and non-specific script reading in order to search for multi-talented performers who will give of their "skills, hearts and spirits generously." Artistic director for Collective Artistes Chuck Mike writes:

It is our belief that these individuals, when chosen will have to exist together for quite some time to come, and therefore given the nature of work which we undertake must not only be able to live together but belong together.

Parts are eventually cast in rehearsal through a series of script readings in which company members alternate parts. This process allows the company to submerge themselves in the text, exploring differing understandings of each character through varied readings while simultaneously distilling for all involved the best players for each role. Early company building plays a major role in forming the ensemble that audiences see on stage and is invaluable in the portrayal of a community of players.

The plays that come out of the African continent are often about groups of people. Although main characters may carry the majority of scripted parts, these characters exist in the context of a larger community that is present even when not scripted. We try to give this community a voice, discovering ways that the ensemble can participate in appropriate scenes—for instance, scenes occurring in the village square. In the Collective Artistes production of *The Lion and The Jewel*, schoolchildren listen in and comment on their schoolteacher, Lakunle's, attempt to woo Sidi, the village beauty. Although not called for in the script, the reactions of these characters—who are carefully developed and given full lives alongside the scripted characters—help to punctuate the scripted scene and provide the audience with a key to interpreting the words on stage. The community portrayed on stage both represents a realistic interpretation of an African village and serves as a practical strategy for translating a cultural text to an audience not necessarily familiar with that culture.

No matter what culture the work originates from, a focus on community in the casting, rehearsal and performance of a play can have the same effect in an educational setting as it has for the Collective Artistes company. A commitment to ensemble work breaks down the hierarchical structure of a theatre that divides players into star actors and extras. Creating an ensemble company can teach young people teamwork skills that extend beyond the limits of the individual production, promoting the value of all participants to the production as a whole and encouraging all involved to participate at the highest level.

Collectivity

Perhaps the most identifiable aspect of African theatre is the integration of several performance methods, including dance, song, drumming, mime, poetry, improvisation, and scripted acting, into the process of storytelling. Although traditional western theatre in the form of Greek comedy and drama incorporated various forms of performance, modern western theatricality often separates these forms so that we often conceive of **theatre** as synonymous with **acting**. Collective Artistes endeavours to break down the barriers between performance methods, conscripting varied performance techniques, styles and talents in the service of bringing a story to life.

Similar to the direction of the ensemble, the inclusion of these performance methods are meticulously planned out to enhance the themes and meanings of the work, and to promote a greater understanding of the play. Traditional African theatricality often breaks the fourth wall to bring an audience into the action, pathos or humour of the performance. Collective Artistes' work often engages this tradition to open up the character's point of view for the audience's understanding. Actors are directed to find moments in which a glance, a gesture thrown to the audience, or simple eye or body focus can let the audience in on the characters' experience. Chuck Mike comments:

A point of view enhanced, a moment of reflection enlarged both of which lead viewers to think further about the action before them is significantly nurtured through these means.

Through this technique, audiences are encouraged to join the family encompassed by the performance. With a glance or a phrase directed to them, audience members are literally cast as villagers or other people present in the world of the play and asked to participate in the interpretation of the world on stage. This technique eliminates the division between the **active** performer and **passive** viewer, and engages the audience in creating—rather than passively accepting—an interpretation of the action on stage.

We often use music, song, dance and drumming with similar effectiveness to engage the audience, highlight the emotional state of the events, and promote the meaning of the scene being played. Subtle song, drumming or movement may underlie dialogue, but when abruptly ended or otherwise manipulated can draw the audience's attention to particular moments or emotional content that may otherwise be missed. In the first act of *The Lion and The Jewel*, a mime portrays the visit of a photographer from Lagos to the distant village of Ilujinle and, among other things, the party that ensues in his honour. The music at the party begins quietly but as the party gets going—and the photographer gets progressively drunker—the music and movement build to an intoxicating whirl of percussion and bodies. Music here is used to clue the audience into the photographer's physical and emotional state—his increasing drunkenness, disorientation and envelopment in the party—and to signal the end of the mime with its heightened climax. Music and dance in this context is more than a snapshot of African ritual or culture; it is a method designed to convey the exhilaration of the characters on stage and to include the audience in the invigorating experience of the scene.

The use of varied performance techniques allows for a wider range of methods for storytelling that can only be an asset for any director. Rather than segregating talent into different realms of performance, Collective Artistes assumes all its performers can participate in these performance methods. Although some performers may be brought into the company as lead drummers, singers or dancers, all participate in these aspects of performance, thus congealing company members into a collective of multi-talented performers.

