

**AS LEVEL**

*Exemplar Candidate Work*

# DRAMA AND THEATRE

H059

For first teaching in 2016

## **Exemplar 3:**

AS Level portfolio for a performance  
of *Metamorphosis*

Version 1



# Introduction

This work has been produced by Drama students as part of their school curriculum time, studying practitioners and performing from a text. It offers teachers an insight into how the process can be recorded by students in their research report and portfolio for Process to performance (Component 01/02/03/04).

As these responses have not been through moderation, an indication of the level of each response has not been included. A version of this resource which provides an indication of the level of the response will be made available in addition to this version in due course.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of an endorsed approach to creating a research report or portfolio.



# EXEMPLAR CANDIDATE WORK 3

## SAMPLE ANSWER

### Metamorphosis

Berkoff invented Total Theatre, he believes drama should be abstract, non-naturalistic, physical, exaggerated and everything on that stage is there for a reason. It should be packed with Self Narration, Mime, Repetition, Background Movement and Live SFX.

Berkoff pairs minimal dialogue and sound effects within his work, which in some scenes have been described as 'an assault on the senses'. We displayed this when exploring Berkoff off text we produced several everyday morning actions, which we incorporated Total Theatre into, for example one of my mime movements was making a cup of coffee. We added narration to explain what we were doing "I filled the kettle with water" then added SFX by creating the sound of the tap with water running and used slight exaggeration and mechanical movements to ensure the audience could grasp how every day the actions were we had produced. Total Theatre uses very minimal sets in which there is an emphasis on physicality and props are mimed, which leads the audience to focus on the actors instead of the set, we showed this in our everyday actions by using no props and a bare set.

We decided to create a modern interpretation on Gregor's transformation (pg.82-91) and interpreted that Gregor would be likely to be a drug addict, in the Social Care system and that Mr Samsa was abusive to the family. We decided to look and research at how families deal with this situation in TV programmes and films and concluded that we should have the mother trying to ignore and cover up what her son was going through because she felt ashamed. The father having a very violent reaction, threatening and beating the son. As the Chief Clerk's character wasn't relevant to the modern day we swapped his role to a social worker which I played. We felt this gave an accurate representation of how drug abuse is viewed today, ignored and viewed incredibly negatively in the media as if there is no help or coming back from it and your reputation is tainted from your actions. Although society is slowly understanding the reasoning behind it, mental illness or disability etc. It is still disapproved upon and mental health issues are still viewed unequal to physical illness, and often said people are exaggerating and pretending for attention, which isn't the case. Our performance differs from the original due to us cutting the appearance of the dung beetle and the Chief Clerk, however we still kept the families characters and their characteristics but just reinvented them into modern day.

For Interpretation we wanted to create a performance in which we concentrated on how Mr Samsa views his family and how he treats them. We wanted to keep pieces of the script such as page 81 (scene 1 - Gregor arriving home from work) and 98 (Gregor has been overfed and Mr and Mrs Samsa have an argument), but bring the interpretation into a more modern and realistic piece. To portray this Gregor was in fact not a dung beetle but had a leg injury at work, and the 'Metamorphosis' was the changing of control and downfall of the father. I played Mrs Samsa and to ensure I was identified correctly I used Gestus of clasping my hands and fiddling with them to show she was afraid of her husband. During the adaptation of page 98 and the argument between the mother and father, I kept my voice strong to display how she was trying to stick up for her child. Even more so than is described in the script because as we have modernised the script I felt it was more likely that she was trying to be stronger and independent as I felt this should have been more viable in the original script. As originally the mother would have said it half-heartedly as if not to step on Mr Samsa's toes. To portray this we interpreted the ballet of the stools and used wooden poles instead pushing weight onto each other to display each of them trying to gain control.

