VCE Drama
2014–2018
Solo performance examination

Examination specifications

Overall conditions

The examination will be undertaken at a time, date and venue to be set annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

The examination will be assessed by a panel appointed by the VCAA.

Examination time: not more than 10 minutes, including preparation, performance and clearing the space

The examination will contribute 35 per cent to the study score.

Content

Students will present a solo performance based on the prescribed structure that is set annually by a panel appointed by the VCAA and published by the VCAA in April. The performance will draw on key knowledge and key skills from Unit 4 Outcome 2 in the *VCE Drama Study Design 2014–2018*.

Information about the characteristics and requirements of prescribed structures is revised and published annually in the VCE Drama solo performance examination materials, which include a section on terminology (see sample 'Terminology' on page 17).

Students must use a current prescribed structure or their performance will receive zero marks for each assessment criterion.

Overview

Each prescribed structure is made up of the following: character, stimulus, performance focus, performance style, convention and dramatic element. The following explanations should be used when preparing the solo performance and must be evident in the performance.

- **Character** – This is the main character who must have a central focus within the performance.
- **Stimulus** – This is the specified source of information that must be used in the development of the character and be referenced throughout the performance.
- **Performance focus** – This is information that provides a context for the character. Students are required to present this information in their performance, incorporating the specific details that are identified in the opening sentences and the three dot points. **All aspects of the performance focus must be included in the performance.** Each aspect of the performance focus does not have to be given equal emphasis during the performance. Unless otherwise indicated, aspects of the performance focus may be performed in any order. When a prescribed structure includes the terms 'creates' and/or 'recreates', students are required to enact and/or re-enact situations and conversations for an audience. The emphasis in the creation and/or recreation must be on action rather than narration; 'doing' rather than 'telling' (see sample 'Terminology').
- **Performance style** – All performances will be non-naturalistic in style. When an additional specified performance style is nominated, it is explained in the prescribed structure and in the 'Terminology' section of the examination materials. Each specified performance style has a list of dot points that exemplifies the style. These aspects of the performance style must be evident in the performance and any combination of the points may be used. Additional conventions of the style may be used where appropriate. The prescribed performance style(s) must be demonstrated throughout the performance.

- **Convention** – All performances must contain transformation of character, time, place and object, and must also contain the specified convention within the performance. Students may use other conventions as appropriate.
- **Dramatic element** – One dramatic element will be prescribed for each structure and it **must** be used during the performance. The dramatic element prescribed will be selected from the following list: climax, conflict, contrast, mood, rhythm, sound, space, symbol and tension. Students may add other elements as appropriate.
- **Reference material** – Resources are provided to support each prescribed structure. It is recommended that all reference material be considered when developing the character. The list is not exhaustive and students should undertake further research in developing their character(s) for performance.

  Please note: If reference material is also listed under **stimulus**, it **must** be used in the development of the performance.

A section on terminology will be provided with the examination materials. Students should consult this list for explanations of the terminology used in the examination.

The definition of each prescribed performance style is listed at the bottom of each prescribed structure. Definitions provided in the 'Terms used in this study' section of the *VCE Drama Study Design* also apply in this examination.

Format

Information about the characteristics and requirements of prescribed structures is revised and published annually in the VCE Drama solo performance examination materials. Examinations materials from previous years may be downloaded from <www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vce/studies/drama/exam.html>.

The solo performance **must** be completed in no more than **seven minutes** and will be presented as a single uninterrupted performance.

A total of **10 minutes** per student will be allocated for preparation, performance and clearing the space.

No additional time is permitted. When preparing stagecraft for the solo performance, students should be mindful of these restrictions.

Students will present assessors with a written Statement of Intention of 80–100 words. The purpose of the statement is to highlight aspects of the student's interpretation that they would like to bring to the assessors' attention. This may include:

- an explanation/clarification of decisions made in their interpretation of the prescribed structure
- reasons for choices made (for example, for the use of costume, properties, accent or symbol)
- where and how a specific convention, element or dot point is demonstrated in the performance.

Students should not simply describe their character by rewriting the performance focus.

A standard form for the Statement of Intention will be published on the VCAA website in April with the examination materials.

Performance examination conditions

Performance conditions are revised and published annually as part of the VCE Drama solo performance examination materials. These are published in April each year.

Examination criteria

Students will be examined against the following criteria:

1. Requirements of the prescribed structure

Students must address all aspects of the prescribed structure to gain the maximum possible marks for this criterion and for the other criteria.

Required aspects of the performance are listed on pages 1 and 2.

2. Development of a performance from the prescribed structure

Students demonstrate skill in using the prescribed structure and stimulus material as well as additional material from a variety of sources, as appropriate, to create and develop a character(s) within a solo performance. This development also involves making imaginative choices in the shaping of the performance text.