Inclusion

Collective Artistes views itself as a larger family of which current company members are only a part. In our working practice we aim to include the creative team, producing staff, past company members and friends of the company in a creative space in which all voices can be valued and heard. To that goal, we run open rehearsals in which older company members, other theatre professionals, friends and family make up a preliminary audience. The creative team, including designers, composer, and choreographer, also work within the rehearsal space, allowing the design and performance aspects to influence each other and grow in a mutual direction throughout the rehearsal process. We welcome the insight of all involved in the process and rely on the inclusion of varied viewpoints and interpretations brought to our working method by the equality of voices we promote.

We create a communal sense of working methods and rules of engagement in each new production by focusing at an early stage on the expectations all have for the process. We discuss what encourages us to do our best and what behaviours discourage us. The combined answers to these questions, brought about in an open and fruitful discourse that includes cast, creative team and often Collective Artistes “family members”, become the backbone of our working method. Respect, trust, and playfulness—the space to try new things without worrying about failure—are often noted as important encouragements, while arrogance, negativity, and lack of commitment are often pointed to as sources of discouragement. Through this discourse appropriate behaviour is defined and solidified, and an implicit understanding of each person’s responsibility to support the rest of the company is born. By including the voices of the entire team we promote the ownership of the production by all involved with the aim of securing the commitment of all participants in the creation of high quality art.

Although Collective Artistes often focuses on work from Africa, we take great pains to form an inclusive practice that invites the participation of diverse traditions, practitioners and audiences into the experience of collective theatre making. We promote an acknowledgment of the diversity within the black communities by working with Africans from all over the continent, black Britons of all origins and African-Americans, as well as welcoming practitioners from non-black backgrounds committed to celebrating the work in a communal and generous environment. As Chuck Mike writes:

Our work, of course, is Black and we see this as a state of immediate condition. Our work is about people and this we see as our link to sharing what we do and feel about ourselves—our condition—with others. It is hoped that our work crosses the boundary of diversity and extends onto the plateau of humanity, serving community and nation with a desire to explore and assess our daily condition.

Conclusion

The aspects of Collective Artistes’ work that I have set out above—community, collectivity and inclusion—are closely linked to African culture and theatrical traditions, but are not limited to the performance of African plays or stories. We hope that teachers, educational workers and other practitioners can incorporate the lessons we’ve drawn from African theatre into a theatricality that crosses cultural borders. In the workshops that run alongside our professional tours, we often ask participants to incorporate the theatrical methods learned in the workshop—songs, dance, drumming and improvisation—into short pieces that originate from their own lives, their own experiences. Our goal in these workshops—as in our performances—is not only to teach an understanding of a foreign culture but also to present a series of tools that will invigorate participants’ understanding of storytelling and allow them to re-imagine their own lives in an inclusive and communal context.

We expect our practice and performance to embolden and empower our company and our audiences to investigate themselves as well as others, and to discover within people and cultures seemingly distinct from themselves a core humanity. We believe that this compelling connection between actor and character, between audience and player, is best served with all the tools of storytelling at our disposal and with an open and generous heart to the possibilities of human understanding.

Collective Artistes' productions

The Lion and The Jewel by Wole Soyinka, a co-production with the Young Vic and Barbican BITE:05. Performed at the Barbican Pit and UK tour (2005)

Trojan Women—Women of Owu by Femi Osofisan. Performed at Chipping Norton Theatre and UK tour (2004)

Sense of Belonging by Chuck Mike with the original Performance Studio Workshop Company. Performed at Arcola Theatre, London (2003) and for the Commonwealth Games at The Green Room, Manchester (2002)

Yerma adapted from the Lorca by Biyi Bandele. Performed at Chipping Norton Theatre, UK tour, and for the British Council at the Edinburgh Festival (2001)

Things Fall Apart adapted from Chinua Achebe's novel by Biyi Bandele. Performed at The London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT) and UK and International tour (2001)

Education work is a core part of Collective Artistes' programme. Through it we hope that young people will gain a wider understanding of theatre, of the specifics of black theatre and of plays coming out of the African diaspora. In turn we anticipate that our educational activities—both independent projects and workshops based around our touring productions—will impact on the practitioners and audiences of the future.

Bibliography

Soyinka, Wole *The Lion and The Jewel* (Oxford University Press, 1962)

The Lion and The Jewel Resource Pack available by visiting <http://www.collectiveartistes.co.uk> (under Past Productions) or at <http://www.collectiveartistes.co.uk/pages/download.html>.

Collective Artistes is an international black ensemble based in London and focused mainly on works from the African diaspora.

Victoria Shaskan is Collective Artistes' education director, responsible for promoting the techniques, history and culture of African theatre in the community. This article has been co-written by Victoria Shaskan and Collective Artistes.

