

# Examiners' Report June 2014

## GCE Drama 6DR04 01

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## Introduction

Full details of the requirements for this unit are published in the specification, available to download from the Edexcel website, along with supporting materials across all four units. In unit 4, candidates sit an examination during which they respond to focus questions around the chosen text for Sections A and B and the live theatre experience for section C.

The choice of text for Sections A and B remain the same for the life of the specification - **Lysistrata** or **Doctor Faustus** or **Woyzeck** - and candidates respond to the chosen text from the viewpoint of a director preparing a production of the play.

Section A is about rehearsal with an extract from the chosen text to focus responses, and Section B is about bringing the text to life for an audience in performance. Both sections are supported by annotated copies of the text, prepared through structured workshop activities instigated within centres.

For Section C, candidates respond to a **live production** of a play originally written and performed in one of the other stated time periods for this unit - see page 48 of the specification. Candidates view the production as an informed member of the audience and need to recognise the historical context of the original performance of the play in order to access the higher levels of marks in the examination. **For the life of this specification 'live' means live and the expectation is that candidates will evaluate the experience as a member of an audience sharing the same space as the performers.**

**Historical Context** is a key feature of this unit - indeed, of the specification - particularly with reference to responses in Section B and Section C. Candidates who are not able to demonstrate an accurate understanding of the historical context of the text explored or of the live production seen will not be able to access the higher levels in the mark scheme, particularly Levels 4 and 5.

In this series, more than any other to date, examiners reported a significant number of historical references that were inaccurate. Not only does the candidate have to be able to integrate an understanding of original performance conditions in responses, but also this original performance conditions referencing must also be accurate as far as we can reasonably be expected to know.

As stated in all previous reports, there is an expectation from examiners that candidates have prepared for the examination. Candidates must take into the examination room annotated copies of the chosen text to support Section A and B responses and Research Notes to support Section C responses. The demands of the unit, therefore, are around candidates responding to the specifics of the question, designed to help them to focus their answers, rather than offering a generalised overview based too closely on the the materials that have been pre-prepared. The published mark scheme indicates where examiners must make decisions around responses that read too much as if they have been lifted too much from the notes candidates have with them. It is a difficult balance for centres - too much supporting material could result in too much copying in the examination; too little will not be useful or meaningful for candidates. For further information about 'annotation' there are FAQs on the Edexcel website that cover all aspects of the specification and for further unit support there will be a series of online feedback sessions available from the autumn term.

In this series of the examination, there is clear evidence that a large number of candidates has been well-prepared for the demands of this unit, particularly when looking for evidence of connecting to the historical context and concepts in Section B that actually make both artistic and historical sense. The popularity of texts has, for the first time in the life of the specification, shifted with **Woyzeck** slightly more popular than **Lysistrata** and **Doctor Faustus** proving to be by far the least popular choice - but often the most successfully answered! Further and specific details are included in the body of this report but examiners have reported the following in this series:

**Woyzeck.** Centres are reminded that Section B is about candidates in the role of director exploring a 21st century interpretation of the text, not presenting ideas for a 'new play' based on the original. There was clear evidence in this series of candidates having taken influence from Punchdrunk's 'The Drowned Man' - not in itself an inappropriate thing to do - but then, in the same way as Punchdrunk did, creating a whole new experience based on Buchner's play, not, as the specification requires, offering ideas for a production of the original. There were interesting and well-considered responses that demonstrated an understanding of the original performance context in response to the chosen question but, alongside each one of these there was also the response that wanted to place the performance 'in a supermarket because people understand supermarkets and, instead of Woyzeck stabbing Marie and disappearing with her into the lake, they would be carried off on the checkout conveyer belt'. Another example of a candidate not fully appreciating the theatrical experience had the audience strapped in to remote controlled seats that could be elevated at speed at the flick of a switch and when reaching a great height would flip back to a horizontal position to alienate the audience and make them feel alarmed and afraid. Examiners reported that the most successful responses were often the most straight forward, driven by a clear relevant concept, with the Point, Evidence Explain approach proving successful for many.

**Lysistrata.** As stated in previous reports, there is little merit in exploring this text through a concept that conjures up rival schools (typically boys versus girls), a thinly-veiled re-imagining of 'Grease', the Olympics, rival football teams or, setting it in various time periods in the past -including Medieval England - that the 'audience can relate to'. 'Chicago in the roaring twenties' seemed popular this year, with some responses in this vein more successful than others. Gang warfare in London - and Los Angeles - also provided mixed opportunities for candidates who often appeared to struggle with the bigger picture of the production. There were numerous variations on conflicts past and present from around the world, including Russia and Ukraine, Syria and, closer to home, the Scottish Referendum. One of the more unusual concepts was based on Question Time but, having stated this, the candidate did appear to struggle to justify the performance in relation to the original - both past and present. It is one thing for candidates to clearly state the when and the why; it is another thing for them to carry this through with well-researched and accurate details in their response. The 'Carry on Cowboy' concept seemed popular this year but, quite often these responses showed a distinct lack of understanding of the original performance context and the purpose of the play as we understand it. As a number of candidates did note, this play is not 'just a sex comedy'. There is a real political purpose in Aristophanes' writing and any analysis of the script will detect quite clearly, references to war, money and sex, but in almost equal measure. The play and its purpose are much bigger than a large number of candidates seem to have given it credit for - which is, of course, why it has been chosen as a suitable text for this level of study. Examiners report that there seems to have been an increase in this series of candidates offering responses to this text that fail to demonstrate an understanding of its historical purpose. The most successful responses were often the most straight forward, driven by a clear, relevant concept, with the Point, Evidence, Explain approach proving successful for many.

**Doctor Faustus.** This text was the least popular of the three but it was, as reported by examiners, often treated with the most respect in terms of referencing its historical context in relation to the chosen question. Some concepts struggled to convince - Faustus as the 'Head Boy of a public school', for example - whilst others took major themes of the original and successfully transposed them on to a hedonistic 21st century society. Faustus in various interpretations took on various guises but, overall, there were clear connecting examples that demonstrated an understanding of the purpose of a production that would engage a 21st century audience. Often candidates looked at site-specific productions with religious buildings providing them with an opportunity to reinforce the divine elements of the play for their twenty-first century audience. The most successful responses were often the most straight forward, driven by a clear relevant concept, with the Point, Evidence, Explain approach proving successful for many.

For all three texts the vast majority of candidates offered updated contexts for productions and, with a few notable exceptions, these were successfully explored in the responses and offered opportunities for candidates to make the necessary connections and to access the higher levels of marks.

**In Section A**, across all three texts, examiners reported a mixed response this year, with candidates struggling to engage with the demands of the questions in relation to the given extract. There was, in many cases, a real sense of the 'prepared techniques' from centres that had to be applied to the question, no matter what it was specifically looking for. There appeared to be a lack of understanding of the purpose of rehearsal from some candidates - sending actors out to get drunk in order to explore the relationship between the two Athenians, for example, or 'having my actors watching other performances to see how it is done' - with responses apparently lifted straight from the annotated texts without due reference to the specific demands of the question. Examiners reported an increase this year in candidates repeating techniques across the section. Whilst there is nothing in the specification to say that this cannot be done, what it did in reality was give the impression that knowledge of the rehearsal process was limited and formulaic. The most popular techniques across all texts this series appear to have been: Animalisation, Status Cards and Bamboo Canes. Some candidates, it is reported from examiners, were not able to convince that the chosen techniques/methods/strategies were appropriate for the response. Worryingly, examiners reported an increase in candidates writing about performance, not rehearsal for part c) of Section A. It is clear in the specification and in previous reports that Section A is about rehearsal, not performance, but for a large number of candidates the 10 marks for this question were lost because they wrote about performance, not rehearsal. Examiners reported that b) overall was the most successfully answered part to this question, possibly because it uses the phrase 'rehearsal techniques'. Centres are reminded that candidates must be made aware that the whole of Section A is focused on rehearsal and marks are awarded on this basis.

**In Section B**, across all three texts where candidates were not able to access marks above Level 3, this was primarily due to there being no connection made in the response to the play's original performance context. Due to this requirement not being met, even though there were a lot of highly imaginative responses that were challenging theatrically and responding to the demands of the question they were unable to access the higher levels of marks.

The pairing of questions in Section B followed the same pattern as in all previous series. One question asks for candidates to develop ideas around a specific aspect of their production - in this case actors in two central roles - while the other question has more of an overview and enables candidates to choose the focus of the response - in this case around production methods used. In this series, the overview question was by far the more popular choice for candidates across all three texts. For both questions examiners reported instances of candidates presenting the 'prepared answer, taken directly from their annotated scripts', with little reference to the actual demands of the question. In some cases, not only was there the 'prepared answer' but, also, the 'prepared centre answer' where almost identical phrasing, expressions and examples were offered across a number of responses from the centre. Whilst there is nothing to stop centres having the same concept, in reality this appears to have inhibited candidates in a number of cases and, in presenting over-rehearsed responses, they were often unable to move their responses into the higher levels of the mark bands.