3. Research, scripting and editing

Students demonstrate skill in using a range of play-making techniques to create a coherent and refined response to the prescribed structure.

4. Use of performance style(s), including the performance style prescribed in the structure

Students demonstrate:

- understanding of non-naturalistic performance styles
- ability to apply aspects of the prescribed performance style consistently throughout the performance.

5. Use of convention, including use of the convention prescribed in the structure

Students demonstrate:

- understanding of transformation of character, transformation of time, transformation of place and transformation of object
- ability to apply **each of these** during the performance
- understanding of the additional convention, as specified in the prescribed structure, and ability to apply it during the performance
- ability to apply other conventions as appropriate.

6. Use of dramatic elements, including use of the dramatic element prescribed in the structure

Students demonstrate:

- understanding of the prescribed dramatic element
- ability to apply this dramatic element during the performance
- ability to apply other dramatic elements as appropriate.

The prescribed dramatic element will be selected from the following: climax, conflict, contrast, mood, rhythm, sound, space, symbol and tension.

7. Timing

Students demonstrate understanding of, and skill in, the use of timing to control or regulate the pace of a performance. The prescribed convention and dramatic element will influence the timing and pace of the piece. This may involve the delivery of lines or the use of pauses. For example, dramatic tension and comedic tension require different timing, or if climax is prescribed, the performance will need to build to this point.

8. Use of expressive skills

Students demonstrate understanding of, and skill in, the use of voice, facial expression, gesture and movement to express and realise a character(s) within the context of the prescribed performance style and convention.

9. Use of performance skills

Students demonstrate understanding of, and skills in, focus, timing, energy, belief and creation of an actor–audience relationship throughout the solo performance. This includes demonstrating presence and commitment throughout the performance.

Students demonstrate skill in portraying a character(s) through the memorisation of the performance text (language – verbal and non-verbal, voice, movement, facial expression and gesture) and the ability to make clear to the audience the presence of other (imagined) characters in the space, as appropriate to the prescribed structure.

10. Application of stagecraft

Students demonstrate understanding of, and skill in, the use and manipulation of stagecraft, such as costume or make-up, to add meaning to the performance. Its use must be consistent with the prescribed performance style and convention.

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

Performance examination conditions

1. The examination will be set and assessed by panels appointed by the VCAA.

2. VCAA examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the *VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook*.

3. The performance examination venue is set annually by the VCAA.

4. The solo performance will be presented as a single uninterrupted performance and last **not more than seven minutes**.

5. If a performance exceeds the prescribed time limit, the student will be asked to stop. A timing device will indicate when the seven minutes have elapsed.

6. A total of **10 minutes** per student will be allocated for preparation, performance and clearing the space. No additional time is allowed. Students should be mindful of these time restrictions when preparing stagecraft for the solo performance.

7. The performance will use a single clearly lit space. No changes to the lighting grid are permitted.

8. Only **two** chairs will be provided in the examination room for students to use in the performance, if they wish. Any additional properties, if required, must be carried into the examination room by the **student alone** and within the allotted time.

9. Students are **not** permitted to bring any objects or substances deemed hazardous or illegal into the performance examination venue. **All actual and imitation weapons are prohibited.** The use of such items is **not** permitted in the performance. Students are advised not to use any materials or properties in the performance that may cause, or that may be seen to cause, injury to themselves or others.

10. The use of open flames, including candles and matches, is **not** permitted in the performance.

11. Students must ensure that any properties, costumes (including footwear) or other aspects of their performance **do not**, in any way, damage the performance space. Students are responsible for the cleaning up and removal of any materials they bring into the space for their performance.

12. Students will be allocated an examination room at the performance examination venue in which to perform. Students and their teachers are **not** permitted to request a change of room.

13. Only the panel of assessors and any personnel authorised by the VCAA will be permitted in the examination room with the student during the examination.

14. Students may choose to perform to the assessors as audience or to an imagined audience, or both.

15. Students must **not** walk behind and/or touch and/or approach the assessors during the examination.

16. The assessors' table is for assessment purposes. Students are not to place objects on the assessors' table or use the table in any way as part of their performance.

Statement of Intention

1. A sample Statement of Intention form is published on page 23.

2. Immediately prior to their performance, students are required to present **three copies** of the Statement of Intention to the panel of assessors. The statement should not exceed 100 words.

3. The purpose of the Statement of Intention is to highlight aspects of the student's interpretation that they would like to bring to the assessors' attention. This may include:
   - an explanation/clarification of decisions made in their interpretation of the prescribed structure
   - reasons for choices made (for example, for the use of costume, properties, accent, symbol)
   - where and how a specific convention, element or dot point is demonstrated in the performance.