RASA—Theatre of the personal

Culture

RASA was formed in 1998 by myself (Rani Moorthy), a writer and performer, joined by producer Ed Higginson and video director Arthur Smith. The company develops and produces new narrative drama that explores complex cultural, social and political issues and shows that every personal story, cultural ritual or unfamiliar history has a universal resonance. Drawing on art forms from South Asia and South-East Asia, as well as using western influences, RASA creates theatre that aims to achieve a dynamic relationship between performer and audience, developing a “culture of links”.

For the third culture is the culture of links. It is a force that can counterbalance the fragmentation of our world.

Peter Brook, *The Shifting Point* (Chapter IX Entering another World—The Culture of Links)

Peter Brook proposed the concept of culture as being distinctly threefold: culture of state, culture of the personal and, the most significant for me, the culture of links.

I am culturally diverse—Sri Lankan Tamil in ancestry, Malaysian in nationality, South-East Asian and South Asian in terms of cultural influence and now, I make theatre in Britain. I find my obsession and exploration of my own journey (physical, psychological, geographical, and so on) connects with the journey of my ancestors and gives me my inspiration. And that journey has been complex.

I grew up in a post-independence Malaysia that was struggling not only to find its national identity, but also to subsume the many diverse races that made up the country. The artistic explorations were entwined with the process of decolonization.

When we were engaged in the theatre of our colonial masters we were aware of differences even in our own homeland. We were constantly having to assert our cultural identity and understand areas in our life that were in the realm of personal culture—in my case my Tamil upbringing, Tamil language, Hindu religion, Sanskrit rituals and chanting, and Bollywood. The English-language theatre was dominated by the English canon and it was common to have an Indian actress playing Lady Bracknell, a Chinese Earnest and a Malay Cecily in a Malaysian production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. For me the choice of what language to use on stage, not to mention what imaginative and metaphorical connections I could make, was essentially an involved one. I remember a time in the 70s when using Manglish (Malaysian English) and Singlish (Singapore English) would elicit laughter in the theatre even in highly tragic contexts, just because of the novelty of hearing local idioms and sounds on stage for the first time. There was also an awareness of the culture of the state, that there was a national identity that involved each race asserting the culture of their motherland—in my case the culture of South India which involved learning an Indian classical instrument, the *veena*, and learning Indian dance, Baratha Natyam. Much of these state-sanctioned cultural activities were depoliticized, tourist oriented and sat comfortably in tenuous democracies, in a region that had to unify diverse peoples.

Thematically, there was a lot of control and much censorship. There were “sensitive” areas that we could not explore. The fear of work being banned and even imprisonment were real challenges to artistic freedom. But within my own home and family I had to contend with the added subtlety of being a Tamil from war-torn Jaffna in Sri Lanka, the land of my ancestors. This was my personal culture and was often not shared with even my Malay, Chinese and Indian friends. So in my own homeland, Malaysia, I had a complicated relationship between state-imposed culture and my own personal culture. Learning to live as an artist in this very particular environment has given me the tools that have enabled me to transcend the challenges of moving to Britain and working as a theatre practitioner.

Exploring the personal

It has slowly dawned on me that my artistic expression has, by necessity, been an exploration of the personal. I set up my company RASA in 1998 with the conviction that every personal story, unfamiliar history and cultural ritual has universal resonance. *Rasa* means emotion in Tamil, taste or feeling in Malay and is the essence of all art in Indian theatre.

So what do I create as my first production in Britain in front of an audience unfamiliar with where I come from and what I am about? A deeply autobiographical one-woman show/play about Hindu rituals entitled *Pooja*. It would not have occurred to me to create *Pooja* back in Malaysia. My reasons for choosing to do this piece were twofold and this reasoning then informed all of RASA work thus far.

The first reason for doing a deeply personal piece of theatre was that it expressed, through art, the truth of my physical, psychological and emotional distance from both my motherlands, Malaysia and Sri Lanka.

The second reason was that the themes I was exploring in *Pooja* were relevant and contemporaneous to both the second-generation British Asian experience and also the experience of other immigrant cultures. I used Hindu ritual as a metaphor that exposed the structures that immigrant communities used in order to exert control over their lives and the lives of their children. This very direct style of storytelling combined metaphor, allegory and mythology and enabled a British audience to draw parallels with their own life. Fear of losing one's culture drives immigrant communities to dogma. This bold theme in *Pooja* makes it still relevant today, six years after I first performed it and it is still a much requested production in my repertoire.