Another specific feature of this series noted by examiners was of candidates presenting clear examples from their production ideas - key moments - but then not framing these within an overall concept, leaving examiners struggling to visualise what the production as a whole would do to have the desired impact on the audience. In some cases, the examples were so disjointed that they appeared to be from different productions of the play.

Well-considered and well-structured responses that enabled candidates to access the higher levels of marks in this section were often led by an understanding of the play's original performance context that drove ideas around the proposed production and enabled candidates to justify decisions made. There is no doubt that a strong, relevant concept is key to accessing the higher levels of marks in this section. Candidates need to understand where the text has come from in order to be able to demonstrate where it is going. The section is about a production of the chosen text, it is not about creating an adaptation of it.

**In Section B** there appeared to be an increase this year of candidates wanting to stage their production of the chosen text to resemble as closely as possible the original performance context. This was, in many cases, quite refreshing to see and made the whole process more straight forward for candidates as concepts had 'in-built' references to the play's original performance context. There is nothing in the specification to say that candidates must try to reinvent the wheel as far as a production for a 21st century audience is concerned - we have the wheel; we are just looking for a vehicle to put it on.

**Responses in Section C** were mixed but, overall, stronger than responses in Section B again this series. Where candidates were not able to access the higher levels of marks this was mainly due to them reporting the experience rather than evaluating it, or not offering responses to the question but simply presenting information from their notes. Examiners reported an increase in over-prepared responses that appeared to inhibit candidates when addressing the specific question and, like for Section B, examples of the 'centre response' where exactly the same phrases, examples, quotes and references were made by all of the candidates from the centre.

Where responses were considered, balanced and responding to the question, however, offering clear opinions as an informed member of the audience, candidates were able to access Level 4 or Level 5 in the mark scheme and demonstrated an enthusiastic response to the live theatre experience in relation to the demands of this unit. In a significant number of cases, candidates were accessing the higher levels of marks in Section C but were struggling in Level 2 or Level 3 of Section B. The main reason for this appears to be that candidates could not see a connection between the demands of responses in Section C and the demands of responses in Section B to reference the original performance context/conditions. For up to 30 marks in both of these sections, clear and explicit reference to the play's original performance context/conditions must be evident.

**In Section C** the pairing of questions followed the established pattern for this unit. One question started with a statement and invited candidates to respond to it, the other question focused on a specific aspect of the production - in this case the impact of the director. In this series, the second question (Question 11 on the examination paper) was by far the more popular choice for candidates. Candidates choosing Question 10 often struggled to connect to the specifics of the statement, presenting, for example their prepared response without due reference to 'young people', while responses to Question 11 were, on the whole, more successful at engaging with the question there were cases, again, of the prepared answer that did not, for example, give the names of key figures in the production, including, at times, the director under discussion.

**Section C questions**, by necessity, have to be fairly generic in order to cover the three possible time periods for this unit but they also need to be specific enough in order to enable candidates to offer responses, no matter what production they have seen. Examiners report in this series far fewer examples of candidates having seen productions of plays that are outside the published time periods. There were, however, examples of candidates evaluating Northern Ballet's production of 'Romeo and Juliet' and Verdi's Opera of 'Macbeth' and a new play, based on the Trojan Women called 'The Last Days of Troy', none of which met the criteria for this unit.

**Shakespeare** dominated the section again this year, with 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' being by far the most popular production(s) evaluated. Other productions this year included

'King Lear', 'Hamlet', 'A Comedy of Errors', 'Twelfth Night', 'Titus Andronicus', 'Henry IV Part 1', 'Richard II' and 'Henry V'. Away from Shakespeare, there were evaluations of, for example, 'Woyzeck' (for candidates not exploring it in Sections A and B), 'Ghosts', 'Hedda Gabler', 'Medea', 'Antigone', 'Spring Awakening' and 'A Doll's House'.

Examiners report an increase this series in candidates including quotes in their Section C responses from, for example, theatre critics, directors and actors. A well-placed quote - like a well-placed and annotated diagram or sketch - can be really helpful in supporting a developing discussion and, where used in this way, was seen to be effective. There were, however, a number of cases of candidates peppering responses with quotes but not commenting on them or referencing them in the narrative so it became difficult to work out what the *candidate* actually thought.

Because of the choice of texts for Sections A and B, the vast majority of responses in this section were to productions of plays by Shakespeare.

The vast majority of candidates appear to have completed responses in the time allowed and completed responses within the booklet without the need for additional sheets. Those who did need additional sheets, however, did not always access the higher levels of marks as, often, these responses became rambling and unfocused in an attempt, it seemed, to get as much information down as possible in the hope of accessing more marks. The pages in the booklet have been compiled with an expectation of the maximum amount a candidate can be expected to write in a two and a half hour examination. Taking the size of handwriting into account, there is no expectation for candidates to write beyond the given space in the booklet in order to be able to access the higher levels of marks.

On the other hand examiners reported that there were instances in this series of candidates whose responses were so brief in Sections B and C that they were not able to sufficiently develop their ideas in order to enable them to access the higher levels of marks. Candidates who had clearly been prepared for the demands of the examination were able to respond within the time and space effectively, giving themselves every chance to access the higher levels of marks.

**Overall**, there was evidence of candidates having a clear understanding of the chosen text in Sections A and B and of the play seen in performance for Section C. The extracts from work that follow in this report represent a broad view of responses across all three sections of the unit. They are included to help demonstrate particular features of the 2014 series of this examination and should be read in the context of the brief commentary that is included with each extract. Not all texts are covered in Sections A and B, in the same way as not all productions can be covered in Section C, but the application of the mark scheme is the same no matter what the focus might be. For further guidance beyond the remit of this report there are responses for all three texts with commentary from the 2012 series of examinations on the Edexcel website.

## Question 1

This question looks at rehearsing an extract from the final moments of the play, with the focus of the question in its 3 parts covering a specific stage direction, a specific relationship within the extract and exploring visual, spatial and aural opportunities within the extract. The structure of the three part question follows the established structure for this unit, with the focus of each part of the question for the marks available clearly indicated. For up to 4 marks, for example, candidates have to indicate two ways of exploring the given stage direction, with reasons. For up to 6 marks in b) candidates are asked to consider three appropriate rehearsal techniques to explore the relationship between First and Second Athenian in the extract and for up to 10 marks candidates are asked to explain how they intend to work on exploring visual, spatial and aural opportunities within the extract.

All three parts of this question are about rehearsal and candidates who were able to access the higher levels of marks in this Section were able to do so by clearly defining what it is they were going to do and the intention behind it. Candidates who were less successful often simply listed techniques/methods/strategies and their general purpose in rehearsal without actually specifically applying them to the given extract - or, for example, the relationship between First and Second Athenian in b).

Examiners report that the main reason for candidates not accessing the higher marks in c) was because the responses were performance focused, not rehearsal focused. Where candidates were writing about rehearsal, they often only offered three examples of what they would do and responses were not sufficiently developed for up to 10 marks to earn more than 5 or 6.

Two things candidates need to consider when responding in this section:

- is the response explicitly connected to the extract?
- is the response specifically about rehearsal?

This response covers all three parts of the question, with the candidate engaging in rehearsal ideas that are directly related to the extract. In order to earn marks in this section, candidates need to demonstrate an understanding of not only the rehearsal process but also the specifics of the extract and the question.

(a) As the director, for this extract I would explore this stage direction by ~~having~~ restricting the space in which rehearsal technique of 'group expression' in which I would the actors can dance. This would make their proxemics so close that it would ~~auto~~ automatically encourage an intimate atmosphere and these close proxemics would represent the unity of the men and women and the way peace has finally been restored. This is when the actors perform this scene, they will naturally ~~be~~ be drawn together. Another way I would explore this ~~the~~ stage direction is through the rehearsal technique of 'group expression'; this is where I would change the ~~or~~ type of music playing and the actors would have

to dance accordingly. ~~Plus~~ For example, if I played a modern pop song by 'Lady Gaga' this would bring out the comedy in the scene and make the actors bring this out when actually performing on stage. This scene is about the characters being so ~~extremely~~ happy that they have finally ended the war that they sing and dance together so the rehearsal technique will enable them to enhance this emotion and laugh ~~in~~ <sup>with</sup> joy in the scene.

\* This was inspired by ~~Attenborough~~ Meyerhold who would use classical music, such as Brahms and Beethoven, to ~~create~~ influence the way their actors would perform - just as

group expression? 'strict space.

((a) continued)

I ~~have~~ <sup>all</sup> would use modern parallels to make them add <sup>a</sup> comedic level to the scene.