4. Students should not simply describe their character by rewriting the performance focus.

5. The Statement of Intention will **not** be assessed.

Advice

1. Students are required to prepare a solo performance using one of the following 10 prescribed structures. Marks will **not** be awarded for performances that do not use one of the prescribed structures.

2. Each prescribed structure is composed of the following: character, stimulus, performance focus, performance style, convention, dramatic element and reference material. The following explanations should be used when preparing the solo performance:
   - **Character** – the main character to be depicted in the performance
   - **Stimulus** – the source of information that **must** be used in the development of the character and **must** be evident throughout the performance
   - **Performance focus** – information that provides a context for the character
     Students are required to present this information in their performance, incorporating the specific details that are identified in the three dot points and in the opening sentences.

     The three dot points (DP)
     - **DP1** begins with the word **recreates** and requires students to present material that is researched directly from the stimulus.
     - **DP2** begins with the word **creates** and requires students to invent material that might or could have happened.
     - **DP3** requires students to move beyond the stimulus and to respond to the scenario outlined using imagination and creativity.

     The opening sentences
     - The opening sentences provide background to the character.
     - They indicate where and when the performance takes place.
     - They establish the audience.
     - They provide insight into the emotional state or motivation of the character.

     All aspects of the performance focus must be included in the performance.

     Each aspect of the performance focus does not have to be given equal emphasis during the performance.

     Unless otherwise indicated, aspects of the performance focus may be performed in any order.
   - **Performance style** – The prescribed performance style(s) is explained in the 'Terminology' section of the examination materials and on each prescribed structure where an additional style is listed. The prescribed style(s) must be used throughout the performance. Where features are listed for a particular non-naturalistic style, students can use **some or all** of the features listed, as appropriate to their performance.
   - **Convention** – The following conventions **will be assessed in all performances**: transformation of character, time, place and object. In addition, one convention will be specifically prescribed for each character and it **must** be used during the performance. Other conventions may be added as appropriate.

- **Dramatic element** – One dramatic element will be prescribed for each character and it **must** be used during the performance. The dramatic element to be prescribed will be selected from the following list: climax, conflict, contrast, mood, rhythm, sound, space, symbol and tension. Students may use additional elements as appropriate.
- **Reference material** – Students should undertake research when developing their character(s) for performance. Resources are provided as recommendations; this list is not exhaustive.

  Please note: If a resource is also listed under **Stimulus**, it **must** be used in the development of the character and **must** be evident throughout the performance.

3. The emphasis in performance must be on action rather than narration; 'doing' rather than 'telling'.
4. A 'Terminology' section is provided. Students should consult this for explanations of performance styles and conventions, as prescribed in the examination. Where an additional performance style is listed, a definition is included in both the prescribed structure and in the 'Terminology' section of the examination.

Notes for VCE Drama solo performance examination

1. While the VCAA considers all the prescribed structures suitable for study, teachers should be aware that, in some instances, sensitivity might be needed where particular issues or themes are explored. Teachers should ensure they are aware of the issues and themes that are contained in the structures prior to the commencement of Unit 4 so that they can provide appropriate advice to students.
2. Schools should check the local availability of required stimulus materials and resources prior to beginning Unit 4. Some materials may not be immediately available.
3. Students and teachers should be aware that websites, including Wikipedia, may contain information that has been altered since the publication of the examination materials.
4. Where a dot point in a particular structure requires moments or aspects, **at least two** instances of the requirement must be evident in the performance.
5. Where a dot point in a particular structure requires a montage of dramatic images or a series of vignettes, **three or more** images or vignettes must be evident in the performance.
6. Students and teachers are reminded that, in addition to the one convention prescribed in each structure, **transformation of character**, **time**, **place and object** must be demonstrated in every performance.
7. When making performance choices, students and teachers should note that all characters **must** be portrayed in the gender identified in the prescribed structure.
8. Students and teachers should note that a table will **not** be provided in the examination space.
9. All enquiries regarding the VCE Drama solo performance examination should be forwarded to Helen Champion, Curriculum Manager, telephone: (03) 9032 1723 or Glenn Martin, Project Manager, Assessment, telephone: (03) 9225 2212.