The second RASA production took me back to Malaysia to collaborate with a Malaysian theatre company and to use Malaysian art forms in the production. *Manchester United and the Malay Warrior* was a piece created for the 2002 Commonwealth Games held in Manchester. The main impetus in this play was the use of the Malaysian legend of Hang Tuah (our equivalent of the Arthurian myth) and, to juxtapose it, the ethos of ancient warriors with that of the modern "warriors"—the global phenomenon of Manchester United. I used the Malay martial art of *silat* and the court theatre tradition of *bangsawan* not in an essentialist, reductive way but in a way that was theatrically analogous to hip-hop and the computer game culture, which we also used in the play. The piece had all the elements of a quest but delved into areas that I now recognize as my thematic obsessions: the exploration of otherness, colonialism both past and present and the power of history to inform the future.

Dancing within Walls focused on the history of Indian classical dance, from being the highly revered spiritual art form, to its decline due to loss of Indian patronage and Victorian morality, and then its subsequent revival. This gave me an epic canvas upon which to explore the state of the "colonized mind". My identification with the historical icon Rukmini Devi Arundale allowed me to examine the concept of artistic appropriation. Rukmini revived the ancient Indian dance by actually fusing western balletic techniques with ancient movements. She brought "respectability" to the art form by replacing sensual moves and moods with rigid lines and an emphasis on the divine. There is still continuous debate that goes on about whether or not, in reviving a dying art form, Rukmini Devi essentially sanitized it and stripped it of its true spirit. I extended the debate in the play by showing the two kinds of dance. By setting dance and karnatic music within the drama, I was allowing the audience to "experience" the debate and form their own judgment. The play also evokes a theme that I often return to, that of racism within a race. The issues of caste and skin colour which I briefly touch upon in *Pooja* return here with the concomitant irony and pathos.

In *Curry Tales* I explore the South Asian diaspora and the very British phenomenon of the nation's favourite food. Thematically I am exploring familiar ground, but from a refreshing and totally theatrical angle. I was fascinated with the idea of cooking on stage, but also sharing the food with the audience while sharing stories. Each character I play cooks while a story, a moment, a history, a life is being shared. The theatre is filled with the smells and tastes of curry. Aesthetically I wanted to reveal the stories through a Tamil style of theatre called Kuthu. This stems from the ancient form of storytelling that demands an immediate connection with the audience. I mingle, touch and invite members of the audience to taste and also

comment on what they are experiencing. I connect with a character and then, in a way, force this character on an unsuspecting member of the audience. With very few exceptions, most people rise to the occasion and we extend and intensify the performer-audience relationship. This manner of co-opting the audience into the storytelling can be demanding on both performer and audience, but the reward is a very dynamic and organic process, based firmly on the format of the script but with a flexibility that allows the audience to be complicit in the storytelling. As with my other one-woman show *Pooja*, I play a range of characters, but this time without the biographical thread to unite them. I am constantly pushing myself to retain the integrity of each character and, like any other business on stage, the cooking must never draw attention to itself except when needed at dramatic points in the play.

Exploring the personal

In my art I return to the most fundamental aspects of theatre—good storytelling—though I also feel I can use technology, like digital video and computer animation, to extend the narrative. This is what sustains me during the time and effort put into research and development, scouring every aspect of my life for inspiration, the hard graft of rewriting, honing and refining.

Inspiration is a mysterious thing and often comes from:

- a combination of observations about the world around me
- the connections I make between an idea that strikes me and the way it affirms and/or challenges my perceptions
- the separations or apparent contradictions between the interiority of my perceptions and everything outside my immediate experience.

So with *Curry Tales*, I started with the phenomenon of curry being Britain’s favourite food. That was the initial observation. Then I connected this contemporary fact about British eating habits with my perception of food as social and political history, how western travel through the centuries contributed to the evolution of this sauce that is South Asian but owes so much to the colonial legacy (the Portuguese, for example, introduced chillies to India). My perception about food being essentially a joyful, sensuous experience was tempered by the fact that when I started thinking about cooking and cooks. I realized the essential loneliness of it, and the extent to which cooking and writing are metaphors for isolation and apartness.

The research in *Curry Tales* took me to South India and my birthplace Malaysia. The reason for this, apart from the obvious need to see, film and observe different types of curry-cooking and placing this in a specific cultural context, was also to study a style of theatre that I wanted to explore—Kuthu, which is a Tamil style of storytelling. It can loosely be called “street theatre” and, apart from elaborate mask-like make-up and costume, there is very little by way of set and props. There is also no sense of a stage except the “Empty Space”, where the audience and performer are at the same level physically and psychologically.

