

AS LEVEL DRAMA AND THEATRE

Example candidate answers

7261

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Command words

Explain – set out purposes or reasons

Analyse – separate information into components and identify their characteristics

Evaluate – judge from available evidence

Section A: Drama through the ages

Example 1

Comments

Antigone – Sophocles

01.1 You are a director staging the first confrontation between Antigone and Creon.

Explain how you would direct the performer playing Antigone in her speech and in her response to Creon's speech in order to demonstrate her attitude towards Creon.

You must make specific reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of *Antigone* in your answer.

Example response

When Sophocles wrote *Antigone* in the fifth century BC, it was as part of a trilogy that he entered in the annual drama contest as part of the festival of Dionysus. Dionysus was one of the pagan gods that the Greeks worshipped, he represented the 'life-spirit' of all the greenery in Greece and was believed to be present at each spring festival that was held in Athens, in his honour.¹

The act of theatre-making in Athens, at this time, was considered to be an act of worship, both for the audience and for the performers. The playwrights competed with one another to re-tell, in drama, the myths of Greece which had been passed down through the generations by word of mouth. The story of Antigone, daughter of the ill-fated Oedipus, would have been well known to the first audiences of the play but they would still have been intrigued to see how Sophocles had shaped this well-known story into a new drama .

Creon is the tragic figure in *Antigone*. Antigone, his niece, is his antagonist and Sophocles has made her into a worthy opponent to the king in this drama.²

If I were directing a production of the play for a 21st century audience I would want to demonstrate her attitudes towards Creon to be wholly negative.³ Antigone appears to despise her uncle and she continually treats him with contempt. Going against the conventions of the time, where women were seen as subservient to men and 'voiceless', Antigone allows her voice to be heard; she is rude to her uncle, she defies his decree and she is unashamed of her crime against Creon's new 'law'.⁴

In the first confrontation, I would have Antigone standing centre stage, still held by the Sentry, when Creon returns to the stage, through the palace doors. When Creon has absorbed the Sentry's story about how he found Antigone burying Polynices I would tell her to keep her eyes fixed on the ground until Creon demands: 'Do you deny you did it. Yes, or No?' At this, I would direct her to raise eyes slowly, shake off the restraining hands of the Sentry and pull herself up to stand tall before saying, in an even and calm voice, 'I did it'. Then she would pause, look around the stage at the Chorus and nod to them before returning her gaze to Creon and saying almost carelessly, 'I don't deny a thing', which should convey to the audience her lack of fear of her uncle.⁵

1. Historical and cultural context.

2. Knowledge of social context.

3. Focus on question.

4. Informed understanding of Antigone's position and social context.

5. Some good detail; ideas are apt.

To Creon's curt question, 'were you aware a decree had forbidden this?', I would direct Antigone to snort derisively before adopting a matter-of-fact tone to say 'Well-aware'. How could I avoid it?' I would have her pause again and make a sweeping gesture to include the Chorus as she states monotonously 'It was public.' This would convey Antigone's attitude of contempt for Creon's 'mortal' authority.⁶

When Antigone begins to justify her actions, I would direct her to be more animated than before; I would tell her to point accusingly at Creon when saying, 'Nor did I think your edict had such force, that you, a mere mortal, could override the gods'. I would direct her to adopt a withering tone of voice for 'mere mortal' and look as though she is concealing a smile, when saying 'you' or 'your', conveying her disregard for Creon's evident mounting anger. I would tell her to spit out the final line of her extended speech, 'let's just say I've been accused of folly by a fool' before folding her arms and looking sullenly at Creon, to show her defiance.⁷

During the stichomythic exchanges with her uncle, I would direct Antigone to pick up her cues promptly and to show her distaste for her uncle as well as her lack of respect for him; she will laugh as she says, 'Lucky tyrants' and point again at Creon as she mocks him, saying 'to do and say whatever pleases them'.⁸

Antigone's lack of respect for Creon comes from his evident disrespect of the gods' laws about honouring the family and burying the dead; so when Antigone speaks of her brother, I would direct her to speak reverently and to clasp one hand to her chest as she whispers, 'to honour my brother, my own flesh and blood'.

At the close of the first confrontation, I would wish the audience to see Antigone's sincerity in her loyalty to her brother's memory and to assert her position, 'I was born to join in love, not hate' with intensity, biting her lip to show the audience her attitude of incomprehension towards Creon's cruel decree about one of his own nephews.⁹

Word Count: 779

Quotations: 15

Commentary

There are many well-developed ideas here for performing the role of Antigone and the answer is focused and informed by sound knowledge and understanding of the play's context.

AO3

The student's response is well developed and insightful; ideas are entirely compatible with the content of the scene.

There is plentiful textual support that is entirely appropriate to the interpretation of the role and section. Purposeful references to context have been made.

Band: Band 5

Comments

6. Focused and apt .

7. Good.

8. Confident use of specialist terminology.

9. Good final point.

Comments

01.2 Explain how you would direct the performer playing Antigone, **in a different section of the play**, in order to convey her loyalty to her brother.

Example response

Later in the play, Antigone is condemned to death and she contemplates the fate that awaits her. I would have her led in, loosely bound at the wrists and ankles, looking more bedraggled than before.¹⁰

The audience must see a very different aspect of Antigone in the section that begins with her solemn recognition that she goes 'to wed the lord of the dark waters'. I would direct her here to speak the line with dignity although she should flinch when Creon accuses her of being the author of her own fate – 'a law to yourself' as this issue about whose law is most worthy – that of the mortal, Creon or the immortal gods, has dominated the play so far.¹¹

I would want the audience to recognise that Antigone's disobedience to Creon's law is a result of her loyalty to her brother and that this loyalty is her sole motive in the play.¹²

An important speech in revealing this motive is Antigone's apostrophe to her dead family that begins with the cry 'O tomb, my bridal bed' which I would have her deliver with a gasp of realisation. Her hope that her death may be 'dear to father/dear to you, mother,/dear to you my brother, Eteocles' is expressed sadly with a bowed head and in a hushed tone.¹³

Her next lines are delivered to her dead brother, Polynices, and these have the potential both to shock an audience and to convey her loyalty to her brother in its purest form. I would direct Antigone to look up and sigh before addressing herself to the absent Polynices who she should represent by holding out her arms in a pose of yearning.¹⁴ She should speak more loudly as she calls to him, 'But now, Polynices' then pause and say through tears, 'because I laid your body out as well, this, this is my reward.' I would tell her on 'my reward' to gesture to herself and her bound ankles. Haltingly she should say, 'Nevertheless, I honoured you' and place emphasis on the word honoured. I would direct her to look challengingly towards the Chorus at this point as she goes on to say 'the decent will admit it' before raising her volume on the phrase 'well and wisely, too' in a self-satisfied tone.

Antigone's revelation that she has buried Polynices because having lost a brother 'no brother could ever spring to light again' should shock the audience into realising the depth of Antigone's loyalty to her family; she should speak this line as a desperate plea of justification. Antigone's loyalty to family, which finds its purest expression in her devotion to Polynices, will be clear to see as I would direct her to sink to her knees before howling her rhetorical question, 'What laws of the mighty gods have I transgressed?'¹⁵

I intend my audience to see the depth of devotion that Antigone has for her cursed family which finds its most extreme expression in her loyalty to her brother, whom she buries against the decree of the King.

10. Apt.

11. Insightful point.

12. Focus on question.

13. Apt and evidence of secure knowledge of terms.

14. Clear.

15. A vivid moment.

Word Count: 507

Quotations: 12

Commentary

There are many well-developed ideas here for performing the role of Antigone to show her loyalty to her brother. The answer is focused and informed by sound knowledge and understanding of the play's context and purpose.

AO3

The student's response is well developed and insightful; ideas are entirely compatible with the content of the scene.

There is plentiful textual support that is entirely appropriate to the interpretation of the role and section. Although slightly shorter than the first answer, ideas are still well developed, justified and highly appropriate.