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 1

Character

The Survivor

Stimulus

The painting *Guernica*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on a person in the painting: *Guernica.*

At a refugee camp, after escaping the bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica in 1937, the grateful Survivor recounts, for members of the Red Cross, how they survived. In doing so, the Survivor:

- recreates a montage of dramatic images that shows the events leading up to, and the aftermath of, the bombing
- creates a scene(s) that shows how he/she actively supported the republican cause against Franco
- creates a scene(s) that makes a parallel to the horrors of another war.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic with aspects of theatre of cruelty*

Convention

Pathos

Dramatic element

Sound

Reference material

Guernica by Pablo Picasso, 1937

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guernica_(painting)

http://www.pablopicasso.org/guernica.jsp

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*Theatre of cruelty

Theatre of cruelty is a type of theatre that attempts to assault or shock the senses of the audience as a form of engagement. It is exemplified by, for example:

- brutal/graphic imagery that is often sudden or unexpected and designed to shock or provoke an intellectual or emotional reaction in the viewer
- unrealistic and contorted movement and gesture
- loud and intense music
- the use of stillness and silence
- the use of sounds, including cries, wails and screams
- dream-like and often fantastic visuals.

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 2

Character

Marvellous Melbourne

Stimulus

The poem 'The Jubilee of Melbourne' by JF Daniell

> Here, fifty winters since, by Yarra's stream,
> A scattered hamlet found its modest place:
> What mind would venture then in wildest dream
> Its wondrous growth and eminence to trace?
> What seer predict a stripling in the race
> Would, swift as Atalanta, win the prize
> Of progress, 'neath the world's astonished eyes?

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the life of Melbourne in 1888.

In a bid to lure prospective inhabitants to Melbourne, Marvellous Melbourne shows off the best aspects of the town. To do so, he/she:

- recreates a montage of dramatic images that shows the highlights of Melbourne in 1888
- creates a scene(s) of a person living in Melbourne in 1888 whose life has been affected by the Centennial International Exhibition
- creates a scene(s) that compares Melbourne to another town/city in Australia in 1888 or beyond.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic with aspects of epic theatre*

Convention

Lyrical and symbolic language and imagery

Dramatic element

Contrast

Reference material

Any history of Melbourne

'The Jubilee of Melbourne' by JF Daniell in *A Century of Australian Song*, 1888

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melbourne_International_Exhibition_(1880)

http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00858b.htm

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*Epic theatre

Sometimes called Brechtian theatre, epic theatre is a style that seeks to tell a story, often on a large historical scale, and including a number of people and events over time. It aims to engage the intellect rather than emotions and often uses devices that alienate the audience. It is exemplified by, for example:

- direct address and/or the use of narration and song
- the use of signs
- the use of mask and movement
- the creation of a large range of characters, often transformed using minimal costume or properties
- stylised gesture and movement
- deliberate and conscious choices intended to remind the audience that they are watching a play.

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 3

Character

The Knight

Stimulus

The film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of one of the 'Knights who say Ni' from the film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*.

In an attempt to convince King Arthur that the Knight should become a Knight of the Round Table, he:

- recreates a scene(s) that shows a heroic deed he has performed
- creates a montage of dramatic images that demonstrates ways in which he assisted Merlin with the creation of Stonehenge
- creates a scene(s) that highlights a plot he has overheard from King Arthur's courtiers, demonstrating all is not well in Camelot.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic with aspects of Pythonesque comedy*

Convention

Caricature

Dramatic element

Rhythm

Reference material

Monty Python and the Holy Grail, directed by Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones, 1975 [PG]

http://pythonline.com/

http://www.britannia.com/history/h12.html

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*Pythonesque comedy

This is a term that encapsulates the work of the Monty Python team, who were popular on television and in film during the 1970s. Much of the team's work is highly satirical, unpredictable or absurd and seeks to attack middle/upper-class social conventions. It is exemplified by, for example:

- silly, farcical or surreal situations and dialogue
- an episodic/collage-like structure, with sketches that rarely have a punchline
- the use of peculiar or bizarre characters and/or character types
- the parodying of social classes and political or religious figures
- the use of songs, poems, rhymes and word play/puns.

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 4

Character

Pride

Stimulus

The novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character Pride.

On his arrival at 'Purgatory', Pride confronts Dorian Gray and gloats that vanity is a human frailty. In doing so, he:

- recreates a scene(s) that shows how Pride has manipulated Dorian's downfall through the vice of vanity
- creates a scene(s) that shows how people's obsession with the pursuit of youth and beauty has evolved over time
- demonstrates examples of Pride's influence in world affairs.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic with aspects of Gothic horror*

Convention

Exaggerated movement

Dramatic element

Mood

Reference material

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde, 1890

The Divine Comedy by Dante Alighieri (Book 2, Purgatory, Canto X to XII)

www.newadvent.org/cathen/12405a.htm

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*Gothic horror

This is a style that combines elements of melodrama, horror and romance. It is the presentation of a performance that deals with supernatural or often terrifying events. It is exemplified by, for example:

- a narrative that focuses on other-worldly characters, such as vampires and ghosts, or evil and madness
- a general sense of gloom, isolation and foreboding
- a strong sense of atmosphere and the natural order unleashed
- a suffering, troubled or Byronic (characteristic of Lord Byron or his poetry – melancholic or rebellious) hero or heroine, villains, monsters and demons
- the use of a narrator and flashback
- a sense of mystery or claustrophobia.