For *Curry Tales* that was so intimate and interactive and, with the very act of cooking and feeding the audience, it was necessary for me to break the fourth wall and speak directly to the audience. I knew I had to find the “kuthu” in my work rather than try to compress years of training in one month of research, so I went to the kathakali theatre in Kerala and kuthu theatres in Chennai and Kanchipuram to observe practitioners and listen and search for anything that would strike a chord in me. This kind of research is very instinctive and when you are open to the experience can actually be rewarding to the work.

The research directly inspired one character who is based on a slum dweller who was cooking a simple curry in a wood stove outside her hut. This was her only meal for the day but because we were photographing her, she insisted on sharing it with us and would not take no for an answer. Generosity is not the monopoly of the rich. I created this character and she gave me the courage to take the risk of performing the whole scene in Tamil, which only a handful of the British audience can understand. But it is one of my most successful creations.

Collaboration

Theatre is a people-oriented endeavour. I have to remind myself of this constantly and always hone and listen to my instincts about work and people. So choice of director and designer is crucial to the realization of my vision. For a director, my producer and I look for someone whose work we admire, who does not necessarily do similar work to RASA but has an affinity with the ethos of RASA. We look for boldness and a distinctive point of view because that is what we want in the final production. In design we look for someone who can read the script and make us visualize something that never occurred to us at all. In *Curry Tales*, for example, there is a kitchen counter that swings out in six possible angles so that each cook/character has a different kitchen. I also feel that the spirit of research that I find in writing and creating the work extends into the rehearsal and production process. This is so important in creating work informed by so many diverse cultures. I want to be working with people who are as dedicated to cultural specificities as I am, so that no one is solely relying on me for reference but are in fact challenging me with informed alternatives, judgments and choices.

My dedication is primarily to find a personal connection, then to eke out the submerged or lost relationships between self and the world, and to transform this into a unique and fulfilling theatre experience.

Bibliography

Brook, Peter *The Shifting Point* (Methuen, 1987)

Rani Moorthy is an actress and writer. She is artistic director of RASA, the theatre company she set up in 1998. RASA has toured nationally and internationally.

An artistic director speaks: starting points and living notebooks

The editor (ED) interviews Phil Clark (PC), artistic director of the Sherman Theatre, Cardiff, Wales on his process and work.

ED: What is your starting point when you begin to direct a production?

PC: Oh, everything starts with the text for me. First thing I do is I read the text and then I brainstorm on one sheet of paper all the things that I think that the play is about. So there's a brainstorm of all these words in front of me. I then look through these and find the ones that interest me. I suppose that at this stage what I am beginning to deal with is **interpretation**. Because whatever the text is, you can interpret it in a number of different ways. I try to find the angles that interest me and try to discover what the text is saying and what I want to say with the text. That will often be determined by my objectives for the target audience. If it's a play for adults you can be wider in your objectives, but if I am working for young people I might want to narrow it down so I want to just explore three words that have come out of a brainstorm. I then look at these words and I start to deal with the brainstorming, dividing it into main ideas, first ideas, secondary ideas and so on. I don't exclude anything but I start to prioritize. The starting point is always the material.

ED: And what do you then do in terms of research? How do you get to the next step?

PC: How do I get to the next step? I also visually brainstorm. So I brainstorm with words but I will then brainstorm with images. So the next thing that I will probably do is go through magazines, books and—personally—I always start with certain artists. I can almost always tell you the artist that has influenced me for each production. I like to work visually. This creates a different sort of language for me. Often a richer language as it is not as restrictive as words. So I will lay out images and start to explore those images and see where they sit alongside the words in the original brainstorm. Having done that, I have started the first stage of research, visually and with language. My research always depends on the play. When I did Aesop's fables I read everything I could find about Aesop, everything about the fables, commentaries, essays, all of that. I research the writer and try to figure out what makes that writer tick. I suppose that the process that I am interested in at the beginning is the process of opening doors. And opening as many doors as I possibly can so that I lay myself vulnerable and open to influence. By opening doors, ideas will then start to enter and inhabit my brain. And I will respond to these ideas and start making connections between the research, the brainstorming and the images and the ideas that have come through the open door.

ED: Could you tell us a little more of how you are influenced by and use visual art?