## **Question 2**

This question looks at rehearsing an extract from the final moments of the play, with the focus of the question in its 3 parts covering a specific stage direction, a specific relationship within the extract and exploring visual, spatial and aural opportunities within the extract. The structure of the three part question follows the established structure for this unit, with the focus of each part of the question for the marks available clearly indicated. For up to 4 marks, for example, candidates have to indicate two ways of exploring the given stage direction, with reasons. For up to 6 marks in b) candidates are asked to consider three appropriate rehearsal techniques to explore the relationship between Faustus and the Scholars in the extract and for up to 10 marks candidates are asked to explain how they intend to work on exploring visual, spatial and aural opportunities within the extract.

All three parts of this question are about rehearsal and candidates who were able to access the higher levels of marks in this Section were able to do so by clearly defining what it is they were going to do and the intention behind it. Candidates who were less successful often simply listed techniques/methods/strategies and their general purpose in rehearsal without actually specifically applying them to the given extract - or, for example, the relationship between Faustus and the Scholars in b).

Examiners report that the main reason for candidates not accessing the higher marks in c) was because the responses were performance focused, not rehearsal focused. Where candidates were writing about rehearsal, they often only offered three examples of what they would do and responses were not sufficiently developed for up to 10 marks to earn more than 5 or 6.

Two things candidates need to consider when responding in this section:

- is the response explicitly connected to the extract?
- is the response specifically about rehearsal?

Responses to this question were broadly in line with those for Question 1 and Question 3 and it is worth having a look at those two questions in this report to see the kind of things that candidates were earning marks for.

### Question 3

This question looks at rehearsing an extract from the final moments of the play, with the focus of the question in its 3 parts covering a specific stage direction, a specific relationship within the extract and exploring visual, spatial and aural opportunities within the extract. The structure of the three part question follows the established structure for this unit, with the focus of each part of the question for the marks available clearly indicated. For up to 4 marks, for example, candidates have to indicate two ways of exploring the given stage direction, with reasons. For up to 6 marks in b) candidates are asked to consider three appropriate rehearsal techniques to explore the relationship between The Doctor and The Captain in the extract and for up to 10 marks candidates are asked to explain how they intend to work on exploring visual, spatial and aural opportunities within the extract.

All three parts of this question are about rehearsal and candidates who were able to access the higher levels of marks in this Section were able to do so by clearly defining what it is they were going to do and the intention behind it. Candidates who were less successful often simply listed techniques/methods/strategies and their general purpose in rehearsal without actually specifically applying them to the given extract - or, for example, the relationship between The Doctor and The Captain in b).

Examiners report that the main reason for candidates not accessing the higher marks in c) was because the responses were performance focused, not rehearsal focused. Where candidates were writing about rehearsal, they often only offered three examples of what they would do and responses were not sufficiently developed for up to 10 marks to earn more than 5 or 6.

Two things candidates need to consider when responding in this section:

is the response explicitly connected to the extract?

is the response specifically about rehearsal?

This is a high scoring (17-20) response in this section, with the candidate clearly aware of the way a director may engage with a company during rehearsal in order to develop approaches to characters to eventually engage an audience.

(a) The first way I would have my actors try these stage directions would be to create a juxtaposition. I would have the actress for the grandmother start at the back of the space whilst ensemble spread themselves around the remaining space. I would then have the grandmother move walking forwards very slowly while the ensemble move very quickly around the stage.

This would help to communicate the sinister and supernatural nature of the grandmother. If the ensemble were whispering also it could almost explore the creepy nature of the character but also how they may represent the mist swirling around the grandmother slowly coming to a stop as she leaves to show the enchantment is over.

The second way that I would explore this stage direction would be to have the grandmother on one side of the space with Andres on the other and they begin to walk in circles, one after the other. If the grandmother's pace was slow and Andres' quick it could highlight the differentiation between the two characters and the emotions that they feel. As Andres would run off the grandmother could stop and perform the last line of the stage directions by the end in order again to highlight and explore the sinister nature of the instructions through stillness as well as movement.

## Question 4

This question, along with 6 and 8, was the more popular choice of two for Section B responses in this series of the examination. The question gives scope for candidates to select the focus of their response as long as it is meeting the demands of the question and gives them an opportunity to reference the original performance context of the play. Examiners reported a large number of candidates who did not consider the specifics of the question - 'production methods' and 'to communicate your ideas' and 'original performance context' - but offered what was very much a prepared and, in a lot of cases, well-rehearsed, response that actually did not meet the requirements of the question and became something of a list that ticked the boxes but did not indicate a throughline of thought as far as the proposed production as a whole was concerned.

The key word in this question is the word *justify* and candidates who were able to recognise this were also able to present well-structured, well-considered responses that often accessed Level 4 or Level 5. Examiners reported some well-considered and imaginative responses that made no reference - or very little reference - to the play's original performance context and were therefore struggling in the Level 2 and Level 3 areas. Whilst these responses were justified in terms of the theatrical experience for the audience, they were not justified in terms of demonstrating an understanding of the play's original performance context within the ideas presented for the proposed production.

This is a confident response to the question and demonstrates a clear connection between the play's original performance context, the question and the proposed production. It not only goes back to the roots of the play, but also to the specifics of this particular translation and makes very clear topical references, particularly around the idea of conflict.

In my production of *Tyriastrata*, I want to draw out the key themes of national identity, in-fighting and the futility of war in this satirical comedy using ~~visual~~ design elements as well as the playing style based on stereotypes. My production method to appeal to a contemporary audience is using the framing device of the historical Scottish/English rivalry to mirror the conflict of the Peloponnesian war. The age-old rivalry which has even escalated to war (battles of Flodden and Cullochen in the 17<sup>th</sup> century) in the past is made contemporary as the 2014 Scottish Independence referendum looms.

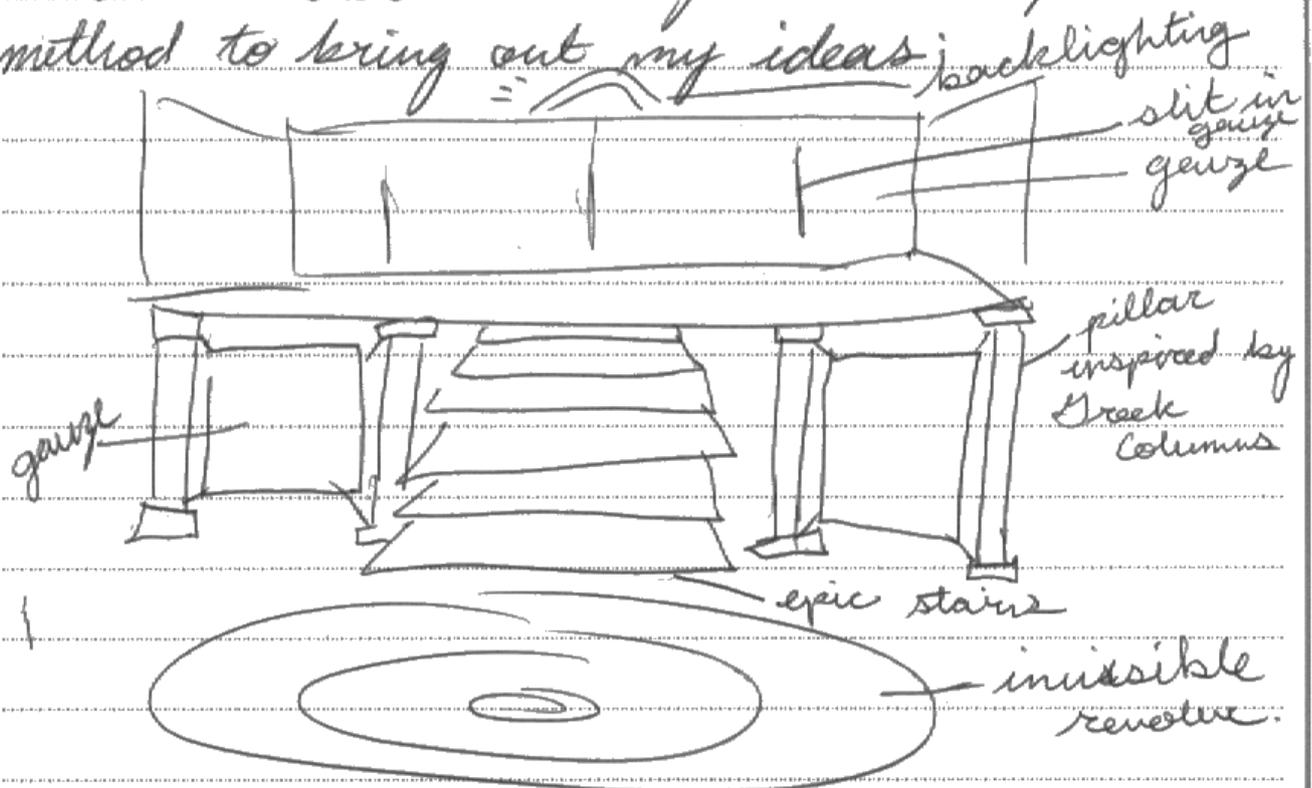
I am using the Pronomos Vase as inspiration for my design elements, as a pictorial reference to Ancient Greek theatre. The use of flags and banners has inspired my central production method to bring out the theme of identity

by using English/Scottish/UK flags and the Union Jack. These contrasting cultures within the nation are mirrored in Alan Sommerstein's translation which I am using, as he has written the lines of Spartans phonetically in Glaswegian accents, also showing them to have bagpipes, "Their leader carries a pair of bagpipes" (149).