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 5

Character

Noor Inayat Khan

Stimulus

The life and times of Noor Inayat Khan

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the person Noor Inayat Khan.

During an interrogation by suspicious members of her Paris Resistance cell, Noor attempts to persuade them that she is a genuine British agent. In doing so, she:

- recreates a montage of dramatic images that shows how her early family and/or military life prepared her for her work in the Resistance
- creates a scene(s) that shows how she avoided capture by the Nazis
- creates a scene(s) that compares her contribution to the fight for the French Resistance to that of Nancy Wake and/or Violette Szabo.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic*

Convention

Use of stillness and silence

Dramatic element

Tension

Reference material

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noor_Inayat_Khan

http://www.moreorless.net.au/heroes/wake.html

http://www.violetteszabo.org/

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*Non-naturalistic

Non-naturalism is a broad term for all performance styles that are not dependent on a life-like representation of everyday life. It is based on the work of Antonin Artaud (theatre of cruelty), Bertolt Brecht (epic theatre) and Jerzy Grotowski (poor theatre). Non-naturalism can allow an actor to explore and present ideas or stories conceptually.

Non-naturalism does not seek to recreate life as it is lived, but is focused more on passing comment on, or responding to, aspects of the real world. Non-naturalistic performance can occur in any space and is not dependent on specific resources. Non-naturalistic performance work might include the manipulation of both naturalistic and non-naturalistic conventions.

A non-naturalistic performance may be defined by the non-naturalistic:

- use of stagecraft
- acting style of the performers
- use of dramatic elements
- use of conventions, including transformation of character and/or time and/or place and/or object.

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 6

Character

The Broadway Producer

Stimulus

The Dastardly Book For Dogs

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of the Broadway Producer.

The doggedly determined Broadway Producer meets with canny canine authors Rex and Sparky in an attempt to persuade them that a new show called 'DOGZ, the Musical' should be based on their work *The Dastardly Book For Dogs*. To do so, the Broadway Producer:

- recreates how dogs train their human masters, which is the climax of Act 1
- creates the love song from Act 2, which glorifies canine qualities
- demonstrates how 'DOGZ, the Musical' has been influenced by the 1930s musical *Show Boat*.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic with aspects of musical theatre*

Convention

Song

Dramatic element

Climax

Reference material

The Dastardly Book For Dogs by Rex and Sparky, 2007

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Show_Boat

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*Musical theatre

This is a style of theatre that comprises a mixture of song, dance, music and spoken dialogue. It is exemplified by, for example:

- central characters often involved in a love or romantic entanglement set against a bigger event or context that often results in conflict
- emotional content, such as love, pathos, anger or humour, expressed through song or dance
- a range of differing musical/dance forms and styles
- the use of comedy and characters that are often larger than life.

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 7

Character

Little Edie

Stimulus

The documentary film *Grey Gardens*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the person Little Edie (Edith Bouvier Beale).

While trying to convince an inspector from the Suffolk County Health Department not to condemn Grey Gardens, Little Edie justifies the validity of her lifestyle choices. In doing so, she:

- recreates an example from her hermit-like life that demonstrates the intense relationship between mother and daughter
- creates a montage of dramatic images from her life prior to 1952
- creates a parallel between herself and a central female character in a Tennessee Williams play.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic with aspects of cabaret*

Convention

Fatal flaw

Dramatic element

Conflict

Reference material

The documentary film *Grey Gardens*, directed by David and Albert Maysles, 1975 [PG]

http://greygardensonline.com/

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edith_Bouvier_Beale

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*Cabaret

Cabaret is a form of musical theatre, performed in small theatres or clubs, that often has a social, political or satirical message. It is exemplified by, for example:

- a mixture of music, song, dance or short comedy sketches
- satirical dialogue or song lyrics
- risqué content, bawdy humour and double entendres
- comical references to current events, politicians or famous people
- exaggerated characters and a sense of caricature
- a master of ceremonies (emcee).

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 8

Character

Zhu Xiao-Mei

Stimulus

The picture book *The Red Piano*

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the person Zhu Xiao-Mei.