Across both answers there is evidence of very secure command of subject specific terminology.

Band: Band 5

Example 2

Comments

***Much Ado About Nothing* – Shakespeare**

03.1 You are performing the role of Beatrice in Act One, Scene One.

Explain how you would demonstrate Beatrice's attitude towards Benedick before he enters the scene.

You must make specific reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of *Much Ado About Nothing* in your answer.

Example response

In Elizabethan times, women were destined for service or marriage. The play is set in a patriarchal society where men went to war and women waited for their return. The play opens with news of the return of a triumphant army who have just won a battle – the battle is unspecified.¹

In Italy, in the sixteenth century, Italy was made up of warring states and it is possible that the war referred to in Act One, Scene I is one of many battles that took place over rights over land at the time. We hear about Messina, Florence and Padua but never learn the cause of the war; it is largely irrelevant to the play except in bringing the principals together.

Beatrice stands by to listen to the praises that the Messenger heaps upon Claudio before revealing her disdainful attitude towards Benedick. I would be standing eagerly by my uncle as he listens to the Messenger but break in with a laugh to ask, 'I pray you, Sir, is Signior Mountanto returned from the war or no?'²

Although I appear casual, I would like my audience to see that I really do hope that Benedick has returned safely by sighing as soon as the Messenger says, 'he's returned' and clapping my hands together to deflect my emotion before adopting a sarcastic tone to describe Benedick challenging Cupid.³ I would then pause and say inquisitively with a mock air of interest, 'How many hath he killed and eaten in these wars?' and then I would drop my voice into a more casual tone, saying, 'but how many hath he killed?' and then laugh adding, 'for I promised to eat all of his killing'.

When the Messenger tells me Benedick has done 'good service' in the wars, I would scoff 'he hath an excellent stomach' and make the shape of a huge belly with my hands in front of me to show the audience my dismissive attitude towards Benedick.

When I quip, 'what is he to a lord?' I will smile brightly and look around at Hero and Leonato as I wish them to believe that I am indifferent towards Benedick. While I have probably been dying to know that he is safe.⁴

When Leonato mentions the 'merry war', I will laugh and nod but say, contemptuously, 'who is his companion?' When the Messenger finally begins to appreciate my attempt at humour and says 'I see the gentleman is not in your books', I would laugh again and say conspiratorially and with my hand on the Messenger's arm, 'No, and he were, I would burn my study' then laugh loudly at my own joke.

1. Fair context .

2. Easy to visualise this.

3. Nice detail.

4. Apt.

When⁵ the Messenger names Claudio as Benedick's new companion I will enact my description of him, using Hero as my partner, saying 'hang upon him like a disease' I will hang my arms around her neck and then walk my fingers up her arm as I say 'If he hath caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pounds ere a be cured.' I will pinch her nose at the end of the line for fun.⁶

Just then I hear the approach of the returning soldiers and I would quickly arrange my hair and pinch my cheeks to make myself look pretty for Monsieur Mountanto, who the audience should see I actually care for!⁷

In these ways I hope to convey my various attitudes towards Benedick.

Word Count: 569

Quotations: 12

Commentary

The student's response is **thorough** and **thoughtful**. There are several apt ideas here for performing the role of Beatrice in order to reveal her attitude toward Benedick.

AO3

The student's response is unified and compatible with the action. The student has evidently got an understanding of the play's context and style and a thoughtful selection of textual illustration is used throughout the answer to support ideas.

Band: Band 4

Comments

5. Apt.

6. Attitude?

7. Apt.

Comments

03.2 Explain how you would perform Beatrice's interaction with Benedick, **in a different section of the play**, in order to create comedy from their love/hate relationship.

Example response

I have chosen Act Five, Scene Four, the final section between Beatrice and Benedick to create comedy from their love/hate relationship.

This is the climax of the lovers' relationship where both attempt to deny the feelings that they clearly have for one another.

In this scene, both are quite bashful⁸ as they have to admit their feelings in front of the other characters who they have been trying to persuade of their indifference to each other.

At first Benedick appears to be claiming Beatrice as his prize, gently asking the Friar, 'which is Beatrice?' as all the female characters are veiled at Hero's second wedding to Claudio.

I will step forward, removing my veil and bobbing in front of Benedick. When he asks me if I love him, all the old feelings of defiance come rushing back to me and I will toss my head a little indignantly saying, 'Why, no, no more than reason.' Then I would quickly flash a look of panic at Hero who is standing by smiling.⁹

Then when Benedick laughs and says that Claudio and the Prince have told him that she does love him, I would blush and look down and then up again quickly and say in an aggressive way, 'Do not you love me?' and when he backs away saying also 'no more than reason' I would scowl at him and retort that my supporters were also deceived.¹⁰

We then try to outdo each other with Benedick protesting 'They swore you were almost sick for me' at which I will put my finger into my mouth as if wanting to be physically sick before saying quite angrily,¹¹ 'They swore you were well-nigh dead for me.'

Cornered, I say, sadly that I only feel 'friendly' towards him.

When Claudio and Hero produce the written evidence that we love each other I will stifle a cry of joy, when Benedick tells me he will take me for pity. I will yield myself completely to his kiss when he tries to 'stop my mouth' and the kiss will be long and tender.

The audience should be laughing throughout this climax to their love story.¹²

Word Count: 359

Quotations: 6

8. How shown?

9. Some comedy.

10. Apt.

11. Comical.

12. A brief section but quite well-handled.

Commentary

The student's response is **useful** and **relevant**, if a little brief. There are some ideas here for performing the role of Beatrice in order to create comedy from the love/hate relationship.

AO3

The student's response is relevant to the question and with some apt ideas for creating comedy. The student has evidently got an understanding of the play's context and style.

Band: High Band 3

Example 3

Comments

***The Servant of Two Masters* – Goldoni**

05.1 You are performing the role of Beatrice from her first appearance in Act One to her exit at the end of Scene Three.

Explain how you would create comedy from Beatrice's disguise as Federigo.

You must make specific reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of *The Servant of Two Masters* in your answer.

Example response

A Servant to Two Masters, written by Goldoni in 1746, was the first scripted version of Commedia dell'arte, the improvised physical tradition of comedy popular from the 16th to 18th centuries. Goldoni disagreed with the indulgences of Commedia and thus wanted a 'greater sense of psychological realism' (Hall), which is displayed through Beatrice as she is an original Goldoni character, although loosely derived from the stock character of the lover.¹

Beatrice has arrived in disguise as her dead brother Federigo, hoping to receive the dowry from Federigo's fiancé's (Clarice) family and it is the use of her unconvincing disguise and feminine vocal and physical qualities which I would apply as a performer to exploit the comic possibilities of her disguise.²

In Commedia, 'a heterogeneous crowd gathered to watch saw a cross-section of society which mirrored their own various origins' (Hall) and thus in order for these stock characters to be recognisable and comedic to a modern audience, reflecting the modern society, I would transpose my performance from 18th Century Venice to 21st Century Essex.³

Essex is often satirised in popular culture and this will be recognisable and comedic for the audience, allowing the performance to 'satirise the middle classes' as Goldoni intended. As Beatrice, I would be the stereotype of an English boarding school girl, talking in an affected RP accent, as she is an outsider.⁴

In Act One Scene Two, as Beatrice, I would want to use my costume malfunctions – key for creating comedy – and heightened masculine actions, in keeping with the heightened acting style of Commedia.⁵ This is Beatrice's first appearance in the production and thus the reactions from Pantaloon and his family who believe Federigo to be dead would also elicit comedy.⁶

I would stride into Pantaloon's living room (established by a cyclorama projection), wearing baggy blue chinos, a tight red rugby top accentuating my large chest, very black hair, tied up in a ponytail and a blonde moustache stuck to my upper lip, already making me look ridiculous.⁷

