A Project Approach to Delivery:
The Bloody Chamber

The Bloody Chamber by Angela Carter is a short story re-telling the legend of Bluebeard Castle, a French 'fairy-tale' in which the main character marries and then kills a succession of wives – he warns them not to enter a particular room in his castle and when they do, out of curiosity, death is their 'reward'. The last wife survives after being rescued by her mother, she then subsequently marries the blind piano-tuner.

You will be working as the design and production team for the production, working to realise the full potential of the text and the director's brief for it. You will have your own specific roles within this team covering:

- Set design and construction.

- Lighting design and operation.

- Sound design and operation.

- Character design, including hair, make-up and costume.

- Stage Management.

However collectively you will all have responsibility for the production as a whole, this will involve:

- Attending and contributing to production meetings.

- Organising and keeping to schedules and timelines.

- Create and use appropriate production documentation.

- Evaluate and use safe working practices.

As the content and title suggests this is a dark and gothic tale that provides for a wide range of creative and artistic skills and techniques to be developed and realised; there is scope to use imagination in the dynamic interpretation of the text and the director's brief. It is not the responsibility of you as designers to be constrained by resources – the producer and director will set a budget and decide on a venue later on in the process.

Initially when acting as the design team you should be unrestrained in your pursuit of a 'vision' for the performance. Later on in the process of production you will be given more information on the realisation of the designs and operations of lighting and sound. At this stage you will be asked to adapt some of the ideas to meet the specific needs of the venue and of the budget.

Your work will be organised into modules, each module will have defined tasks and evidence. Some of these tasks will be related to production meetings; there will be three of these including the final technical rehearsal. Other tasks will relate to operations during the performances and a final review meeting.

Your work therefore can be summarised as follows:

- General report on roles, responsibilities, documentation and risk assessments.

- Read and interpret the text, present initial design ideas.

- Adapt and re-work ideas for given space and resources.

- Produce final documents and operational plans.

- Review evidence and work.

Director's initial statement:

I want a dark and rich vision in light and sound and costume. I want space for performers to move freely and with speed but I also want the enclosed and claustrophobic nature of the castle to be evoked. The wives must feel choked by the suffocating oppression but this can be emotional as well as physical. Walls and floors could move around the actors! Sounds could be big and operatic but then whispering and almost oozing from the brickwork. There should be hints of gothic expressionism but also elements that seem familiar to a contemporary audience. Let your imagination go wild – but be loyal to the demands of the text!

This work can be undertaken as an individual or within a team. If working within a team learners are expected to contribute to each of the areas (and be able to evidence this contribution) in order to gain the experience and knowledge required to successfully complete the Cambridge Technicals in Performing Arts Level 3 (Theatre Production Pathway) units.