During her performance for members of the French Institut de Beaux Arts on Bastille Day 2014, Zhu Xiao-Mei champions the cause for contemporary Chinese artists. In doing so, she:

- recreates an example of the hardships she faced as a young girl in Zhangjiake Camp 46–19
- creates a scene(s) that explores a significant moment in her life after she was released from the camp
- demonstrates how another world-renowned artist or performer overcame political restrictions to build a career in the arts.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic with aspects of Asian theatre*

Convention

Movement

Dramatic element

Contrast

Reference material

The Red Piano by André Leblanc (author) and Barroux (illustrator), 2010

http://www.wilkinsfarago.com.au/Teachers_Notes_Red_Piano.pdf

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Revolution

People such as Jung Chang and her family, Rudolph Nureyev and Kurt Weill

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*Asian theatre

This is an eclectic form of theatre that encompasses the history and theatrical styles and traditions of countries from Asia. It is exemplified by, for example:

- a non-linear structure of storytelling
- the use of a narrator, mime and acrobatics
- the use of stylised and symbolic movement, gesture and dance
- the use of mask, make-up and puppetry
- the use of music, chanting and percussion, highly stylised characters, symbolic costumes and properties
- a sense of ritual and other sacred forms of theatre.

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 9

Character

The Newspaper Mogul

Stimulus

The life and times of William Randolph Hearst

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the person William Randolph Hearst.

While directing his legal team to respond to thinly veiled attacks on him in the film *Citizen Kane*, Hearst angrily demands that his name be cleared. To do this, he:

- recreates a montage of dramatic images that shows how he built his media empire
- creates a scene(s) that shows how far he was prepared to go to prevent the release and distribution of *Citizen Kane*
- creates a scene(s) that shows how a future media empire will take 'yellow journalism' to an entirely new level.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic*

Convention

Satire

Dramatic element

Symbol

Reference material

Citizen Kane, directed by Orson Welles, 1941 [PG]

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Randolph_Hearst

http://www.crikey.com.au/2010/09/22/safe-journalism-is-firmly-based-in-ethical-journalism/

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*Non-naturalistic

Non-naturalism is a broad term for all performance styles that are not dependent on a life-like representation of everyday life. It is based on the work of Antonin Artaud (theatre of cruelty), Bertolt Brecht (epic theatre) and Jerzy Grotowski (poor theatre). Non-naturalism can allow an actor to explore and present ideas or stories conceptually.

Non-naturalism does not seek to recreate life as it is lived, but is focused more on passing comment on, or responding to, aspects of the real world. Non-naturalistic performance can occur in any space and is not dependent on specific resources. Non-naturalistic performance work might include the manipulation of both naturalistic and non-naturalistic conventions.

A non-naturalistic performance may be defined by the non-naturalistic:

- use of stagecraft
- acting style of the performers
- use of dramatic elements
- use of conventions, including transformation of character and/or time and/or place and/or object.

PRESCRIBED STRUCTURE 10

Character

The Detective

Stimulus

http://www.smh.com.au/national/riddle-on-the-sands-20121119-29kwz.html

Performance focus

Create a solo performance based on the character of the Detective.

It is Adelaide, 1949. Following an anonymous tip-off, the jaded Detective attempts to persuade police officers from the Glenelg Station to close the 'Somerton Man' case. To do this, he:

- recreates a montage of dramatic images that shows the circumstances surrounding the mystery
- creates a scene(s) that shows how he solved the mystery for 'interested parties' in America
- creates a scene(s) that demonstrates a connection with the search for the Maltese Falcon, as depicted in the 1941 film, *The Maltese Falcon*.

Performance style

Non-naturalistic with aspects of film noir*

Convention

Heightened use of language

Dramatic element

Mood

Reference material

The Maltese Falcon, directed by John Huston, 1941 [PG]

http://www.smh.com.au/national/riddle-on-the-sands-20121119-29kwz.html

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_noir

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*Film noir

This is a cinematic term that refers to the Hollywood crime dramas of the 1940s and 1950s. Film noir seeks to examine the darker side of life and involves characters that are often motivated by greed or sexual desire. It is exemplified by, for example:

- a sense of menace
- the femme fatale character
- cynical or world-weary characters
- the use of narration or voice over
- the use of flashback
- sleazy settings
- foreboding music
- heightened use of language.

SAMPLE TERMINOLOGY

The explanations listed below provide direction for teachers and students in the development of the VCE Drama solo performance examination. This information should be read with pp. 10–12 of the *VCE Drama Study Design 2014–2018*.

Non-naturalistic

Non-naturalism is a broad term for all performance styles that are not dependent on a life-like representation of everyday life. It is based on the work of Antonin Artaud (theatre of cruelty), Bertolt Brecht (epic theatre) and Jerzy Grotowski (poor theatre). Non-naturalism can allow an actor to explore and present ideas or stories conceptually.