PC: Just to explore this a little further I will expand on the design process of *All's Fair*, and explain how works of art influenced lighting, scenery and movement in these productions. Frank Vickery's play *All's Fair* is set in the Rhondda Valley of South Wales during the Second World War. South Wales had been a large target for the enemy, as much of the economy of Britain relied on the industries of South Wales. There was heavy bombing in South Wales, predominantly in Swansea, where the complete heart of the city had been devastated. Devastation became a strong theme within my production. I was interested in how people survived, living through devastation. When working on the design with Jane Linz Roberts, the designer of the show, we decided to spend time talking about these ideas. The next day I went to Tate Modern in London. I came across a room that housed one sculpture—*Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* by sculptor Cornelia Parker. She had taken a garden shed with all its contents and asked the British Army to blow it up—which they had done. Parker then collected every part of the debris and reconstructed the moment of explosion by suspending all the objects around one single light bulb. The effect this had was to examine the shattering of a moment through suspension and shadow. Having experienced the sculpture for a good

four hours at the Tate, I spent time talking to the designer who indeed then spent time with the sculpture herself. The play is set in a terrace house in the Rhondda Valley in south-west Wales in 1939/40. Therefore we are talking about a two-up, two-down house with a lean-to scullery, no bathroom, but a tin bath hung in the back yard and a pantry under the stairs. There were so many facets of the sculpture that influenced that actual final stage set. For instance, when the single bulb was switched on in the pantry under the stairs on the set, the reflections resembled the shattering of the sculpture. Apart from an emotional response to the sculpture being similar to the emotional life of the play, we began to see how the pieces of art became a common and shared language throughout the complete process of staging the play. The colours, shadows, use of light, the single light bulb, the darkness.

Light, of course, was essential to survival and at night the lack of light was also a safety measure. "Put that light out" (last line of the play). Parker's sculpture became the dominant image for my discussion with the designer and lighting designer (to see an image of Cornelia Parker's *Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View* please go to www.tate.org.uk/colddarkmatter).

For *Unprotected Sex* (same production team) I had described the play as an assault course of emotions. I had therefore asked the designers to construct an assault course based on the images of the artist Patrick Heron whose paintings had reminded me of camouflage with humanity and colour bursting to escape (to see a collection of Patrick Heron's paintings please go to www.tate.org.uk).

None of my work exists or is created in isolation. I am interested in the politics of the situation as much as I am interested in the aesthetics of the work. There is no doubt that painting, sculpture, installation, photography and so on play an important part within the creation of a piece of theatre. I am always determined to find images that can become a shared language, but I also know that my visual art education at school played an enormous part in influencing the way I use art within my work today.

ED: I have seen three of your productions and they have all been very different in terms of how they have been performed. Where does the style come from?

PC: It comes from sharing that initial brainstorming with the actors, the designers, the writers and the musical directors in order to find a shared language for all the artistic team. I am **not** interested in prescriptive direction. I suppose that I like to open up the ideas and be open to the influences of the other artists in the team. So the designer might say, "Why don't we develop this idea?" We might then go down a dead end but this process is about opening up the play for the other artists as if it is a new piece of writing. There's an old-fashioned concept that it's entirely the director's vision. But there is no point having a vision if it is not shared by the whole of the artistic and production team. It has to also be shared with the actors who have to own the concept. After all, they are the people that have to go on stage and communicate it to an audience. I can always tell you when a group of actors do not own the process and the conceptual thinking behind the piece. They learn lines and miss the furniture. And I am not interested in that sort of theatre. I am interested in the collaborative ownership of the performance concept.

ED: What happens in rehearsal?

PC: The rehearsal room for me is a living notebook. I like to get everything on the wall during rehearsals.

I often use art-based exercises encouraging actors to find means of expression within the drama using the basic elements of art, line, form, colour, shape and texture. I, at times, will ask actors to draw the shape of a scene or the line of the emotion or the texture of the relationships. Such lateral thinking in the rehearsal room can liberate new and exciting thoughts and endless possibilities for dramatic interpretation. The rehearsal room is about invention at all levels. Consequently quite often at the end of the rehearsal period my rehearsal room is completely covered with paintings, drawings, charts, brainstorming sheets, and so on. Often there is an enormous burden on the actor to carry everything in their mind and physical persona, there is no way that you can avoid this in theatre but the walls of the rehearsal rooms can be a living notebook of ideas and influences—a sort of bible of resources peculiar to the production that the actor can refer to physically on a daily basis. A valuable living resource. I also get actors to draw and paint,

draw around themselves, draw the shape of their character, put the words in the shape of the character, explore both the positive and negative sides of the character through images and words, and we place these words and images on drawings of the character, examining where they belong—the character’s brain or heart or feet. Then we start to analyse ways in which the character inhabits the world of the play. I am interested in creating a room that is full of ideas. Because when you do get stuck in the rehearsal room, which quite often happens, you can then refer to the walls and think, hang on, I had forgotten about this! That’s why the notebook and the living notebook are such important records and crucial to the process. They act as an aide-memoire and a way to share ideas. I think there is also a danger that certain actors work very privately so you don’t quite know what they are up to. So by creating a shared language and making it part of the working environment you discover how an actor works. I am not being prescriptive and telling them how to work, I am asking them to **share** their brain, to share their heart and their vision. Because only through this shared vision can you get to the heart of ensemble work.