To be able to understand Gregor's character we created 3 still images of his transformation, I concentrated on his posture for the first image at the start of the play he is exhausted from travelling to work and feels as if all the weight of the family is left on his shoulders. I displayed this by sitting instead of standing and hunching my shoulders and hanging my head low with blank and vacant facial expressions. I also showed a very low level of tension (Californian), as he really had no energy to sit up right let alone stand, the physical transformation isn't very visible here so I kept my body language human like. In my second still image I showed the process of the transformation by hunching over further as it begins to dehumanise his character however I showed my face this time showing distress and confusion as he didn't understand what was happening to his body, I also raised my level of tension and started to twist my arms and legs to show the changes in his body. In my third position I incorporated the scaffolding into my image and perched on a bar to show an insect's body language, and my arms into positions that displayed inhuman behaviour and had an incredibly high level of tension but soft facial expressions to display Gregor's almost acceptance of what he was.

When looking closer at NVC we entered the room in character and were hot seated by the rest of the class, I played Greta (page 112) in which she's becoming fed up of having the responsibility of Gregor. When I entered the room, I peeped through the window to portray that she wanted to check that Gregor wasn't in sight. I slowly opened the door and I kept walking with my head down, wary and hurried to the chair silently, pausing before taking a seat. I did this because I wanted to show how the situation had knocked Greta emotionally as she had believed she had lost her brother and she was very nervous in case anybody saw she was in Gregor's room.

I just nodded my head when asked most questions, because I interpreted that Greta wouldn't want to say the wrong thing and was anxious that Mr Samsa may be angry with how she replies. I kept my body language very small to show she wasn't meant to be in his room, I did this by being perched on the edge of the seat with my legs crossed, hunched over and not looking directly at anyone as this showed she felt guilty about not feeding Gregor.

We created an exposition for Metamorphosis and focused more on the spatial aspect of the piece, we wanted to create an eerie atmosphere so decided to have the exposition start as soon as the audience enter the room, by creating a small scene of Gregor's desk at work outside the entrance door to set the scene for the audience and the atmosphere we did this by having a dim lamp on the table to suggest the time of day – night-time. We used traverse staging as we felt this made the audience feel like they were in the middle of the scene and created an eerie atmosphere, additionally we had the stage surrounding the audience having part of Gregor's room behind them involving chairs turned over and dark cloth covering them. This suggested that it has no resemblance of bedroom furniture because as he gets deeper and deeper into his metamorphosis he can't recognise as much of his life before. Also for the whole performance we kept Gregor isolated and separated from his family using either the chairs or the scaffolding, this portrays the physical and mental divide, which begins to form later on in the play.

To explore vocal awareness I interpreted the scene where Gregor arrives home from work on the page 81 and wanted to view it from Mr Samsa's point of view. I played Mrs Samsa, we decided to have the rest of the family's volume increasing slowly throughout the performance as we felt it showed anger and gain of control against Mr Samsa especially from Mrs Samsa and Gregor. For example we used techniques such as choral speech and repetition using unison on a section on page 81, 'Gregor! Cash! Gregor! Shoes!' As it appeared to give a tense atmosphere as if to intimidate the father suggesting they were being targeted and weighed down by the strains of the family. We decided to repeat this at the end of the performance too but change 'Gregor!' to 'Father!' and quickened the pace to show Mr Samsa was now in the position in which he had put his son in and he couldn't cope. To show this in our performance, after the repeated choral speech we had Mr Samsa increasing his volume and shout in panic and then pause, become everyone is silent again suggesting loss of control.

We explored Gregor's monologue on page 117 and looked at how he differed from the rest of his family, we concluded that it was because he spoke more sophisticatedly, was in first person, was very emotive in the way he described himself and because he didn't interact verbally with the other characters. Gregor's language didn't relate to what was physically happening to his character as it would mean the audience wouldn't be as sympathetic towards him we decided to reverse this idea in our pieces, by rearranging this monologue (picture) and using simpler language, swearing, shorter sentences or leaving them unfinished. We did this because it showed the pain and frustration he was feeling more realistically, that he couldn't remember the words or physically couldn't get them out, and in most of the monologues the feedback we received was that we felt more sympathetic towards him as we could relate to the language he was using.



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