1. Knowledge.

2. A clear and promising start.

3. Justification is offered for this transposition.

4. Further justification offered for this transposition; hopefully it will be utilized.

5. Reference to style.

6. Yes; but focus is Beatrice's performance.

7. Some potential for comedy.

I would call in an accidentally feminine voice 'Mr Pantaloon' before clocking the audience in panic, and coughing loudly to cover up my mistake and calling again in an exaggeratedly deep vocal tone 'Mr Pantaloon, it appears the courtesy which I have received in correspondence is now matched by your behaviour in person', glaring at Pantaloon, Clarice's (the lover) father (who stands upstage left with the pedant Dr Lombardi) with a heightened scowl as Pantaloon stares at me in confusion seemingly unaware of my feminine sounding first word.⁸

When Pantaloon splutters 'May I enquire as to who you are?' I would bow with a heightened flourish and boom in an overly loud voice as if trying to sound more masculine 'Federigo Rasponi'. As I bow, my moustache would fall off and I would squeal, glancing up in terror before pretending to sneeze violently and shoving it back on upside down without realising.⁹

I would look at the audience, in fear that my disguise would be found out. Then I would smile calmly at Pantaloon, putting my hands on my hips, adopting a masculine stance. This would look ridiculous as my moustache is upside down, and Pantaloon's reaction of amazement – wide eyes and mouth – at my assertion that I am Federigo (and thus not realising I am a woman in search of my lover Florindo), would make the audience laugh at me in disguise.¹⁰

As I stroll forward, my hips swinging in an attempt to walk with a masculine posture, Brighella the zanni should raise an eyebrow and ask 'surely you recognise Brighella Cavicchio – from Turin, sir?'! At this I would widen my eyes, in fear that he realises I am a woman, and lean in and beg in a high pitched, pleading vocal tone 'please_ don't give me away': – my hands clasped together – the contrast between my 'masculine' disguise and feminine delivery of the line making me look ridiculous and thus makes the audience laugh at my disguise.¹¹

I would then attempt to heighten my masculinity by broadening my shoulders and sucking in my chest whilst raising my chin, making me look even more ridiculous, and Smeraldina (the rational zanni, upstage left) should gawp at my odd way of walking. I would swagger towards Clarice downstage right before throwing my arm around her overly forcefully, causing her to jolt forwards, surprising the audience with my strength asking 'who is this lady' in a deep tone. As I do this, the exertion of the gesture should cause all of the buttons on my shirt to pop open, revealing my pink lacy bra.¹²

I would clock the bra and then the audience in quick succession, my eyes wide in panic and mouth in a grimace before grabbing Clarice by the shoulders and embracing her in an attempt to cover up my costume malfunction, booming loudly 'The daughter promised to me in marriage?' causing Clarice to cover her ears at my loudness and burst into tears. I would then look at the audience in confusion at this hysterical girl, beads of sweat¹³ dripping down my feminine face as I am glad they did not realise I was not Federigo.

The fact that, despite my many costume malfunctions and overcompensations of manlihood, Pantaloon and his family believe my ridiculous disguise would make the audience laugh, in keeping with Goldoni's intention of ridiculing the ruling classes as Pantaloon is the controller of the social structure' (Rudkin)¹⁴

Comments

8. Comic moment embedded in a section which reveals knowledge of commedia stock characters.
9. Difficult to execute but potentially funny.
10. This is comical and is also well contextualised in terms of the plot.
11. Comical.
12. Difficult to achieve but comical.
13. Practical?
14. Comedy has been created throughout.

Word Count: 899

Quotations: 8

Commentary

The student's response is **well-developed** and **insightful**. There are many well-developed ideas here for performing the role of Beatrice in order to create comedy from her disguise. Many ideas relate to the comic potential of costume malfunction but these are firmly set in the context of the situation that is presented in the text.

The suggested transposition has been justified but not fully exploited.

AO3

The student's response is strong, entirely relevant to the question and with many highly creative ideas for creating comedy. The student has evidently got a sound understanding of the play's context and style and this is used throughout the answer to support ideas.

Band: Band 5

Comments

05.2 Explain how you would play Beatrice's interaction with Clarice or Truffaldino, **in a different section of the play**, in order to reveal a more serious side to Beatrice's character.

Example response

In Act 3 scene 3, I reveal a more serious side to Beatrice's character as I discover what I believe to be proof of my lover's death.¹⁵

Standing centre stage with Pantaloon, having been discussing business, with my arms folded and legs slightly too far apart I would snap 'There is a notebook in my Trunk, can you retrieve it for me?' to Truffaldino, waving my arm at him in an attempt to flex my muscles, bending my arm at the elbow as if trying to remind them of my 'masculinity'.

Truffaldino, the zanni, should cackhandedly throw the book at me from upstage and it should hit my crotch, immediately causing both men to wince. I would stare at them in confusion, turning to clock the audience with my brows furrowed in confusion before realising if I really were a man this would hurt. After a tense pause I would widen my eyes exaggeratedly and double over as if in pain, attempting to scream whilst maintaining a deep vocal tone, my face then crumpling in mock pain as I hop about the stage, looking up quickly to check my servant and my future 'father in law' are believing my feigned pain- they too should grimace, making the audience laugh at my forgetfulness that I must always act according to my disguise.¹⁶

I would then slowly bend down to pick up the book, still grimacing in heightened pain, groaning and clutching my crotch before opening it and my jaw dropping aghast, my face draining in colour, stammering to the audience 'Here are two of the letters I wrote to Florindo' my lip quivering effeminately, reminding the audience that I am derived from the lovers. I would then stand up straight and boom in an overly commanding vocal tone 'What's going on?', remembering I must maintain my masculinity, but my limbs shaking creating a comic contrast to the audience.¹⁷

When Truffaldino replies in a fast pace as he is lying 'I was left it, Sir, when my previous master sadly died, sir; I would squeal in a high pitched voice 'When did this master die?', my face crumpling as Pantaloon looks on in confusion at my change of vocal pitch.

Truffaldino should then stammer 'twelve days ago?' and this would be too much for me. I would drop to my knees and in a very high pitched voice wail 'No. no. No Florindo dead?' tears streaming down my face, causing the two men to raise their eyebrows at my odd behaviour.¹⁸

As a hard edged spot focuses on me and dry ice fills the stage I would screech 'All my plans, my disguises, the danger, the suffering, have all been for nothing' my voice wavering from the tears as I rip off my shirt and pull off my moustache-grimacing slightly with a heightened flourish causing Truffaldino to gasp and clamp his hands over Pantaloon's eyes, conveying that they did not realise I was a woman and thus my disguise has created comedy.

15. Focus.

16. This is inventive – but not really showing a more serious side to Beatrice.

17. Beatrice is serious here – even if the result is comical, so a reasonable example.

18. Beatrice's misery shows her serious side and still creates comic exaggeration which is apt for the play.

Comments

As the music from *The Titanic* plays in the background and a wind machine blows my hair across my face as I rip it out of the ponytail, eliciting a further gasp from my servant as he is shocked by another of my feminine features, I would wail hysterically, conveying a characteristic of the lover, that I am filled (and somewhat indulge myself in) with the pains of love. I would then stand up quickly and run off stage wailing, leaving a very shocked Pantaloon and zanni centre stage, causing the audience to laugh at my revealed feminine demeanour.¹⁹

Even though the scene is potentially tragic for Beatrice and in my performance ideas, I have tried to show her more serious side, Goldoni intended the effect of the scene (and of the whole play) to be comical and so I intend the audience to laugh at me, even though I am being serious.²⁰

19. Some nice ideas – directorial in nature, rather than performance based, however.

20. Quite so.

Word Count: 655

Quotations: 8

Commentary

The student's response is **well-developed and insightful**. There are many well-developed ideas here for performing the role of Beatrice in order to reveal her more serious side, although, as the student explains, Goldoni still wants to create comedy from this and the ideas suggested achieve both aims.