I will put on my production at the Olivier Theatre as it is not only ~~inspired by~~ based on the amphitheatre of Epidaurus, but is perfect to house the big, heightened acting style and provoke debate on the ideas I want to communicate to the audience. As Nick Hytner observes, "When the audience is a visible, tangible part of the experience, big debate plays really come alive". In 411 BC when *Thyestes* was first performed, theatres

were civic places' of debate, where plays would challenge the audience and politicians (who normally sat in the front row). ~~It~~ This is the type of effect I want and why I have used ~~the~~ the Olivier as a production method.

I will also use my set as a production method to bring out my ideas;



~~I am using pillars to represent~~ As the audience enter the theatre, they will see hystericata dressed in stereotypical ~~Attitude~~ ~~matter~~, tweed ~~that~~ blazer and riding boots, ~~the~~ holding an iPad whose screen is projected on the gauze. This immediately characterises her as organised and as a leader,

with the gestic prop (iPad) and neat appearance. The iPad screen shows her on her calendar, where "Meet with Women" is written. She goes onto a Twitter feed #ScottishIndependence to see the news of the day. This, along with the

pillars representing some type of government building, immediately hooks the audience as ~~the~~ the referendum will no doubt affect a London audience. Further along, as the women enter, <sup>(p. 11)</sup> there will be a clear difference between Spartans (Scottish) who wear tartan and distressed denim to show their barely nature and Athenians (English) who wear clean-cut blazers and blouses to show they are more cerebral than physical. I am using costume as a production method to clarify the cultural divide and highlight the theme of conflict. This is similar to in 411BC, when *Lysistrata* was most likely performed at the festival of Lenaea. This was in winter, meaning Spartans would not have come to Athens and the Athenians could mock them and other Greek. Using masks, they represented Spartan men with long unkempt

beards and women with tan faces and light hair, as opposed to pale dark-haired Athenians, according to Jeffrey Henderson's "Gysistrata: The Play and its themes".

In the Aem on page 71, I feel that the wool metaphor Gysistrata uses is particularly clear in themes of political turmoil. Here I would have Gysistrata giving the speech on the balcony, which represents the Acropolis, with the Magistrate on the steps, showing the territorial struggle between the Mens and Womens choros who ~~not~~ stand on the stationary revolve. Gysistrata will throw down a huge ball of wool, or iconically British red wool, and the Womens choros will throw it amongst them, each holding on to the last string until it is completely unravelled at the end of Gysistrata's speech to reveal a Union Jack at the end. They would then trap the Mens Choros in the wool and projections of knitted wool union jacks would fly on the gaze as the men turn on the revolve, further emphasizing their incapability.

This politician-type speech is contrasted with the use of music in a very comedic heightened way, which will entertain the audience. The chorus plays on the revolve as in 411BC when they would have played in the orchestra at the front. They are telling the story as Tysistrata speaks, as they would have in the original - people came to see the chorus, who were the only paid performers, ~~was~~ because of their acrobatic talents and singing.

Moving through the pantomimic plays, I plan to use iconic English and ~~Scottish~~ Scottish songs, to enhance comedy for example in the first Episode when the women try to escape from the Acropolis. I will have a live band housed in the band room of the Olivier, as they would have live music (played by musicians) in the original. Yakety Sax by Benny Hill will play, to heighten the humour as the <sup>3</sup>women try to escape in a more ridiculous way each time. As Tysistrata catches them, ~~they~~ a hard-edged spot-light goes on them and a cork pop noise ~~plays~~ sounds, as they spin around trapped on the revolve melodramatically.

Reconciliation is a directorial challenge, for which I will use a man dressed in a fat woman suit. This is inspired by the fact that only men were allowed on stage in Ancient Greece, and fat suits with grotesque breasts were worn. This is humorous and is a method which is consistent with my aim to use the original playing style. Academic H.C. Baldry sums "The tendency of Old Comedy is not to reflect reality but to grotesquely distort it."

My main aim for my production is to leave the audience with questions, to spark a debate, not to contest ~~that~~ an opinion. All in all, this issue of ~~Scottish~~ English conflict is accessible as it was in All BC, as "The laughter in *Thyristrata* is underseeded by tears" (cf. Michael Walton). This is why as my audience leaves, I will project images of civil war today <sup>(eg. Crimea)</sup> to bring back the questions and issue after the komos. ~~not to all~~ Like the original performance may have done, I want to spark debates and question the audience with my ~~play~~ production.

## **Question 5**

This question, along with 7 and 9 was the less popular of the choice in Section B in this series. The demands of the question are very specific - actors in two central roles - and this could be the reason why a large number of candidates chose not to respond to it. Those who did attempt it, examiners report, appeared to fall into two camps:

- those who clearly defined the actors in two central roles within the context of the production as a whole and with clear reference to the differences/similarities in relation to the play's original performance context. There was a clear sense of the production as a whole and of the way the candidate as director would engage the actors within an overall concept for the production.
- those who described the actors in the role - what they would be wearing, for example, what lighting would be used and what the settings would be like - but, crucially, little or very little information about the production as a whole, other actors in other roles and without any reference to the play's original performance context.

Clearly at this level of study the examination is demanding more from candidates than copying from the annotated script in order to access the higher levels of marks. It would appear that numbers of candidates offered information in response to this question that was highly descriptive and not sufficiently focused on the demands of the question. Some candidates ignored the question altogether and described the production, often with reference to the play's original performance conditions but with no specific connection made to the question itself. Some candidates wrote about one actor in a central role and were therefore not able to access the higher levels of marks; others wrote about a number of actors and it was not clear where the focus of their response should be.

Some candidates chose the chorus - either male or female - as a central role and examiners accepted this. Most obvious choices were Lysistrata, Magistrate, Cinesias and Myrrhine with, possibly, Lysistrata and Magistrate the most popular combination. As with responses in questions 7 and 9, the most successful responses here were those that were able to lead with the specific demands of the question but also had an eye on the bigger picture and how actors in these two central roles contributed to the director's interpretation of the production as a whole. See question 9 for an example of a candidate exploring this question.

## Question 6

This question, along with 4 and 8, was the more popular choice of two for Section B responses in this series of the examination. The question gives scope for candidates to select the focus of their response as long as it is meeting the demands of the question and gives them an opportunity to reference the original performance context of the play. Examiners reported a large number of candidates who did not consider the specifics of the question - 'production methods' and 'to communicate your ideas' and 'original performance context' - but offered what was very much a prepared and in a lot of cases, well-rehearsed response that actually did not meet the requirements of the question and became something of a list that ticked the boxes but did not indicate a throughline of thought as far as the proposed production as a whole was concerned.

The key word in this question is the word *justify* and candidates who were able to recognise this were also able to present well-structured, well-considered responses that often accessed Level 4 or Level 5. Examiners reported some well-considered and imaginative responses that made no reference - or very little reference - to the play's original performance context and were therefore struggling in the Level 2 and Level 3 areas. Whilst these responses were justified in terms of the theatrical experience for the audience, they were not justified in terms of demonstrating an understanding of the play's original performance context within the ideas presented for the proposed production.

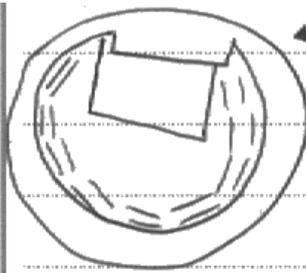
This is a well-considered, well-structured and knowledgeable response that demonstrates an understanding of the play's original performance context and sets out ideas for the proposed production that are confident.

There are challenges here in the casino setting that must be addressed as the response develops but, unfortunately, it is so brief that it does not sufficiently develop in order to enable the candidate to access the higher levels of marks.

This response was placed in Level 3 - just.