ED: What, for you, is the value of the director’s notebook?

PC: Most of what I record in my notebooks are starting points and these transform through energy into what we call process. Theatre is so ephemeral and it’s all over and done with and gone so quickly. But ideas, I think, stay in an artist’s brain for a number of years. The journal is a point of reference, for me to go back and remember things. I know that you can video a show and all that but how do you record process? And I suppose my notebooks are about looking at process. It becomes my own personal encyclopedia. I go: that’s a great thing that we did on that show, why don’t we do that on this one? It just gives me a prompt, a background.

ED: Can you give us a very brief idea behind your adaptation of Oscar Wilde’s *The Selfish Giant*?

PC: I wanted to do *The Selfish Giant* because I think the concept of selfishness is a really fascinating one for 3–7-year-olds. I think that we are living in a selfish world. You see 5, 6, 7-year-olds already going onto computers and working alone and not in groups. I’m also interested in the concept of ownership. “This is mine, this belongs to me.” At the time I was working on it, it was just after the tsunami where you suddenly saw thousands of people that had suddenly lost everything. It didn’t matter if you were a king or a pauper, a banker or a worker. People suddenly lost everything. Within that moment concepts of how we live became important. So when I read *The Selfish Giant* I wanted to look at the concept of selfishness and the sharing of the **heart**. How do you share the heart? And how do you share in a way that is equal? The play for me also looks at the adult, who was the Selfish Giant, and how he becomes the victim of selfishness. So I wanted to create a play where young people—children—question the adult’s selfishness.

ED: The piece is quite environmental and also very much about the natural world. The audience experience this through the way that you changed the performance space into an environment.

PC: I think that we emotionally relate to a lot of things environmentally—when we walk into exhibitions, when we walk into churches, temples, museums, parks. We have an emotional response to the world in which we live. One of the things in Oscar Wilde’s story is a strong sense of the seasons. I started thinking of the feelings I associated with the seasons; the warmth or the cold, the growth of spring and the dying of autumn. They are all concepts that interested me. I think that what I was interested in was trying to create a world where the audience would actually come in and emotionally relate to being part of the environment. The reason for this was the strong concept of selfishness in the story. The Giant owns the garden and has a strong sense of ownership of his garden. The children trespass into what he owns. I wanted the audience to feel as if they too were trespassing into adult selfishness. And by physically putting them into the role of trespassers in the piece, you give the audience a way to understand the concept emotionally. So when the three children in the play are caught by the Giant for trespassing, the whole audience is caught as trespassers. You live the drama of the piece because you are at the centre of the drama physically and emotionally.

Most Recent Productions

Merlin and the Cave of Dreams by Charles Way, Sherman Theatre Co, Autumn 2005

The Selfish Giant by Oscar Wilde, adapted by Phil Clark, Sherman Theatre Co, Autumn 2005 and tour

Waves in the Chatroom by DJ Britton, Sherman Theatre Co, Spring 2005 and tour

The Laramie Project by Moises Kaufman, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Spring 2005

One Dark Night by Mike Kenny, Sherman Theatre Co and Theatre Centre, Autumn 2004 and tour

Danny the Champion of the World by Roald Dahl, adapted by David Wood, Sherman Theatre Co, Autumn 2004 and tour

Caitlin by Mike Kenny, Sherman Theatre Co, Summer 2004 and tour

Phil Clark is Artistic Director of the Sherman Theatre, Cardiff's only producing theatre. He specializes in producing a wide range of theatrical productions for young audiences.

Ways to use the inspirations

The purpose of the inspirations is to inspire the teacher to develop their own schemes of work, as well as to give the students an insight into professional practice from artists who use global influences.

Below are some exercises and some suggestions that can be adapted and used with the “Inspirations” or with any other articles/interviews on theatre. They are presented to be altered, adapted and reinvented to suit the purposes of the teacher and the students.

The outcome of all the exercises should be recorded in the journal in some way, together with the title, date, author and source of all articles.

Reading the article

Aim

- to read the articles carefully and to hear what is being read

Exercises

The students read the articles:

- alone in class or as homework, keeping notes in their journals
- in small groups, reading around the group
- as a whole class, changing reader every time a punctuation mark is reached
- as a whole class with the text divided and given to small groups/pairs who read their particular section as a chorus.