As before, all of the student's ideas are firmly set in the context of the situation that is presented in the text.

AO3

The student's response is strong, entirely relevant to the question and with some highly creative ideas for creating comedy. The student has evidently got a sound understanding of the play's context and style.

Band: Band 5

Example 4

Comments

Hedda Gabler – Ibsen

07.1 You are a director staging the section in Act One from the arrival of Mrs Elvsted until the entrance of Judge Brack.

Explain how you would direct the performer playing Tesman to reveal his attitudes towards Mrs Elvsted and her news about Eilert Lovborg.

You must make specific reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of *Hedda Gabler* in your answer.

Example response

As director, I see Tesman as a balding, fat and jolly looking man who would wear a monocle and checked jacket and trousers. He would be unattractive and have a goofy smile and a habit of pushing his spectacles up his nose. I see him as a bit of an idiot who speaks with a squeaky voice that goes up and down when he is excited.¹

In the Nineteenth century in Norway the man of the house wore the trousers but in Tesman's house, the one who wears the trousers is Hedda. Tesman is a hen-pecked little man who does as he is told, opening and closing windows and blinds at Hedda's beckon call.²

When Mrs Elvsted arrives, Tesman is pleased to see his old flame perhaps he thinks he can make Hedda jealous at last and he calls her 'my dear' and I would have him wink at her and look at Hedda to see if she has noticed that he had a girlfriend before her who is pretty and blonde. He is boasting in front of his wife.³

I think he likes Mrs Elvsted and is proud to show Hedda that she is not the only girl he has gone with.⁴

When Mrs Elvsted gets upset I would want Tesman to look shocked and pull at his hair. He still likes her and does not like to see her cry.⁵

When Mrs Elvsted says Eilert is in town I would have Tesman squeak 'Eilert!' in shock and when Hedda starts pumping Mrs E for gossip he is standing by like an idiot.⁶ He does not know anything about Hedda's past with Lovborg and is too stupid to understand that Hedda is cunningly getting all the news out of Mrs Elvsted who is also stupid like him. His attitude to the news about Eilert is pleased that he has written a big book.⁷

Word Count: 314

1. Some of these ideas are appropriate if rather casually expressed and lacking justification. There is a contradiction in the use of spectacles/monocle.

2. Brief references to 19th century mores and some knowledge of the play's content is shown. Confusion over the phrase 'beck and call'.

3. This suggestion is unconvincing and reveals a lack of understanding of Tesman.

4. Dubious point.

5. This is a more appropriate suggestion.

6. Abbreviated names are not acceptable; expression is overly casual.

7. There is some understanding of Tesman's naivety.

Commentary

The student's response is under-developed but some of the points made are relevant to the question although they are not always compatible with the content of the specified section. There is some misunderstanding of Tesman's attitudes towards Mrs Elvsted and her news about Eilert. There are a few textual illustrations but expression is casual at times and there is little detail offered.

AO3

Under-developed although focus is relevant.

There is one limited reference to the social context of 19th century Norway. The answer is mainly well described by Band 2 criteria, however, the focus on Tesman's attitudes and some evident knowledge of the play lifts this within the band.

Band: Towards the top end of Band 2

07.2 Explain how you would direct the performer playing Tesman, **in a different section of the play**, in order to demonstrate his misunderstanding of Hedda's true nature.

Example response

In Act 4, Tesman is still clueless about Hedda and thinks she loves him and that is why she burned Eilert's books.⁸ At first he thinks that Hedda still has the manuscript and he says, 'you told him (Eilert) we had it' he is in a bit of a panic here and would look worried. He does not understand Hedda's true nature when she says 'I haven't got it'. I would have his mouth drop open like a fish and tell him to repeat 'haven't got it' like an idiot with a frown.⁹ When she says she burned it, Tesman just stands there with his mouth opening and closing like a fish for two minutes not knowing what to say.¹⁰

He gets really worked up and scared saying its against the law and ranting on about Judge Brack. He is so clueless about Hedda's true evil nature. When Hedda says she did it for him the audience see that she is making fun of stupid Tesman but he can't see it.¹¹

Hedda manipulates Tesman into thinking that she loves him and he falls for it. I would direct him to jump for joy literally jumping up and down and doing a little victory dance. When he says 'is it true?' I would have him jump up and down on the spot, 'can it be true?' Now he thinks she is having a baby and loves him.¹² I want the audience to see that he does not understand Hedda at all she has made a bigger fool out the fool he already is.¹³

Word Count: 262

Commentary

The student's response is under-developed (and very brief) but some of the points made are relevant to the question although they are not always expressed in practical terms.

AO3

There is some understanding of Tesman's blindness to Hedda's true nature. There are a few textual illustrations but expression remains casual and there is little sense of a director at work. The answer is mainly well described by Band 2 criteria, however, the focus on Tesman's gullibility (implied) and some evident understanding of the situation lifts this within Band 2, but its brevity hinders potential achievement.

Band: Band 2

Comments

8. This is an appropriate choice of section for this question.

9. The idea is appropriate although 'like an idiot' is unhelpful.

10. Two minutes of this on stage is unlikely to be effective.

11. Some understanding of the situation and of Tesman's misunderstanding of Hedda's true nature but no concrete direction here.

12. This shows some understanding of Tesman and the ideas are not incompatible with the role although perhaps not apt for the period.

13. Some focus on the question but rather a casual conclusion.

Example 5

Comments

The Caucasian Chalk Circle – Brecht

10.1 You are a designer creating designs for Scene Two of the play, 'The Noble Child'.

Explain how your costume design ideas for the Fat Prince and Grusha would help to reveal their difference in status.

You must make specific reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* in your answer.

Example response

The CCC is a parable play that Brecht wrote in the aftermath of World War Two to illustrate the Marxist principle that 'what there is should go to those who are good for it'. This principle was significant in post-war Europe where the consequences of Hitler's encroachment on both Western and Eastern Europe were being addressed by the victorious allies.¹

Old alliances and borders were redrawn in the wake of the defeat of fascism, as reflected in the Prologue to the play, which opens with the opposing claims of the Fruit growers and the Cheesemakers to take control of a disputed but fertile valley in the Caucasus.

Brecht's play is a political one which exposes the conflict between rich and poor and reveals how war is simply another means of making money for the rich. The underlying tension between the 'haves and the have-nots' – the nobility and the peasants, offers excellent opportunities for the costume designer to reflect this opposition in design terms.²

After the Prologue, which is set in the 'contemporary' historical setting of when the play was written, Brecht transports us to the Singer's imaginary world of Grusinia, where Brecht's 'lessons from the past' inform the political difficulties of Brecht's 'present'.³ This gives the designer the opportunity to set the play in an imaginary world and does not require a specific historical setting. Accordingly, I have chosen to set the Singer's story which begins with the words, 'Once upon a time' in a fairy-tale setting with accents of Renaissance Europe in my costumes.⁴

The Fat Prince and Grusha are at opposite ends of the social status spectrum. The Prince is wealthy, as shown by his 'fat' figure as well as by his expensive-looking clothes. He rules over a country of peasants and petitioners and must be instantly recognisable as upper class (a Prince) and extremely rich.⁵

Grusha is a peasant girl and servant to the Governor's Wife. Although not dressed in rags, as she serves in a rich household, her status should be reflected in her costume.⁶

I would design a colour palette for my cast in which peasants, soldiers and petitioners wear 'sludge' coloured costumes in a variety of designs. The colours will range from beige to brown, khaki and dirty green.⁷ Female servants, like Grusha, will wear beige aprons and matching mob caps over floor length dark brown skirts and jerkins. To differentiate Grusha from the other servant girls, I will design a 'peasant style' blouse in off-white with brown leather lacing (see sketch below).⁸

1. This is useful historical context.

2. The student shows secure understanding of the play's focus on status.

3. Understanding of Brecht's purpose in historicisation.

4. Justified decisions.

5. Apt.

6. Understanding of Grusha's position in the society depicted in the play.

7. Sense of a designer at work in relation to colour palette.

8. The sketch is useful.

Comments



9. The design is informed by secure knowledge.

10. Sense of the wider play.

11. Knowledge related to costume design.

12. Interpretation of character through design.

13. Choices are justified in relation to one of Brecht's key concepts.

Brecht indicated that Grusha was not to be portrayed as attractive or romantic but should have a face 'like a potato'- so my designs are not intended to flatter.⁹ I would cast a tall woman in the role as Simon says she has the 'longest legs' but she would wear unflattering wooden clog-style shoes and worsted stockings to indicate her lowly status. Her hair would be short and unremarkable under her mob cap; she would wear a worn scruffy belt and no ornamentation of any kind, until Simon gives her the necklace as an engagement gift.