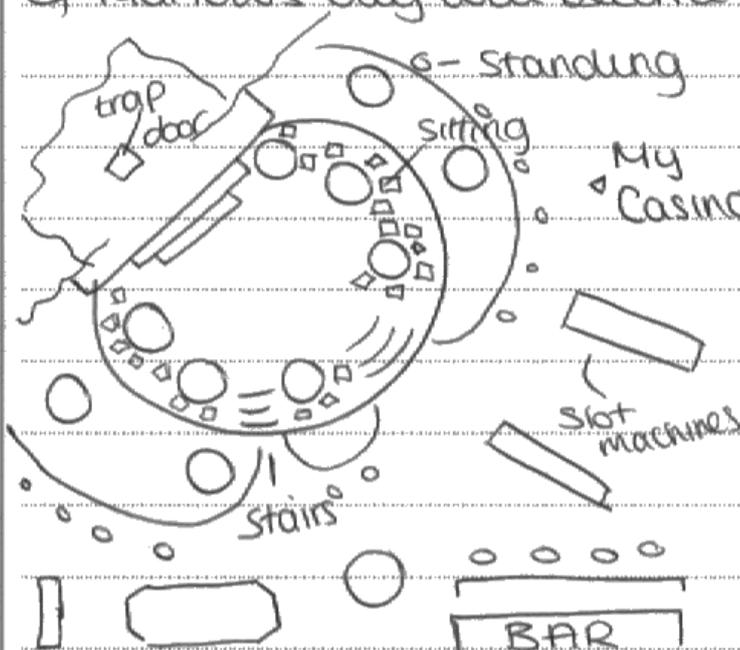
The main idea of my concept ~~is~~ is to focus on the themes of greed and temptation. I want the audience to

The main idea of my concept ~~is~~ is to focus on the themes of greed and temptation. I want the audience to feel tempted themselves and as such my production would ~~be~~ take place in a site-specific <sup>modern day</sup> casino where they can interact with working slot machines and gamble away money as Faustus gambled <sup>bled</sup> his soul. This provides a stark contrast to the original performance which took place in Marlow's Rose Theatre. It would have been an open air theatre with an end on stage. In order for my audience to have time



Marlow's Rose Theatre to experience the working casino atmosphere I would open up the doors in the afternoon, this also

would have been when the performance was put on. Originally as they had to rely on sunlight to light the performances as they had no electricity. The working casino would provide a natural soundscape for the audience and I would have the power to make all the machines explode with noise at dramatic moments in the play - emphasising the temptation and creating a loud enough noise to reflect the interior conflict in Faustus's mind when he considers repenting. It will also ~~provide~~ heighten suspense and stop suddenly to ~~create~~ juxtapose silence with noise. Upon entering the audience will be given a ticket, either sitting or standing. My hope is that those standing, similar to the groundlings of Marlow's day will become envious of those sitting



emphasising the theme of greed. ~~Play~~ To further emphasise the idea of temptation any devils will be good-looking waiters and waitresses who will serve those sitting snacks during the

performance only to stop what they are doing and head into action whenever devils are required, this involves the audience, breaking the fourth wall and hopefully tempts them into giving into lust, which they will later see is one of the 7 deadly sins. To emphasise this Lechery will remain in her waitress outfit for the seven deadly sins scene and flirt with audience members, hopefully making them feel uncomfortable. Audience interaction played a key part in the original production which saw actors speaking directly to the audience, particularly in soliloquies. The audience would have been a lot rowdier though; if they didn't like a performance they would 'boo' and throw things at the actors. It is my hope that by involving the audience in the plays action and having the same lighting on the actors and audience (like in ~~the~~ Elizabethan performance) where it was a shared experience) I can break the passivity that ~~we~~ we are used to as modern theatre goes. There will be some divide between the audience and action though with any supernatural happenings such as the final scene where Faustus is carted off to hell taking place on the casino's own end on stage (similar to the one at The Rose, where the original performance took place) Here any entrances from hell will be via a trap door on the stage and upstage

Will represent Heaven, the same as it did on stage at The Rose. Because casinos often have in-house entertainment such as magicians it will not look out of place to have supernatural activities occur on stage. To show how we can be blinded by our greed I will have the spirit of Helen of Troy as something clearly unhuman. The glamorous Casino will have a water feature which I would project a ~~video~~ video of Helen, a great beauty which saw actors speaking directly to the audience, particularly in soliloquies. The audience would have been a lot rowdier though; if they didn't like a performance they would 'boo' and throw things at the actors. It is my hope that by involving the audience in the plays action and having the same lighting on the actors and audience (like in ~~the~~ Elizabethan performances where it was a shared experience) I can break the passivity that ~~we~~ we are used to as modern theatre goes. There will be some divide between the audience and action though with any supernatural happenings such as the final scene where Faustus is carted off to hell taking place on the casino's own end on stage (similar to the one at The Rose, where the original performance took place) Here any entrances from hell will be via a trap door on the stage and upstage will represent Heaven, the same as it did on stage at

entertainment such as magicians it will not look out of place to have supernatural activities occur on stage. To show how we can be blinded by our greed I will have the spirit of Helen of Troy as something clearly unhuman. The glamorous casino will have a water feature which I would project a ~~video~~ video of Helen, a great beauty walking across. The combination of the water distortion and the video image will heighten the fact that this is the SPIRIT of Helen, not her herself. However as 'she' reaches the end of the fountain the ~~actress~~ <sup>same</sup> actress from the video will ~~be replaced by a~~ ~~actress~~ exit in the same costume but showing all the signs of decay a corpse would (similar to Clifford Williams' 1968 performance). However Faustus, blinded by temptation reacts to this grotesque woman as the most beautiful creature to grace the planet. In the original performance Helen would be played by a man, as all females were. For this scene the lights would be overly bright, ironically as if symbolising heaven, however they may also make the audience uncomfortable as they too become as blind as Faustus is to his mistakes. It will use modern costumes for example Faustus will be in a tux and reflect the glamour of a Las Vegas casino. In the Elizabethan performance the actors would have worn contemporary costumes to that age so both audiences can relate to what they are seeing before them.

## **Question 7**

This question, along with 5 and 9 was one of the less popular of the choice in Section B in this series. The demands of the question are very specific - actors in two central roles - and this could be the reason why a large number of candidates chose not to respond to it. Those who did attempt it, examiners report, appeared to fall into two camps:

- those who clearly defined the actors in two central roles within the context of the production as a whole and with clear reference to the differences/similarities in relation to the play's original performance context. There was a clear sense of the production as a whole and of the way the candidate as director would engage the actors within an overall concept for the production.
- those who described the actors in the role - what they would be wearing, for example, what lighting would be used and what the settings would be like - but, crucially, little or very little information about the production as a whole, other actors in other roles and without any reference to the play's original performance context.

Clearly at this level of study the examination is demanding more from candidates than copying from the annotated script in order to access the higher levels of marks. It would appear that numbers of candidates offered information in response to this question that was highly descriptive and not sufficiently focused on the demands of the question. Some candidates ignored the question altogether and described the production, often with reference to the play's original performance context but with no specific connection made to the question itself. Some candidates wrote about one actor in a central role and were therefore not able to access the higher levels of marks; others wrote about a number of actors and it was not clear where the focus of their response should be.

Some candidates for this question cited the Seven Deadly Sins as central role and within the context of the response examiners accepted this. The most popular combination from candidates was Faustus and Mephistopheles and those that were able to access the higher levels of marks were able to place the actors in the two central roles within an overall and recognisable concept for a 21st century production that clearly referenced an understanding of the play's original performance context. See question 9 for a candidate exploring this question.

## Question 8

This question, along with 4 and 6, was the more popular choice of two for Section B responses in this series of the examination. The question gives scope for candidates to select the focus of their response as long as it is meeting the demands of the question and gives them an opportunity to reference the original performance context of the play. Examiners reported a large number of candidates who did not consider the specifics of the question - 'production methods' and 'to communicate your ideas' and 'original performance context' - but offered what was very much a prepared and in a lot of cases, well-rehearsed response that actually did not meet the requirements of the question and became something of a list that ticked the boxes but did not indicate a throughline of thought as far as the proposed production as a whole was concerned.

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This is a clear response to the question, taking the reader through production methods that would be employed to bring the production to life for a 21st century audience, with due reference to the play's original performance context.

There are some throwaway comments that detract slightly from the overall strengths of the writing at times but there is much here to commend this response.

This response was placed in Level 5 - just.

As well as being deemed the first modern tragedy, *Woyzeck* is also socially relevant as Büchner communicates the extreme poverty and poor living conditions that his characters face. The left-wing aspect anticipates the Marxist works of Brecht and agit-prop theatre. When assuming the role of director, I would want the audience to see the world through *Woyzeck's* eyes and so personally feel the effect of the key themes I would aim to communicate such as madness, passion, religion, medical experimentation and poverty. I would

set my production in the same year as the original performance, in 1913, as it would be poignant due to the dramatic irony created by the audience being aware the characters are inevitably going to face more intense suffering in the near future. This choice of year is also relevant to a ~~contemporary~~ contemporary audience as it is the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

I would set my production at the vaults venue in Waterloo to create a tight-specific piece inspired by Pynchon's *The Drowned Man*. Therefore, the audience would have to follow Woyzeck from room to room for each scene. I want to employ Brecht's technique of disallowing the audience to sit comfortably so that they consequently empathise with Woyzeck's constant state of hurry and eternal nightmare. The venue I would choose is highly different to the original performance condition (OPC), when the play took place at the sumptuous Residenz-theatre Munchen, that was decorated with extravagant colours such as gold and red. Instead, the vaults would be earthy and grotty. Rather than being at odds with the subject matter like the OPC, I would want to recreate the impression of reality, using Stanislavski as my main influence.