Identifying the information

Aim

- to identify and mark key words, phrases, practitioners and concepts in the journal for further research and exploration

Exercises

The students read the articles and:

- mark what they consider to be important or interesting words and phrases in colour (using any of the above strategies)
- create a glossary of terms in their journal
- build spider diagrams of key words/phrases in their journal, in order to clarify and identify links
- draw links between the articles and areas of the theatre course
- create a flow chart of the article, showing how main ideas are developed and linked
- create a storyboard or cartoon strip of the key information and concepts.

From information to knowledge

Aim

- to validate and extend the information in order to develop their knowledge

Exercises

The students read the articles and:

- use a web search engine to explore the artists, the companies, the concepts and ideas in the article in order to develop new perspectives and gather new information
- use the new information as a starting point for a web “treasure hunt”, that is, as one web page of information is found, choose something on that page to extend the search into another area and so on
- use books and magazines to give meaning or perspective on the new information
- find a synopsis of any play text or an account of any productions mentioned in the articles and illustrate what they reveal about the artist or the company, and why the artist/company writing may have chosen to do them.

The article as a script

Aim

- to understand in a holistic way the new visions and perspectives offered by the articles

Exercises

The students read the articles and:

- break the article into sections and the class into groups. Each group is asked to present their section using actions and key words/phrases from the article.
- if the article has characters (for example, editor or director) cast pairs to block and perform sections
- the group are asked to perform a section with appropriate chosen music
- the group are asked to perform a section with appropriate images
- in pairs/groups the students are asked to present a section with set rules, for example, “you can only use three sentences”
- turn a section into action using the key words/phrases. Develop the physical actions, remove words and add music. Record this physical exploration as shapes and/or images in the journal.

Applying the knowledge

Aim

- to apply any new theatre production or performance processes or concepts described in the article in a practical way

Exercises

- Follow an artist’s process or starting point.

Example 1—*Collective theatre making for the world stage*

Work on a scene from Wole Soyinka’s *The Lion and The Jewel* putting into practice the principles described in the article.

Example 2—*Theatre of the personal*

Create a piece of theatre that uses a traditional theatre practice to present a contemporary issue.

Example 3—*Starting points and living notebooks*

Identify the process described by the artist. Using either a piece of poetry, fairytale, play text or piece of music, work through this process to create a piece of theatre for a younger audience.

Making connections

Aim

- to connect the “inspirations” and the concepts in the material to the IB theatre course and the student’s learning

Exercises

- Write a 250-word summary of the article and create a portfolio of supplementary material to show the ideas, concepts and ways of working of the writers/companies.
- Do an oral presentation on the artist/company and their work using 5–10 images to illustrate their work, processes and ideas.
- Write a research paper further exploring one of the concepts identified in one of the articles.
- Create a chart connecting an article to the theatre course.
- Use one of the concepts in the articles as an inspiration for creating a piece of theatre.
- Develop questions you would like to ask the practitioners.
- Choose any other artist or company and interview them or write an article about them.
- Write an article about your own processes and influences.

Select bibliography

Using the bibliography

The purpose of this bibliography is not to provide a definitive list of resources but rather to offer resources that have been recommended by teachers and theatre practitioners, either for the purpose of this publication or on the online curriculum centre (OCC). It should not be seen as a reading list for the theatre course, nor should a teacher starting the course think that the suggested resources are an essential part of the course.

This bibliography represents a multitude of choices and the realization that there may be more than one way to view one's art and one's world. The bibliography, rather, represents a myriad of pathways and the start of an endless line of signposts to discovery. For each of the many resources mentioned here, there are countless others in libraries, on the World Wide Web, in books, in theatres, museums, galleries and in the countless experiences and imaginations of those artists and craftspeople who work with theatre.

This list may provide a starting point or an inspiration for a teacher wishing to create new schemes of work or it may be used as a resource for students who are interested in researching a particular area; it may be the starting point for a theatre library or a resource to develop the students' skills for selecting and critiquing sources.

Resources specific to the schemes of work and the articles in this publication are featured at the end of each scheme and article.

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The following have worked on the articles related to teaching the course:

Nick Connolly is director of studies at Worth School in England. He has run theatre programmes in South America and Europe and was deputy chief examiner of theatre arts for the IBO between 2000 and 2005.

Richard Harvey has been a teacher of media, film, English and drama in secondary and higher education for more than thirty years. He is a senior examiner for OCR and the IBO and is an associate tutor of the *bfi* (British Film Institute).

Dr Ksenija Horvat is a Croatian-born playwright and dramaturg who currently lectures in world drama and dramaturgy at the School of Drama and Creative Industries, Queen Margaret University College in Scotland.

Michael J Pasternak has been involved in theatre and international education for over thirty years as chairperson of the performing arts department at the La Châtaigneraie campus of the International School of Geneva. He was formerly president of ISTA and is currently deputy chief examiner of theatre for the IBO.