I would design her skirt with pockets to be practical and when she flees to the mountains she would wear a half-length woollen cape in sludge brown and made of a woollen material that I will have distressed.¹⁰

The Prince, however, like all the characters from the noble families, will wear a costume in jewel colours. Colourful dyes were not available to the poor, before the twentieth century.¹¹ I like the idea that the Fat Prince and the Governor try to outdo one another in their costumes – they are political rivals, after all, and it would amuse the audience as well as highlight the status difference between the Prince and Grusha, if Fat Prince wore very brightly coloured clothes that serve to emphasise his bulk as well as his status.¹²

I would choose bright blues, electric blue, turquoise and pale blue colours for the Fat Prince. I have decided that he should appear in a costume that resembles idealised pictures of 'Prince Charming' in the illustrations of old fairy tales, as the play is set in a universal time/place. It would also create irony and be a form of Brechtian 'Spass' to portray this callous character like a fat Prince Charming¹³ when he is actually a ruthless persecutor of the poor.

Working from head to toe (see sketch) therefore, I would have a velvet hat in electric blue shaped like a beret but with a diamond look jewelled button as its centrepiece. He would wear a bright turquoise jacket made of a silky material that is fitted to look too tight for him with apparently strained seams on his sleeves and wide lapels but the front of the jacket will gape to reveal a large belly under a white floppy cambric style shirt with a jabot tied at the neck, so that he looks half-strangled.¹⁴ His buttons (undone) will appear to be gold and shiny. His breeches will be royal blue velvet look; also tight over bulging legs. White stockings that end in highly polished buckled shoes and slightly high heels that make it difficult to walk.¹⁵

As an accessory I would choose the Fat Prince to carry a jewel encrusted gold tipped cane to emphasise his wealth and status in Grusinia.



It would give him a useful prop to brandish at the end of Scene 2, when he is regretting the 'decadence' of the 'modern era'; he cruelly states, 'In the old days it would have been: 'Off with his head'' The Fat Prince could use the cane to point at the poor doctor and then mime using it as the executioner's axe with a flourish and a wicked laugh.

I think these costumes are in keeping with Brecht's intentions and help to emphasize the difference in status between the Fat Prince and Grusha.¹⁷

Comments

14. Combines status with comedy.

15. Good costume detail here.

16. Another useful sketch.

17. Question focus to conclude a clear response.

Commentary

This is a well-developed and thoughtful answer which offers clear ideas for differentiating between the two characters in terms of their status; there are several insightful points made.

There is evidence of understanding of the characters' roles and purpose within the play. Costume ideas are compatible with Brecht's historicised style which is reflected in the students' decision to set the action in a 'fairy-tale' past – the Renaissance period is mentioned and the sketches suggest this – broadly.

AO3

A well-developed response with several insights; well-developed with the potential to be highly effective and sketches are entirely appropriate.

The answer opens with purposeful reference to the historical/political context of the play.

The costumes, as described and sketched, have the potential to be very effective in conveying the different statuses of the Fat Prince and Grusha.

The student's explanation is detailed and fluent.

Band: Band 5

Comments

10.2 Explain how your costume ideas for **two further characters** could be used to highlight the contrast between rich and poor in a different section of the play.

Example response

At the end of the play, the audience see The Governor's Wife again. She is very rich and as Brecht has shown us in Scene 2, she is vain and more concerned about her clothes than she is about her own child. In this scene, she frequently makes disparaging comments about the peasants, 'I can't stand their smell. It always gives me migraine'.¹⁸

In keeping with my design concept for the nobility, I would stay with my jewel colour palette, but in the case of the Governor's Wife, I would use scarlet, tangerine, rubies and garnets.

The Governor's Wife is a villainess and I would take inspiration from fairy-tales, as with the Fat Prince. I would want the audience to associate the Governor's Wife with the wicked stepmother character in *Sleeping Beauty* or Cruella de Ville in *101 Dalmatians*, in her characterisation.¹⁹

The Governor's Wife would have very long black hair, encircled at the temple with a golden coronet, studded with ruby coloured paste gems. I would design a full length dress with a small train; all in red velvet and trimmed with white 'ermine' around a neckline which is emphasised by a large stiffened collar.²⁰



In the sketch, I have her wearing a half-mask; Brecht often chose to use masks for the villains in his plays.²¹

The bell-shape of the skirt of the dress will be contrasted by tight fitting sleeves which will also be trimmed in 'ermine'. I will design a belt made of gold chain and a cape made of tangerine velvet to show the ostentatiousness of her clothes and emphasise her wealth. She will wear delicate gold-coloured shoes with heels.

The Governor's wife's extravagance will be highlighted and contrasted by the poverty shown in the costume of the Old Woman²² who wants a divorce from Azdak.

18. Useful reference to the text to justify design ideas and links to 'rich and poor' idea.

19. Consistent approach.

20. Good detail.

21. Knowledge of Brechtian practice informing choices.

22. The student has made sensible choices to show the contrast, here.

Aged and wrinkled in the face, her straggly grey hair will be held back by a grubby paisley handkerchief. Her scrawny neck will protrude from a rough brown hessian sack-like garment, shaped like a full length tunic and tied at the waist with a grey, fraying piece of rope.²³ She will wear grey stockings in her shabby clogs and have a dirty greyish apron under her belt. While Old Woman will carry a traditional wicker basket, I will create humour as well as contrasting the rich and the poor characters by giving the Governor's wife an anachronistic accessory of a large Gucci 'designer' handbag. She will take out her handkerchief from this bag to cover her nose when the 'common people' are near her.²⁴ It will also look ludicrous if she gives the bag to Azdak to hold when she is trying to pull little Michael out of the chalk circle.



Brecht wanted his actors to perform in a spirit of criticism and by wearing appropriate costumes it is clear to see who Brecht considers to be spoiled, idle and feckless (the rich) and those he recognises as hard-working contributors to society (the poor). Perhaps he would not approve of my giving the Governor's Wife a Gucci bag – as he preferred to use historically authentic props - but I think he would be satisfied that it is a design decision intended to create *Spass* as well as to draw attention to the great divide between the rich and poor, that is still evident today.²⁵

Word Count: 554

Comments

23. Good detail.

24. Nice touch.

25. Secure knowledge of Brechtian practice and a neat return to the focus of the question.

Commentary

This is a quite a thorough answer; it is thoughtful and focused on differentiating between two well-chosen characters in terms of the contrast between rich and poor. Interpretation is inventive and secure.

There is evidence of understanding of the character of the Governor's Wife as well as the purpose of the poor characters within the play. As in the first answer, costume ideas are compatible with the play's style and the student's intentions.

AO3

A well-developed response with several insights; well-developed with the potential to be highly effective and sketches are entirely appropriate to conveying the difference between the rich and poor in the play.

The student's explanation is detailed and fluent and shows a very good understanding of Brechtian practice.

Band: Band 5

Example 6

Comments

Accidental Death of an Anarchist – Fo

11.1 You are performing the role of Inspector Bertozzo in Act One, Scene One of the play.

Explain how you would reveal Bertozzo's attitude towards the Maniac.

