

AS LEVEL

Exemplar Candidate Work

DRAMA AND THEATRE

H059

For first teaching in 2016

Exemplar 11:

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 11

SAMPLE ANSWER

The Good Person of Szechwan

Bertolt Brecht wrote plays in a way he felt would engage the audience more and educate them because he believed theatre could be used for more than just the retelling of stories but a way to help guide the audience through their own lives.

To help Brecht do this he created epic theatre throughout my exploration I used many techniques to portray "The good person of Szechwan" like placards during my interlude scene on page 21 which read Gods and open/closed to indicate a scene change. I experimented with Brecht's *verfremdungseffekt* to alienate the audience so that they aren't too involved with the story but rather the morals behind it by using direct address to introduce my character in the interlude and breaking the forth wall when winking at the audience as Shui Ta. I also used powerful minimalistic props to show character change e.g. when I wore a waistcoat to indicate the Shen Teh to Shui Ta transformation this also demonstrates multi-role another Brechtian technique.

Finally "The good person of Szechwan" is a parable with a hidden underlining message about the true nature of is there really a good person written by Brecht during the second world war where Arian race, the good and evil where highly controversial topics and people were unsure of themselves now that the conflicts have come to an end Brecht's message is clear: There are no good or bad people just those in between.

By analysing interpretation I chose to interpret the Chinese powerful gods. To be modern day celebrities this change would help the audience connect better with the play and understand what is going on in an up to date way.

I chose to play Whitney Houston as she is seen as a god of pop music. I created a still image to the song line "I will always love you" this image had me low down bending into a microphone with my hand outstretched for a hand shake with the audience (or the humans if I was a god) this shows a connection with gods as people will do anything for celebrity contact making them all-powerful with their wealth and fame.

If the whole piece was to be performed in this way for me it feels the play would have a different meaning about hierarchy and power in society rather than is there a good person.

To look at the social, cultural, political and historical points in the play in a group we decided to change the scene involving the creation of the fake cousin from page 17 onwards from a traditional Chinese inspired drama to east end London dodgy corner shop.

I played Shen Teh as a female drug dealer doing back hand deals behind a counter the audience sat surrounding us (in-the-round) so could see what I was doing behind the counter we all attempted to put on London accents to further emphasise the new cultural aspects. I became a male drug dealer because they earn more money as they are respected more in the east end streets.

I thought about changing Shen Tehs Gender and follow the modern day struggles of sexuality and gender but this would change the whole meaning of the play from a more political viewpoint of world war politics to a more social piece of modern times.

I hoped to explore language by focusing on the family to explore what singles there language out from the other characters.

During the play Shen Teh is pestered by the family who are looking for a place to stay, the family often talk in slang e.g. "Hullo", "chum" and "grandpa can kick off" and rarely have sentences longer than a couple of words as well as having bizarre similes like "He eats like an ostrich" from this style of language they appear to be quite common and uneducated.

I created a scene to further explore the family where they took a day trip to the zoo. I played the role of the nephew. From the style of language and things the family do throughout the play e.g. steal food, my group and I played the family with cockney accents and short sentences like in the script. Cockney accents are stereotypical for unintelligent people so that's why we opted for that. We also snuck into the zoo as we felt the family weren't the sort of people who paid.

To examine characterisation in the good person of Szechwan, I interpreted the "Song of defencelessness of the good and the gods" on page 48. Specifically the "She puts on Shui Ta's Costume and takes a few steps in his way of walking" stage direction. To see how the two characters could be distinguished.

The Characters of Shen Teh and Shui Ta are very contrasting Shen Teh is kind, thoughtful but taken advantage of whilst Shui Ta is portrayed as stern, unkind and controlling over others. To distinguish the two I created a *gestus* for each character.

I entered the stage as Shen Teh with a closed body language making the character appear slightly shy this gave the effect that she was often overlooked and ignored but a small wave (gestus) to show I was friendly and approachable. Compare this to when I dressed myself in a waistcoat and sunglasses to portray Shui Ta, despite having a costume which tells the audience I am already a different character I also appeared on stage with an open body language to show I was overly confident and proud as well as a gestus of lifting up my glasses and winking (flirt). This added an element of comedy, due to the dramatic irony because the audience knows I am a woman, so I am not flirting with the women in the audience but rather the men.

To experiment with vocal awareness I looked at the duologue of episode 7 on page 71. "Yard behind Shen Teh's shop" to see the affect my voice had on the lines and whether or not Shen Teh came across as a good liar.

Because Shen Teh's character is a woman and the play is a comedy I chose to perform in a slightly higher pitched voice to impersonate a woman.

I tried going through (a partner playing Mrs Shin) the lines slowly and stuttering every time the character was put on the spot, this had the effect of making it look to the audience like I was a bad liar which I felt didn't have the correct effect as Shen Teh spends most of the play lying as Shui Ta, But when attempting to counter it I sped up my lines quickly delivering lies to Mrs Shin very naturally this made me as a character look quite stressed, and possibly under pressure to silence Mrs Shin. Both tempos worked very well but I opted to remove my stuttering and just speak very slow and clear and elongate certain words e.g. "No." Accompany this with rolling eyes it appeared very sarcastic and quite comedic for the audience.

To explore the aspects of Visual, Aural and Spatial in a group I interpreted the interlude "Under a bridge" on page 21 during the piece I played a god and the grandfather in the family. By introducing visual aural and spatial features we wanted to see the effects it had on the audience and their perception on the characters.

In order to differentiate the characters I, as a god would be on a platform, this spatial difference between Wang the water seller who was on the floor allowed me to look more powerful and godlike as I stood him.

We experimented with different music to see if we could help the audience understand aurally that what they were witnessing was a dream. First of all we played harp noises every transition to show how the piece was transitioning into a dream but when we did this it felt to cliché and so we decided to play calming music throughout the whole dream sequence to show that what was occurring was unnatural or abstract and hopefully peaceful.

Visually there were placards introducing each setting and the characters wore different clothing based on who they were as a god I wore a sash and gold jewellery. To show wealth and power but the grandpa wore all black to show dullness.

To express nonverbal communication I walked from the back to the front of the stage in the style of the Barber: Shu Fu before creating a gestus (a small action to symbolise his personality and character) that would be used by that character if I were to play him in a reproduction of "The good person of Szechwan."

I walked on stage with a very tense body and wide step to hopefully come across as powerful and strong. I also wanted to be taken seriously as the barber is a successful business man so I retained a straight slightly disgusted look, due to all the people who were peasants compared to me e.g. Wang whose hand I broke.

My gestus at the centre front was me playing with my hair in thought this indicates to the audience both I am the barber as I am focusing on my hair but also I am a wise intelligent man as I look like I am in deep thought.



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