Due to the vaults being a set of underground tunnels, this would create a suffocating and enclosed feel and symbolise the way in which the characters are unable to escape their poverty and the tough conditions they are faced with. The ~~trains~~ <sup>trains</sup> to above would create an unsettling sound during the performance and would also create irony as they represent travel and the opportunity to move on, reminding the characters that they lack this privilege of freedom.

The My set would also solve the issue of the OPC having a lack of flow due to having to draw curtains between scenes for set changes. For example, I would use the arched tunnel decorated with graffiti that is outside the venue for the woods. The floor would be ~~also~~ covered with mud and bark which would create the unsettling feel of being outside and be feeling vulnerable and exposed. I would have branches at the edges of the tunnel that would be twisted and entwined to communicate Woyzeck's torture and unease. ~~I would also use~~

I would also use projection and have facts such as '30% of the total population of London in 1913 were living in poverty' displayed on the sides of the tunnel. This idea was inspired by the production 'Oh! What a lovely war' where stark facts are used to communicate the horror of the reality of war. In Scene 21 I would use lighting to create a dim and eerie effect before Woyzeck meets Marie. I would use oil lamps like the OPC to create a smoky and oily atmosphere. This would symbolise clouded judgement, <sup>that is displayed</sup> such as when Marie helps with the Drum Major. I would use parans to pick out the silhouettes of Woyzeck and Marie from the side and use lilac filters to create a night-time feel and sculpture their bodies. I would also use a profile with a red filter to create the moon that <sup>Marie</sup> ~~Woyzeck~~ describes as 'all red.'

As you enter the venue, the tavern would be set up in the front room on the left, making the transition between the woods and tavern slick and fast during scenes 12 and 13. The high ceiling of the tunnel would allow a large stage space and I would only place three tables in

the room, allowing to that the actors have space to move and play their musicians as like the OPC, I would employ actor musicians. The actors would play instruments that suit their specific personalities. For example, the Drum Major would stay true to his name and play the drums as due to these ~~being~~ <sup>creating</sup> a powerful sound, it would communicate his authority and strength. The Sergeant would play the piccolo next to the Drum Major as I would portray him as his sidekick in my production. To create folk music I would have the Journeyman on fiddles and pipes. The characters would also play fiddles and pipes to pre-empt the coming war such as 'Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag' by Murray Johnson. I would want the sound to be celebratory to create irony and contrast with the dark feelings of Woyzeck.

I would choose a smaller room in the corner of one of the tunnels for Marie and Woyzeck's room. The room would contain few objects to emphasise the poverty and the walls, dressing table and the bed would be painted red to communicate the key themes Marie embodies such as passion, love and danger. There would be a tiny cot in the

corner of the room. The fact it is not close to Marie's bed shows the distance and detachment Marie ~~feels~~ feels towards her child when she puts her lust for the Drum Major above her maternal instinct. For I would use limited lanterns and have to create a dim lighting state. I would then project a gobos of a crucifix on the fluted ceiling of the tunnel. The gobos would be distorted due to the uneven ceiling which would communicate Marie's misjudgement and emphasise the way in which she has turned, she is the fallen madonna.

I would also use costume to highlight the way in which Marie is a combination of the virgin and whore. I would dress her in the virgin Mary outfit; a white dress and blue shawl accompanied by a white scarf. However, the dress would be too big on one ~~soldier's~~ shoulder and when the scarf is removed, her corset and cleavage would be visible underneath.

In order to highlight the ~~power~~ influence medical science has on today's society, I would dress my doctor in a top hat and tails. He would wear a silk cravat, pin striped trousers and use a cane as a prop that he would use as an instrument

of manipulation. ~~His~~ The Laboratory would be situated in a secluded room upstairs in the venue, and this placement along with his evening dress denoting his upper class status would show how he uses his medical knowledge to manipulate characters such as the captain. I would also have a faint smell of antiseptic in the laboratory in order to focus the audience's minds on the theme of medical experimentation.

In between scenes, I would have the distinct beat of a drum to show how the army during 1913 would have to keep marching and Woyzeck has to keep going in order to survive. The audience would feel as if they are marching whilst following the cart which would pre-empt the coming war in 1914, and they would sympathise with Woyzeck's never-ending plight. I would also use my ensemble to stage a protest in between scenes, wandering around the tunnels with signs ~~and~~ saying things such as 'we sweat in the sleep, the poor' and 'poverty but work under the sun'. This would illuminate the theme of extreme poverty.

## Question 9

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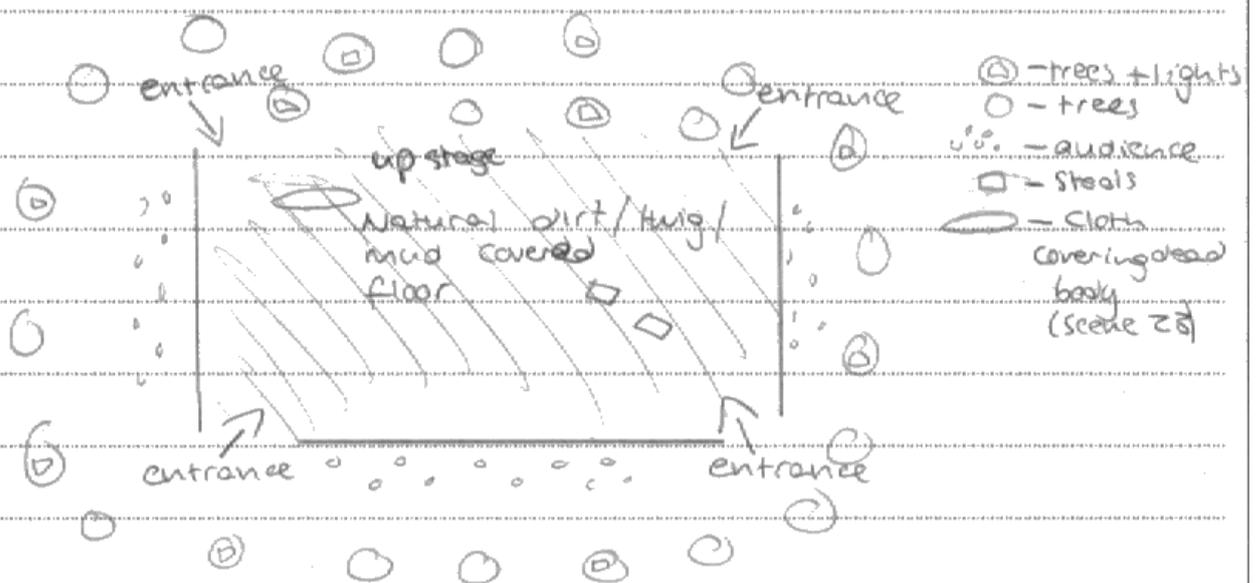
Some candidates wrote about one actor playing both Woyzeck and Andres and attempted their responses on this basis. Whilst an interesting idea in itself, these answers were about one actor in a central role, not two.

This response has been included because it is a clear example of two ways a candidate has not been able to access the higher levels of marks in this section. Firstly, the response is quite brief. For up to 30 marks in this unit, there is an expectation that candidates should be aiming to fill the available space in the booklet. There is no expectation, however, that candidates should have to exceed the available space in order to access the full range of marks available.

Secondly, the candidate takes little notice of the specific demands of this question which is about two actors in two central roles, and writes about one actor in two central roles - Woyzeck and Andres. Whilst it is perfectly feasible that the candidate could have written about Woyzeck/Andres and the actor playing Marie, for example, the candidate chose not to do so.

This response was potentially a high scoring response but it earned a mark in Level 2.

As a director, I have included aspects into my production of *Wayzack* that allow my actors to engage the audience. My concept is based on Schizophrenia and focuses on the loneliness ~~and~~ of Andres and his split personality, *Wayzack* (who are both played by the same actor). All the other characters are hallucinations until the audience discover a 'real' dead body upstage in scene 23, making the audience question the reality of that moment and the story. I have considered ~~included~~ elements such as costume and relevance to a modern audience to help engage the audience better, and have considered how/why this differs to OPC (the original performance conditions (OPC) - at the Residenz Theatre, Munich in 1913; ~~and the impact of the original perform~~



As I have chosen to use a ~~site~~ <sup>site</sup> specific stage space (a clearing in the woods) I have allowed the barrier to be broken between real life and the theatre, which (Grotowski), which has also allowed my audience to consume

the atmosphere before the has even begun. This ~~that~~ therefore, ~~it~~ entices my audience into seeing ~~the prod~~ staying focused ~~on~~ ~~with~~ my actors playing Marie and Woyzeck/Andres because they are sharing the same stage space. This, however, would have been unheard of during the OPC as plays were always performed in the theatre; ~~and~~ ~~that~~ Buchner's play was already ~~been~~ ahead of it's time by being the first working class tragedy, meaning that if too much had drifted from the norm in his production, it wouldn't have been shown (suggesting why it wasn't performed until 85 years after being written).