You must make specific reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* in your answer.

Example response

The basis of the play is a true story about the death of an anarchist Guiseppe Pinelli, in police custody in the 1970s. The social context is a period in Italian history where corruption was rife throughout the establishment.¹

As the performer playing Bertozzo I would wish to show my attitude of frustration towards the Maniac. I would want to show how my blood pressure builds when the Maniac enters. I will have a big red and white spotty handkerchief as a prop which I will use throughout the opening section with the Maniac to mop my brow as I get sweaty with stress.²

While I am discussing the Maniac's charge for impersonating a professor, I would want to show my complete disregard for his human rights. I would push myself right up into his face, trying to intimidate him. But this fails and makes the audience laugh. The Maniac is too intelligent for me. I become completely confused when he lectures me about my inadequate knowledge of language and punctuation and I will look from the Maniac to the Constable and back again several times, to show I am puzzled by the Maniac and look for reassurance from the Constable that he is also confused. I will pull a face of complete non comprehension, scratching my head and wearing a puzzled frown.³

I would show my frustration with the maniac by shrieking 'I'm an arsehole am I?' while red in the face and puffing in an out of breath way and furious tone. When the Maniac coolly tells me that my 'grammar is a bit retarded' I would open and close my mouth in astonishment and mop my brow feverishly with my spotty hankie.⁴

I would take off my spectacles and clean them with my spotty hankie and replace them and then glare at the Maniac to check that I was still seeing things clearly to show how wound up he has made me.⁵

I would show my fear of the Maniac when he begins to chase Bertozzo round the office, threatening to bite the constable's arse and I would create comedy by running with my knees coming up very high to my chest and shrieking like a girl, trying to escape him and I would then hide behind my coat on the coat rack, just peeping out ridiculously to show I am completely afraid of this lunatic.⁶

1. Some context.

2. Generic idea but this could be comical.

3. Comic potential not fully realised.

4. Could be comical here.

5. Some comic business.

6. Comical business.

When the Maniac climbs onto the window-ledge I think this is the ideal opportunity to get rid of this 'thorn in my side' and at first I yell at the constable to give him 'a hand' waving my hand in despair to make him get on with it.⁷

I end up pleading with him in a whiney tone, imploring him to come down, with my hands together in prayer, saying, 'please come down, we won't harm you' as if I was speaking to a toddler, putting a lisp on 'pwease' and offering a sweetie that I will take from my trouser pocket to coax him down, as I realise that this would be a disaster for me if another anarchist went AWOL.⁸ This would show my attitude of dependency on the Maniac who holds my career in his hands.⁹

I also start to hyper-ventilate when telling the Constable to lock the drawer and the maniac tells him to swallow the key. I would look from one to the other as if at a tennis match with my mouth open and my eyes wide. This should show my attitude of despair that the Maniac is getting the better of me. Eventually I am so angry with the Maniac that I throw a towel over his head and bundle him out of the door. Then I would lean against the door and pant for breath with relief that he had finally gone.¹⁰

Word Count: 639

Quotations: 4

Commentary

The student does focus on Bertozzo's role and offers some unified ideas for showing his attitude towards the Maniac.

There is scope for further development and detail but what is here is quite inventive.

AO3

The student's response is quite **thorough and thoughtful**. A number of strategies have the potential to convey meaning and create some comic effects.

There is a sense of the farcical style of the play and a brief reference to cultural context.

Band: Low Band 4

Comments

7. Comical.

8. Comic invention.

9. Focus.

10. Quite clearly realised.

Comments

11.2 Explain how you would perform the role of Bertozzo, in a different section of the play, in order to create comedy for your audience.

Example response

Towards the end of the play, Bertozzo arrives in Pissani's office where the Maniac has completely succeeded in persuading Pissani and the Superintendent that he is the Judge appointed to investigate the death of the anarchist.

I would wear a black eye patch to cover the black-eye Pissani gave me and I would also have my head bandaged ridiculously to resemble a turban for comic effect.¹¹

I am interrupting the deliberations between the Maniac and the other police officers in their attempts to cover-up their involvement in the death of the anarchist. They are trying to fool Felletti at this point, too.¹²

The Maniac is kneeling on the floor as I enter focused on finding his glass eye. I will accidentally step on the eye and lose control of the replica bomb that I was bringing up for inspection. As I go flying into the air, the bomb goes up in the air with me and everyone watches its parabola before the Maniac catches it with aplomb and boasts 'Howzat?!' While I am applauding him with an inane grin on my face, I suddenly notice that he is throwing the bomb in my direction; horrified, I rush forward and catch it, by diving as if it was a cricket ball going for six. This will make the audience laugh.¹³

While the Maniac begins spitting at and polishing the glass eye, I will be staring at him and scratching my head to show that I am a bit stupid but do recognise him from somewhere, I am frantically trying to work out where I have seen him before as since our earlier meeting the Maniac has changed into a new disguise. He is also wearing an eye patch. I will saunter over to him and lift the patch to reveal a yellow and blue bruise beneath, saying, 'Your face looks very familiar'. When the Maniac laughs and replies, 'that's because we've both got bandaged eyes'. I will do a double-take, gasp and then start pointing at him and gibbering away to my colleagues; 'him, him, him' backing away from him as if he has the plague.¹⁴

The Superintendent introduces the Maniac as 'Captain Marcantonio Piccini of the forensic department', and I will cry, 'Piccini? That's impossible, I know him' shaking my head and pointing at the Maniac accusingly. When Pissini kicks me, I will be start hopping round the stage on one foot holding my sore leg and whining 'You! You kicked me. You're assaulting me again, why?'¹⁵

Each time I try to say that the Maniac is not Piccini, one of the other policeman starts to wrestle me to the ground with their hands over my mouth.¹⁶ While I helplessly try to call out from beneath the hand 'it's not Piccini' but this just comes out as a muffled cry.

Bertozzo is a figure of fun in this scene as he was at the opening of the play as his colleagues hit and kick him to try to stop him from blowing their cover in front of the journalist.

Word Count 509

Quotations: 7

11. Comic intentions.

12. Context of the scene.

13. Could be a little more detailed on how to make this funnier.

14. Potentially comical.

15. Classic slapstick comedy.

16. Could be more precise.

Commentary

The student focuses on Bertozzo's role and offers some ideas with the potential to create comedy.

The answer is a little narrative although there are some practical details.

There is scope for more development and detail.

AO3

The student's response is relevant and there is some thoughtful attention to comic detail.

Several strategies have the potential to create some comic effects; others need a little more development.

Text is used and quotations are appropriate.

Band: Low Band 4

Example 7

Comments

Jerusalem – Butterworth

14.1 You are performing the role of Davey in his appearance in Act Three of the play.

Explain how you would perform the role of Davey in order to create comedy for your audience.

You must make specific reference to the social, cultural and/or historical context of *Jerusalem* in your answer.

Example response

Davey is one of Rooster's hangers-on in Jez Butterworth's play, 'Jerusalem'. The play is a parody of a pastoral where, instead of wood nymphs and fairies and elves in the forest, we find a drug-dealer as King and his motley crew of wastrels and losers from a run-down Wiltshire town.¹

Life in Kennet and Avon's forest is one long drug and drink induced haze. Davey is one of the funnier characters in the play. In Act Three, Davey and Lee come looking for Rooster. Lee says it's to say 'sorry' but Davey is more honest saying, 'We've come for the whizz'.

Although everyone makes fun of Ginger,² Davey winds him up at the start of this scene by pretending that the '2 Trevs' have had a punch-up and split up, making room for Ginger's DJ act at the pub. Davey teases Ginger saying, 'Your public awaits'. I would say this line completely straight and when Ginger starts stuttering 'I'm, I'm etc' I would struggle to keep a straight face. I would say 'Carpe Diem' in a mock religious tone and make quotation marks in the air, looking really serious.³

After Ginger goes, Davey tells Lee that Rooster's time is up. I would amuse my audience with my impersonation of a woman – pulling at my T shirt to impersonate breasts and hitting a high note to say that it's 'the fat lady singing'.