Non-naturalism does not seek to recreate life as it is lived, but is focused more on passing comment on, or responding to, aspects of the real world. Non-naturalistic performance can occur in any space and is not dependent on specific resources. Non-naturalistic performance work might include the manipulation of both naturalistic and non-naturalistic conventions.

A non-naturalistic performance may be defined by the non-naturalistic:

- use of stagecraft
- acting style of the performers
- use of dramatic elements
- use of conventions, including transformation of character and/or time and/or place and/or object.

Create

To create is to enact for an audience situations and conversations that may be informed by material other than the stimulus, such as reference material. The emphasis in the creation must be on action rather than narration; 'doing' rather than 'telling'.

Recreate

To recreate is to re-enact situations and conversations that are informed by the stimulus. The emphasis in the recreation must be on action rather than narration; 'doing' rather than 'telling'.

Asian theatre

This is an eclectic form of theatre that encompasses the history and theatrical styles and traditions of countries from Asia. It is exemplified by, for example:

- a non-linear structure of storytelling
- the use of a narrator, mime and acrobatics
- the use of stylised and symbolic movement, gesture and dance
- the use of mask, make-up and puppetry
- the use of music, chanting and percussion, highly stylised characters, symbolic costumes and properties
- a sense of ritual and other sacred forms of theatre.

Cabaret

Cabaret is an adult form of musical theatre, performed in small theatres or clubs, that often has a social, political or satirical message. It is exemplified by, for example:

- a mixture of music, song, dance or short comedy sketches
- satirical dialogue or song lyrics
- risqué content, bawdy humour and double entendres
- comical references to current events, politicians or famous people
- exaggerated characters and a sense of caricature
- a master of ceremonies (emcee).

Caricature

Caricature is an exaggeration of a character that is often ludicrous or grotesque. It can be comic, at times derogatory, with the intention to ridicule.

Climax

The climax is the most significant moment of tension or conflict in a drama, often occurring towards the end of the plot. Multiple climaxes and/or an anticlimax can also occur. The action of a drama usually unravels after the climax has transpired, but the work might finish with a climactic moment.

Comedy

Comedy is a performance style that is associated with amusement, fun and humour, and is intended to entertain, delight or invoke laughter. It is exemplified by, for example:

- characters or situations that are often silly, ludicrous or absurd
- the use of words, jokes or stories that have a punchline
- the use of parody, caricature, visual or physical gags and other comedic styles
- the use of references to current events, famous people or politicians
- the use of costume or properties to enhance comedy.

Conflict

Conflict generally occurs when a character cannot achieve an objective due to an obstacle. This obstacle may be internal or external – between characters or between characters and their environment. Conflict can be shown in a variety of ways, for example through physical, verbal or psychological means. Conflict can be embedded in the structure of the drama.

Contrast

Contrast presents the dissimilar or opposite in order to highlight or emphasise difference. Contrast can be explored in many ways, and can include contrasting characters, settings, times, themes, elements, stagecraft and performance styles.

Epic theatre

Sometimes called Brechtian theatre, epic theatre is a style that seeks to tell a story, often on a large historical scale, and including a number of people and events over time. It aims to engage the intellect rather than emotions and often uses devices that alienate the audience. It is exemplified by, for example:

- direct address and/or the use of narration and song
- the use of signs
- the use of mask and movement
- the creation of a large range of characters, often transformed using minimal costume or properties
- stylised gesture and movement
- deliberate and conscious choices intended to remind the audience that they are watching a play.

Exaggerated movement

Exaggerated movement includes action that is overstated or drawn larger than life; often for the purpose of ridicule.

Fatal flaw

This is an imperfection, shortcoming or weakness in a character, for example, excessive pride or ambition, which leads them to make a certain choice(s) in a given situation. The choice(s) made results in the character's downfall.

Film noir

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Gothic horror

This is a style that combines elements of melodrama, horror and romance. It is the presentation of a performance that deals with supernatural or often terrifying events. It is exemplified by, for example:

- a narrative that focuses on other-worldly characters, such as vampires and ghosts, or evil and madness
- a general sense of gloom, isolation and foreboding
- a strong sense of atmosphere and the natural order unleashed
- a suffering, troubled or Byronic (characteristic of Lord Byron or his poetry – melancholic or rebellious) hero or heroine, villains, monsters and demons
- the use of a narrator and flashback
- a sense of mystery or claustrophobia.

Heightened use of language

Heightened use of language is the poetic and exaggerated use of language. It includes a deliberate choice of words whose syntax, alliteration and rhyming patterns enhance the dramatic statement. The intended meaning is enhanced through the use of non-conventional and non-naturalistic dialogue.

Lyrical and symbolic language and imagery

This requires the performer to characterise the work with poetic motion. This may be achieved through the use of verse, dialogue or movement. It may also be achieved through the selection of imagery and action. It is allied to the use of symbol, which provides definition for metaphors, gestures or objects, and gives specific meanings to written and performance texts.