My actor playing Andres/Woyzeck engages the audience through his costume. As <sup>Andres</sup> ~~he~~ is the only 'real' person, he ~~is~~ ~~is~~ will wear a plain and scruffy khaki uniform, representing ~~his~~ ~~and~~ his low socio-economic status and rank in the army. Whereas Marie contrasts Woyzeck such as in scene 3 at the fairground. ~~And~~ My actor playing Marie will wear a very elaborate dress and corset - representing her high socio-economic status. She will also be wearing a masquerade which suggests to the audience that she is enigmatic ~~and~~ as she is hiding a part of her face, making them interested in finding more out about who she really is. This elaborate and eccentric outfit also represents the strange and unrealistic world of the hallucinations. This would not have been possible to achieve during the OPC, however, due to lack of money, and so the actress playing Marie would have worn a plain dress of the time. However, the actor playing Woyzeck would have worn a German soldier's costume.

that was influenced by the French military uniform and head dress ~~of~~ of the time. This contrast in my costume design, however, engages the audience because the two characters appear as a mismatch, despite being in a relationship.

The use of one actor playing both Andres and Woyzeck engages the audience, especially in ~~scene~~ scene 1 when they are conversing with each other. The one actor talking with himself at the very beginning sets the theme of my interpretation and heightens the madness. Schizophrenia is already a serious issue in today's society as 1 in 100 people suffer from it and there is still no definite cause or cure. ~~Adding~~ The one actor playing both parts also helps to keep the ~~set~~ madness present constantly throughout the production and keep the audience aware of the situation. Their constant awareness of this abnormality in the performance space will hopefully keep them engaged because modern society are uncomfortable <sup>by</sup> and fear anything that they don't understand. This idea was influenced by the fact that Buchner's 'Woyzeck' was based on the real ~~case~~ trial of Johann Christian Woyzeck in 1828 who showed signs of schizophrenic symptoms. Buchner also stated that "we are only puppets; our strings are being pulled by unknown forces", however, he was talking about the power of the upper class and the dehumanising effects that can have on a man, ~~to~~ but I have interpreted it in a way that Woyzeck is being pulled along by the unknown forces.

of schizophrenia, represented by the hallucination, - especially Marie hidden behind her masquerade. She uses her power and <sup>sexuality</sup> ~~beauty~~ to control Wayzack, especially ~~after~~ ~~at~~ in scene 4 when Wayzack spots the earrings ~~and~~ ~~and~~ ~~which~~ engages the audience and Marie distracts him with sexual advances:

This engages the audience because sex has become more of a casual activity, and both men and women have experienced some sort of sexual manipulation whether it's to get someone to buy them a drink, or give them a job.

## Question 10

The question starts with a statement and this statement should focus the response to the question. Examiners reported that, for a number of candidates tackling this question, it appeared that they either ignored it altogether or responded to part of it, ignoring the 'young people' and writing about a more general 'twenty-first century' audience. Often these responses then went into the prepared answer and it was difficult for examiners to award marks in the higher levels because of this. Successful candidates really got to grips with the statement - some quite indignant in their responses, stating quite clearly that 'as a young person myself I will demonstrate in this essay that I do understand the relevance of theatre'. Most candidates who attempted this question disagreed with this statement and were able to offer opinions based around the live theatre experience and an understanding of the play's original performance conditions. Often candidates were able to offer a considered and balanced response, moving across the live experience, the historical conditions and the statement.

This response scored a mark in Level 5. It is confident and makes the connections between the statement, the live experience of 'Twelfth Night' and relevant connections to the play's original performance conditions. This is an example of a candidate who has been prepared for the demands of this examination but who has also been given the freedom to take ownership of the response in the examination.

Title of play: *Twelfth Night*

Playwright: *William Shakespeare*

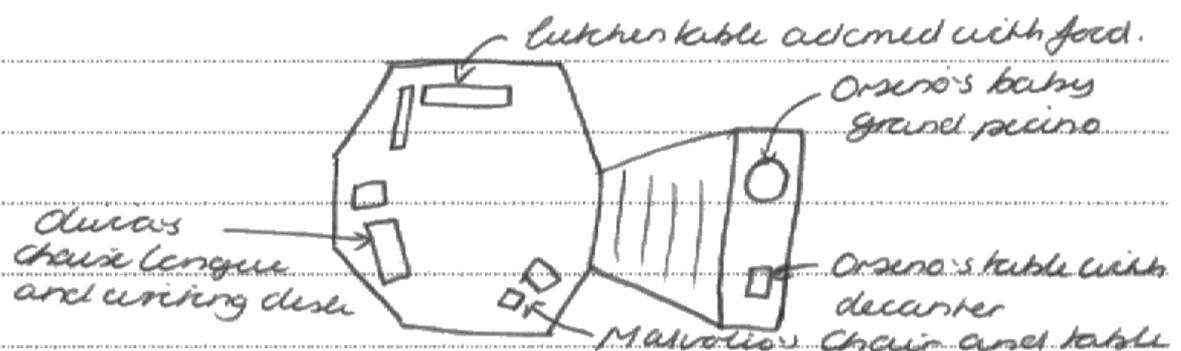
Date seen: *10<sup>th</sup> March 2014*

Venue of production: *The Botkin Octagon*

*On Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014, I saw David Thacker's production of Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night' at the Botkin Octagon. Set in the 1920s, Thacker portrayed 'Twelfth Night' in the style of recently popularised television programmes such as 'Downton Abbey' and 'Upstairs / Downstairs'. While Thacker employed the use of several production elements that were in keeping with the Elizabethan era, his contemporary approach to the play created new meaning in order to make the play accessible by audience members of all ages. I therefore strongly disagree that 'young people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century struggle to see the relevance of theatre',*

as Thatcher successfully engaged his younger audience in the production of a classic Shakespeare play.

The audience were immediately engaged by set designer Ciaran Baynall's use of stage space immediately entering the theatre. Set was already established present and characters were already on stage within their own 'worlds' that had been established like so:



Malvolio could be seen issuing orders while Olivia was reclining mournfully on her chaise longue. Orsino meanwhile, was playing a musical phrase on his baby grand piano that became a symbol of love throughout the play. The effect of already entering a pre-established world, made me feel as if I had walked right into the lives of other people. Each character being their own world conveyed a sense of order within the household, which was supported by Thatcher's use of home period. This, coupled with the fact that the play was staged in the round,

and audience. During the Elizabethan period, it would have been difficult to establish such an intimacy between actors and audience, as the start of plays were heralded by a trumpet blast. There was no opportunity to create meaning, present. However, 'Twelfth Night' was performed both at 'The Middle Temple' and 'The Swan Theatre' during Shakespeare's lifetime. As both theatres are staged in the round, a sense of intimacy could have been established due to the close proximity of the audience. I therefore disagree that 'young people of the 21st century struggle to understand the relevance of theatre', as Thatcher used intimacy between audience and actor - an age old concept as it was evident in the Elizabethan era - to make a classic play relevant to an audience of all ages.

In Act One, Scene One, Thatcher and sound designer Andy Smith used sound in order to symbolise love, adding new meaning to the character of Orsino (played by Michael Shefford). On Orsino's line 'if music be the food of love, play on', Shefford was seated at his baby grand piano, playing his musical phrase. He was dressed in a muted, pale grey suit with a blue stripe running through it, a dark intricately patterned tie and a pink handkerchief. In this moment, he was picked out by a warm yellow wash which highlighted

cut by a warm yellow wash which highlighted his widened eyes, broad smile and excitable expression. I therefore felt as if Orsino was a slightly romantic character at heart, as his love for music conveyed a sense of romance. Costume designer Mary Heron's costume choice also reflected this, as his slightly Coward-esque appearance conveyed that he was not an extremely decadent character and thus his love was more subtle.

Live music would have also been used during the Elizabethan era, as they did not have the technology to create pre-recorded sounds. Thacker remained true to this throughout his production, as he only used two pre-recorded sound effects. In this era, musicians were commissioned to write a musical score for each play, to be used to highlight moments of comedy or tragedy. This is similar to how Andy Smith composed a score in Thacker's production, suggesting that the aim that 'Young people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century struggle to understand the relevance of theatre', as it was evident that music has been a relevant part of theatre for centuries. It also made the play accessible to younger audience members, as it engaged them from the very first scene.

Another moment in which Thatcher brought new meaning to the play was in Act Two, Scene Four ~~Three~~, in which Christopher Villiers' acting style presented Malvolio as an endearing character. From his discovery of the letter left by Olivia - 'Why this is my lady's hand!' - to his understanding of her love for him - 'Why, she may command me: I serve her; she is my lady'; Villiers made extensive use of stage space in order to engage the audience. In one moment, he came down to the audience and showed an audience member the letter, inviting them to confirm Olivia's love for him. His tone was one of disbelief throughout his monologue, conveying a sense of insecurity within his character. His eyes were wide while the past has a strong influence on contemporary theatre, thus theatre is relevant to changing attitudes in the arts.