When I try to wriggle out of having filmed the others pissing on Rooster, I would look mock offended. Saying, 'What did I do? I just filmed it' then give a cheeky wink.⁴

My big monologue is also funny as I mock Lee for wanting to change his name. Davey's life is rubbish but he has an optimistic side to him and although he spends his working life killing cattle he can still mock Lee; 'you're still f...ing Lee Piper. Shag on!' I would finish the speech with a thrust of my hips as I say, 'Shag on' to make the audience laugh.

Davey epitomises the drug dependent uneducated youth of the early twentieth century but Butterworth makes sure that we laugh at his lifestyle as well as pity him for his wasted life.⁵

1. Reasonable point of context.

2. How?

3. Comic intention implied.

4. Some sense of comedy.

5. Some understanding of Butterworth's intentions.

Word Count: 366

Quotations: 6

Commentary

The student's response is under-developed but some of the points made are relevant to the question. There are a few textual illustrations but expression is casual at times and there is little detail offered. There is limited reference to the social/historical context.

AO3

The answer is mainly well described by Band 3 criteria, however, it is very brief so it lies on the cusp between Bands 2 and 3.

Band: Cusp of Bands 2 and 3

Comments

14.2 Explain how your performance of Davey, in a different section of the play, would convey his relationship with Lee.

Example response

Lee and Davey are mates, both born and raised in Flintock. Davey fancies himself and in Act One he creates the impression of being quite 'cool' wearing shades, which I would have as very big sunglasses and I would have my accordion slung round my neck.⁶

I would want to rub Ginger's nose in the fact that he missed Ginger's party and then turn my attention to getting a spliff. This is his real reason for being here.

Just like with the pissing on Rooster episode, Davey filmed Rooster smashing up his new TV with a cricket bat and he proudly shows off his recording on his phone.⁷

Lee and Davey have some banter here, showing their close relationship but even Lee takes objection to Davey's description of what might have happened to Phaedra – being eaten by a werewolf. Here I would mime being the werewolf by sticking my teeth out and creeping about with my knees high, as if prowling, then I would pounce on Pea in fun. Lee tries to stop him scaring the girls and makes him shut up, showing his power in the relationship.⁸

Word Count 188

Commentary

The student's response is under-developed (and very brief); some of the points made are relevant to the question although they are not always expressed in practical terms or relate adequately to the focus on the relationship.

AO3

There is some understanding of Davey's bantering relationship with Lee et al. There are no textual illustrations; expression remains casual and focus is not strong.

Band: Low Band 2

6. Focus?

7. Focus?

8. Focus?

Section B: Live theatre production

Example 8

Comments

15.1 Explain how lighting design was used at **two** specific moments. Analyse and evaluate how successful the design was in creating mood and atmosphere.

Example response

In July 2015, I saw a live streamed production of the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *The Merchant of Venice*, directed by Polly Findlay.

Lighting was used in combination with a stunning 'gold-plated' set to suggest a mood of celebration and atmosphere of opulence at certain moments in the production and created other effects at other moments.¹

As the setting was a composite one, serving as both Venice and Belmont, changes in location as well as mood and atmosphere were created through lighting effects. For example, the play opened with an interior scene in Antonio's house; but, when the action shifted outside to the Rialto in Venice, the set was washed with golden light and a ripple effect was created on the back wall to suggest the Venetian lagoon and a mellow mood² as Antonio and Bassanio were left alone together by their friends.

Another effective lighting effect occurred in the scene where Portia first allows the Prince of Morocco to choose the caskets.³ The stage was plunged into semi-darkness, leaving Portia and Morocco in a single spot centre stage while pin-spots picked out the caskets which were suspended above the stage. The lighting enhanced the sheen on the gold and silver caskets while contrasting their 'glitter' with the plain unreflective nature of the leaden casket. This helped to heighten the mood of uncertainty and atmosphere of anticipation before Morocco made his (incorrect) selection.⁴

Word Count: 234

Commentary

This is a sparse answer with few technical details about how lighting was used in the chosen production. The student has referred to two specific moments and there is an attempt to link the moments to mood or atmosphere.

AO3

There is some useful and relevant knowledge and understanding evident here but the answer lacks development. The answer is fluently written and has some accurate use of terminology but there is insufficient developed detail about production aims, form and style.

Band: Cusp of Bands 2 and 3

AO4

Although the student asserts that the two moments were effective in terms of lighting supporting mood and atmosphere, the analysis and evaluation is underdeveloped.

Band: Band 2

1. Focus on task.

2. Lighting linked to mood.

3. A little evaluation.

4. Lighting linked to mood and atmosphere.

Comments

15.2 Explain how **one** performer used performance skills to engage the audience at **two** specific moments. Analyse and evaluate their success in doing this.

Example response

The role of Portia was played by Patsy Ferran; she was able to engage the audience throughout the performance.⁵ When Portia first leads Bassanio to make his choice of casket, she used her vocal skills to show her yearning for him to choose correctly. She stretched out the words 'choose' and 'peize out' in her entreaty to him to stay longer before making an irreversible decision.⁶ When the couple were bantering about the torture they were enduring, she looked longingly at Bassanio when charging him with 'heresy'. And she made the audience laugh when she mimicked his tone of voice and delivery when discussing the 'rack'.⁷

Portia's face was full of longing for Bassanio as she called for music and she shot Nerissa a mischievous look when her musicians entered and the singer emphasised every word that rhymed with 'lead' with a shake of a bell. She watched Bassanio with a dreamy expression on her face as he made his choice and erupted into a 'whoop' of joy when he opened the lead casket.⁸

Patsy Ferran also engaged and enthralled the audience in the trial scene.⁹ She showed excellent skills in handling props when she was questioning Shylock, peering over a pair of half-moon spectacles at the bond and re-arranging her jacket to show some nervousness as if she feared that Shylock would succeed in his act of revenge against Antonio.¹⁰

I was engaged by Portia's sudden switch from apparently unbiased lawyer who dealt with Shylock in a friendly and courteous manner to begin with, where she seemed genuinely unsure about which of the men was 'the merchant and which the Jew'. Suddenly, Portia dropped the façade of impartiality when she snapped, 'Tarry a little, Jew' with pointed venom in her voice.¹¹

After she had revealed the loophole in the bond, she snarled at Shylock to tell him to get down on his knees to beg for mercy from the Duke.

The sheer range of Patsy Ferran's skills engaged the audience as she moved from love struck girl, to confident lawyer, to vengeful Christian.¹²

Word Count: 344

5. Question focus.

6. Some performance detail here.

7. Laughter suggests engagement.

8. Some description of what the actor did but not fully linked to the issue of engagement.

9. Focus.

10. Moment linked to engagement, but not fully explored.

11. A personal response to the performer's shift in tone.

12. Some evaluation here.

Commentary

This is a slightly more developed response to the task and there are some useful and relevant points made.

AO3

The actor's aims have been appreciated and there is some useful reference to the actor's application of skills; use of voice and facial expression are commented upon and there is awareness of how meaning is created on stage.

Band: Band 3

AO4

The student reveals personal engagement with the actor's characterisation of Portia and there is implicit positive evaluation of the actor's ability to engage an audience.

Band: Band 3

Example 9

15.1 Explain how lighting design was used at **two** specific moments. Analyse and evaluate how successful the design was in creating mood and atmosphere.