Mood

Mood is the overall feeling or emotion that a performance can evoke. This may be achieved through manipulation of acting, conventions or stagecraft.

Movement

Movement requires the performer to act out a feeling or to use action to develop the plot. Students may also have to use their body to show their thoughts and feelings or a change in place or position.

Musical theatre

This is a style of theatre that comprises a mixture of song, dance, music and spoken dialogue. It is exemplified by, for example:

- central characters often involved in a love or romantic entanglement set against a bigger event or context that often results in conflict
- emotional content, such as love, pathos, anger or humour, expressed through song or dance
- a range of differing musical/dance forms and styles
- the use of comedy and characters that are often larger than life.

Pathos

Pathos is a quality that evokes a feeling of sympathy, pity or sadness in the audience; for example, the power of stirring tender or melancholic emotion. Pathos may be associated with comedy and tragedy.

Pythonesque comedy

This is a term that encapsulates the work of the Monty Python team, who were popular on television and in film during the 1970s. Much of the team's work is highly satirical, unpredictable or absurd and seeks to attack middle/upper-class social conventions. It is exemplified by, for example:

• silly, farcical or surreal situations and dialogue

• an episodic/collage-like structure, with sketches that rarely have a punchline

• the use of peculiar or bizarre characters and/or character types

• the parodying of social classes and political or religious figures

• the use of songs, poems, rhymes and word play/puns.

Rhythm

Rhythm is a regular pattern of sounds, words or actions. Performances can also have their own rhythm that can be influenced by the emotional nature of the plot, the pace of line delivery, the pace of scene transitions, and the length of those scenes and the dialogue within them.

Satire

Satire refers to the use of wit and comedy to attack, denounce or deride a target. It exposes or questions the presence of vice, folly, abuse or pretence. It can be achieved through the manipulation of language, caricature, parody, parable or other comedic theatrical conventions. The satirist laughs at, punishes or questions a target and/or an audience. The target may be an individual or a system.

Song

This refers to a musical interpretation of a text using the performer's own voice at the time of performance (not pre-recorded).

Sound

Sound is created by the performer through the possible use of voice, body percussion and objects to create an effect in performance and enhance meaning. Sound may include silence or the deliberate absence of sound.

Stillness and silence

Stillness and silence are found where there is an absence of sound and an absence of movement. This technique enhances dramatic effect. Stillness and silence should both happen at the same time.

Symbol

Symbol is used to create meaning that is not literal. Symbol allows performers to communicate ideas and themes through words, stagecraft and expressive skills.

Tension

Tension is the suspense that holds an audience's attention as a performance unfolds. The release of tension can have a comic or dramatic effect.

Theatre of cruelty

Theatre of cruelty is a type of theatre that attempts to assault or shock the senses of the audience as a form of engagement. It is exemplified by, for example:

- brutal/graphic imagery that is often sudden or unexpected and designed to shock or provoke an intellectual or emotional reaction in the viewer
- unrealistic and contorted movement and gesture
- loud and intense music
- the use of stillness and silence
- the use of sounds, including cries, wails and screams
- dream-like and often fantastic visuals.

Transformation of character

The actor manipulates expressive skills to create characters in performance. A change in character, therefore, requires modification of the focus and manner of use of expressive skills by the actor. Additions of mask or costume may enhance the character transformation, but this does not constitute transformation unless accompanied by communicable changes in the use of expressive skills.

Transformation of object

This occurs when an object(s) is endowed with a variety of meanings by the actor.

Transformation of place

The actor creates more than one place or setting during the performance and does so without the use of scenery. The actor can communicate transformation of place to an audience through the context that they create for the performance, and through the use of objects and space in symbolic ways. Transformation of place can be achieved through the transformation of properties (real and imagined) and/or through the use of expressive skills alone.

Transformation of time

Performances can move around in time as well as in place. Sometimes performances can occur in a linear or chronological timeline. Others move backwards and forwards in time from a central point.

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VICTORIAN CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY

VCE Drama
Solo performance examination

STATEMENT OF INTENTION

Student number

Prescribed structure number   **Name of character (from prescribed structure)**

Comment   *Use the space below to highlight aspects of your interpretation that you would like to bring to the assessors' attention, for example:*
- *explanation/clarification of decisions made in your interpretation of the prescribed structure*
- *give reasons for choices made (for example, for use of costume, prop, accent, symbol).*

DO NOT SIMPLY REWRITE THE PERFORMANCE FOCUS.

These comments should not exceed 100 words.

Three copies of this completed form must be handed to the assessors on entering the examination room.