Overall, Thatcher's production of 'Twelfth Night' brought the classic Shakespearean play into a contemporary light, in keeping with the recent interests of popular culture in the 1920s period. This, in my opinion, made 'Twelfth Night' accessible to an audience of all ages, as it made a traditionally hard to decipher play into a contemporary classic. It is therefore evident that

Young people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century do not struggle to understand the relevance of theatre, as it is theatre that allows Shakespeare to become relevant for a contemporary audience of all ages.

## Question 11

This question asks the candidate to focus on the impact of the director on the production they have seen. It was by far the more popular choice in this section in this series. The question produced responses across a range of productions that clearly demonstrated an understanding of the role of the director in the 21st century, and made relevant connections to the play's original performance conditions.

Less-successful responses appeared to ignore the question and simply present what appeared to be the 'prepared answer' with little or no regard to what the question was actually demanding of them. In some cases, the name of the director was not even mentioned and at this level of study, in order to access the higher levels of marks candidates should be referencing named people connected to the production, including the names of actors, not just their character names.

This is a confident, well-structured and coherent response, demonstrating knowledge of the play's original performance conditions in relation to the live performance seen. This is an outstanding example of a candidate who has been well-prepared for the examination, but allowed sufficient freedom to take ownership of the response.

The points are made well, the structure of the response allows the candidate to take and develop the arguments around the impact of the director on the live production in relation to how it was in the original.

This is clearly a Level 5 response.

OR

11 Evaluate the director's impact on the production you have seen and compare this with its original performance conditions.

*set Nora not so different, mention Krogstad. less impact*

(Total for Question 11 = 30 marks)

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box . If you change your mind, put a line through the box  and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen Question Number: **Question 10**  **Question 11**

Title of play: *A Doll's House*

Playwright: *Henrik Ibsen*

Date seen: *19<sup>th</sup> September, 2013*

Venue of production: *Duke of York Theatre*

The director of the modern production of *A Doll's House*; Carrie Cracknell used a ~~number~~ number of forms to communicate the feminist themes of the play such as set, costume, lighting and a less more stylised theme than that of the Realism ~~and~~ ~~was~~ presented in the original performance of the play in 1879.

Before seeing the play I read an interview with Cracknell about her interpretation of the play. Unlike Ibsen, who did not originally intend for his work to be seen as an act of feminism, rather exploring themes of justice and freedom, Cracknell wanted to explore the themes of feminism and the character of Nora. She ~~put~~ ~~along~~ with designer, Ian Macneil, Cracknell chose to communicate her feminist interpretation through the set, which was much more ambitious and stylised than Ibsen's "living set." The visual impact of Cracknell's interpretation certainly gave greater impact to the message she was trying to communicate. The use of a ~~revolve~~ and a ~~much smaller~~ set with <sup>a number of</sup> small rooms represented the "hamster-like confinement" of Nora, played by Kattie Morahan. Unlike Ibsen, whose set was there to support the story and create the suspension of disbelief, Cracknell's set represented the entrapment and suppression of women at the time: the ~~revolve~~ symbolised the



Another way in which Cracknell's impact was substantially more ambitious and stylised than the original was through the lighting <sup>and</sup> sound. Similarly to the set, Ibsen's original performance did not use lighting <sup>nor sound</sup> to present a certain view of the play but rather to support the idea of Realism by using gaslights on stage which would have been used in homes at the time to increase the suspension of disbelief. However, although Cracknell ~~and~~ decided to use gaslights on her revolving set, she again broke away from Ibsen's intended Realistic Style in order to communicate a feminist view. An example of this would be a defining moment of Nora's character and, again her entrapment at the end of act one. After ~~the~~ Torvald (played by Dominic Rowen) commands her to dance the Tarantella the lighting and sound take on a stylised approach. The ~~the~~ white light is shone on Morahan's face to make her look like a porcelain doll and the music grows steadily louder. This makes her seem as if she were an object of Torvald's pleasure and a toy that he is free to play with thus successfully ~~communicating~~ Cracknell's feminist ideals. Unlike

The original where lighting is used the same throughout the duration of the play, Cracknell and lighting designer Guy Heave use light and sound at the beginnings of both acts to contrast the ~~atm~~ mood in the two halves of the play. At the beginning there is a much brighter and warmer atmosphere and the sound of Christmas music which adds to the happy and hopeful atmosphere of the household. However this is heavily contrasted at the start of act two where the light is dimmer suggesting it is night thus symbolising a darker turn of events and a sense of doom, with sad, moving and piano music softly playing as we witness a slower and hopeless pace to the performance. Therefore one can argue again that Cracknell was more ambitious and understood the importance and opportunities of set.

However there is an aspect of the performance in which Cracknell directly took from Ibsen's original: the ~~present~~ style of acting and presentation of Nora. In both performances Nora is portrayed by both Betty Stennings and Morahan as childish and glib. This aids both performances clear themes: in Cracknell's it helps to communicate the dominance of Torvald as he likes her

to act like a young girl and she does so to captivate him, Morahan is ever moving, her fingers twitching as if they are looking for sweets to steal and her voice high and and shrill to represent the innocence of a young girl. Jennings would have also portrayed Nora in a similar way but it would have not have been to represent any feminist themes of dominance, repression and desire as was the impact Cracknell hoped to make but one of justice and the hope that Nora might gain some freedom. Cracknell Although Cracknell and Morahan were inspired by the acting style of the original and ignoring the common melodramatic style, the oppression of Nora was further communicated by Krogstad's confrontation of Nora occurring in a smaller room of the house. ~~There~~ There was a more claustrophobic feel and the feeling that Nora could not escape, thus creating a sympathetic feeling towards her, thus again showing her entrapment unlike the original where Nora could have gained a greater distance from him.

It is fair to say that Cracknell's impact was sufficiently greater as she was more ambitious in ways to communicate her own feminist message through set, lighting, sound and

capable actors "Ibsen's play" was solely rooted in the acting and the desire to create the suspension of disbelief. Therefore Crachell's interpretation was in many ways more powerful.

## Paper Summary

To draw this report to a conclusion, it is perhaps helpful to go back to the beginning. This unit is an A Level written examination and there are expectations that are set out in the specification and supported by:

- Past papers and mark schemes and ResultsPlus.
- FAQs on the edexcel website
- The Assessment Support Guide
- Examples of candidate responses from 2012 on the Edexcel website
- Examiners' Reports from all previous series on the Edexcel website
- Online training events from Pearson, with a focus on each individual text

### Highlights of the 2014 series include:

Strong responses in Section C across a range of texts in performance that clearly demonstrated understanding and were indeed 'coherent and knowledgeable'.

Imaginative responses in Section B that showed engagement with the chosen text and demonstrated an understanding of its historical context in relation to its original performance context - particularly with **Woyzeck**, but also in some cases with **Lysistrata** and **Doctor Faustus**.

### Doctor Faustus

Application of rehearsal methods, strategies and techniques in Section A that demonstrated a practical approach to exploring the given extract in order to develop the experience for the actors. Well-structured and thoughtful responses that demonstrated the passion for the subject that we know the candidates have that we know the candidates have:

Evidence of teaching that enabled candidates to access the unit with confidence, commitment and knowledge.

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### Low points of the 2014 series include:

The number of Section B responses that did not reference or reference sufficiently the original performance context.

Section C responses that told the story of the play.

Lack of understanding of the purpose and focus of this unit in relation to the previous series.

Overly long, rambling responses that did not enable candidates to access the higher levels of mark.

Unfocused responses in Section A that listed rehearsal methods, strategies and techniques with a general purpose applied to them but nothing specifically to connect them to the given extract and/or the question.

Responses in c) of Section A that were performance focused, not rehearsal.

**Based on performance on this paper, centres are offered the following advice:**

Review your choice of text in relation to the marks achieved in 2014 and the interests and abilities of the cohort.

Find and book a suitable Section C performance as soon as possible and double check that it meets the criteria as set out in the specification.

Start work on Unit 4 as soon as possible, looking at structuring responses, writing style and techniques, timing responses - all connected to practical activities around sections of the text, and perhaps linking into and supporting practical work around Unit 3.

Review the marks - and the grade boundaries - for this unit and consider why candidates earned the marks they did - and how the new cohort might be supported towards achieving equally well, if not better, depending of course on 2014 achievement.

Read the specification again - understand what this unit is about and how to access the marks available.

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Overly long, rambling responses that did not enable candidates to access the higher levels of mark.

Unfocused responses in Section A that listed rehearsal methods, strategies and techniques with a general purpose applied to them but nothing specifically to connect them to the given extract and/or the question.

Responses in c) of Section A that were performance focused, not rehearsal.

**Based on performance on this paper, centres are offered the following advice:**

Review your choice of text in relation to the marks achieved in 2014 and the interests and abilities of the cohort Find and book a suitable Section C performance as soon as possible and double check that it meets the criteria as set out in the specification.

Start work on Unit 4 as soon as possible, looking at structuring responses, writing style and techniques, timing responses - all connected to practical activities around sections of the text, and perhaps linking into and supporting practical work around Unit 3.

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## **Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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