Example response

On 29th April 2015, I saw a production of *The Woman in Black* directed by Robert Herford at The Lowry Theatre in Salford Quays, adapted by Stephen Mallatrat. The non-naturalistic performance was performed end-on, set in a theatre in the early 1930s. The production was a 'play within a play'. The use of lighting was impressive.¹ One part of the play involved lighting/special effects used quite cleverly, it was when 'the actor' was walking behind the gauze and went up some stairs that were jutting out at the back of the stage with a projection of a grand staircase being projected onto the gauze.²

The play is about an old man who wants to tell a true story so a younger man 'the actor' helps him to act it only 'the actor' plays Mr Kipps and the real Mr Kipps plays all the other characters.³

The lighting effects in this section helped to enhance the performance of the play because we couldn't see the actor's facial expression because it appeared as a shadow because it had been lit from behind him, the grand staircase had been lit with a bit of colour⁴ as to make it seem more realistic, the lighting masking the facial expression made the scene tense because the audience couldn't tell what was happening to the actor apart from his silhouette.⁵

There was only a staircase that was in the background so we couldn't see whether the woman in black⁶ was there or not which only increased the tension. There was also a slight bit of comedy in the lighting as the staircase looked quite false therefore this could be seen as being comical.⁷

Later the actor moves back down the stairs with a candle and he was next to the gauze going across the stage, he holds his hand further away from the gauze so the shadow of the man was against the gauze so was a realistic, whereas the hand shadow appeared a lot larger than him, therefore this made the audience feel scared⁸ because it didn't look as though it was his hand. This was a special effect created by the lighting. Therefore, the lighting at this moment was needed to make the performance tense and scary, but when the man came out from behind the gauze on to the front stage we could see that it was hand, therefore there was again an element of comedy in this section, which made the audience feel stupid and made them laugh.⁹

I thought that the lighting enabled the performance to have a lot of tension by masking things on the stage by lighting them from a different angle.¹⁰ I felt that the lighting was intentionally made to bring out horror but to also bring out comedy and tension.¹¹

Comments

1. Reference to style but could be further developed.

2. We need some context here.

3. Somewhat sparse description. Needs more on style of the production and production aims.

4. Which colour?

5. Some attempt to link an effect with a tense atmosphere although not entirely convincing.

6. We need to know more about this 'woman'.

7. Lighting?

8. Atmosphere.

9. Attempts to link to question's demands to create mood(s).

10. This needs an example.

11. Statement of opinion.

Comments

One example is when the lighting increased the tension¹² of the scene is the church scene where they attend the woman's funeral, I think that the gobo of the cross that was projected on to the gauze looked very large and sinister which created tension because the cross was huge and looked overpowering.¹³ There was also a lighting effect of a gobo of a glass window projected on to the floor this also enhances the tension because again the projection was large and intimidating, there was a dark blue wash over the stage so the lighting was very cold and intense,¹⁴ this only increased the horror and the tension because it made the scene very dark and was obvious that the 'woman in black' was going to appear as there wasn't much happening in the scene anyway.¹⁵

I think that this reflected what Stephen Mallatrat wanted to portray in his interpretation because we see other moments in the play while he does the same thing by focusing the lighting to make the scene more tense, for example, the scene where 'the actor' is looking for his dog¹⁶. In this scene he uses a reverse blackout so that the audience's eyes aren't working fully as he shines the torch into the audiences to allow things to happen behind him, this makes the scene tense because it makes the audience vulnerable and so it's clear that something is about to happen.¹⁷ This scene also has a large element of horror within it as we can't know where the woman will be because there is no light other than the torch. The torch is then lifted to shine on the woman's face which is half-lighted from the bottom which emphasises her paleness which is scary to the audience.¹⁸

Mallatrat used a minimum set with moveable props like a hamper which becomes a desk in an office, a bed in the house and a pony and trap when the 'actor' travels to Gifford. There is also a door that is very important as it leads to the nursery.¹⁹

In conclusion, I think that the use of lighting in *The Woman in Black* is a key part to altering the audience's experience as it makes them very wary of the woman in black as they think she might appear and then doesn't and it seems very comical to the audience but then sometimes they might not expect her, for example is the graveyard scene as they had just seen her so wouldn't think that she would appear for a while to make it more scary and so that the audience are on their guard all the time. Lighting is also used at other times to accentuate the horror and comical side to the play.²⁰

Word Count: 888

12. Focus on mood/atmosphere.

13. Some evaluation.

14. Links light with mood.

15. Not entirely convincing but an attempt to evaluate.

16. Insufficient context has been offered for the action although there is a reference to production aims here.

17. Focus on tension is apt.

18. An effect creating scary atmosphere.

19. Question focus?

20. Rather sweeping conclusion.

Commentary

This answer lacks detail and there is insufficient context offered for the action of the play that is referred to in the answer.

The student writes as if there is no need to explain who any of the 'characters' are or to explain what is actually happening on stage when the lighting effects are used.

Specific moments are referred to in relation to lighting, however, and there is some personal response.

AO3

Evidence of some knowledge and understanding of the style of the production and several references to specific aspects of the production suggest that production aims have been understood. Expression is clear but there is a lack of technical detail. Most points are relevant albeit not developed/illustrated.

Band: Band 3

AO4

There is some detail here but it is sketchy at times; under-developed critical appreciation of the use of lighting; there is some attempt to offer a personal response to the ways in which lighting was used to enhance mood/atmosphere.

Band: Cusp of Bands 2 and 3

Comments

15.2 Explain how **one** performer used performance skills to engage the audience at **two** specific moments. Analyse and evaluate their success in doing this.

Example response

On 29th April 2015, I saw a production of *The Woman in Black* directed by Robert Herford at The Lowry Theatre in Salford Quays. The non-naturalistic performance was performed end-on, set in a theatre in the early 1930s.¹ The production was a 'play within a play' in which Arthur Kipps, played by Malcolm James, hires an actor (Matt Connor) in order to re-tell the events of his life in which he experienced trauma from *The Woman in Black*. I will focus on the performance of Matt Connor who fully engaged my attention in this production.²

The beginning of the production began with James, as Arthur Kipps, stood centre back stage.³ James was stood holding a book to his face, murmuring quietly with a stiff posture due to his rigid legs, pushed back shoulders and straight back. The audience strained to hear but were then shocked as Connor, as the actor, abruptly entered through the audience yelling "Is this supposed to be of interest" in a sarcastic tone.⁴

Once on stage, it is Connor's responsibility to teach James how to read in an engaging way, after again James is stood stiffly with his face buried in the book. Connor then immediately stops him and shows him the correct way; he recites the exact same lines from memory but he reads them in a varying pitch and tone, expressing the true emotion of the words, and he moves around the stage with a loose posture, shoulders slightly slouched forward, arms hanging loosely by his side and head held high, with a bounce to his step.⁵

When James goes to try again, he reads in the exact same way as he did previously, to which Connor replied with rolled eyes and a sigh. The actor is then showing Kipps how to read the line "the family had had their business for years". Connor raises a bent arm, gesticulating towards James looking around with furrowed brows, and speaking in a varied pitch to reveal a slight questioning tone. James then again copies, with expression and his arm wooden, with an outstretched palm which he rigidly moves up and down, his eyes were fixed on his hand and he revealed no tone or pitch change in his voice. This scene entertained the audience.⁶

A further scene in the play revealed the multi-rolling which was to take place, as the performance is now in the 'play within the play'. In this scene, Connor plays the young Arthur Kipps, this scene is after Kipps has arrived at Ell Marsh house and is now attending the funeral of Mrs Drablow, whom he has been hired to look after the will of, as a lawyer.⁷

1. No need to repeat this information which was given in the first answer

2. Clear focus on the question

3. Term?

4. Engagement implied.

5. Some performance detail here.

6. Assertion of entertainment – engagement implied – both actors' skills are described.

7. Some context.

Comments

Connor and James are stood right backstage⁸ looking up at the back wall, which had a cross projected on it, compared with the dim lights of the rest of the room, creating a tense atmosphere. The two of them are both stood with straight backs, a strong stance, with pushed back shoulders, raised heads and their hands clasped together behind their backs, emphasising the respect. The Woman in Black then swiftly entered through the audience and onto the stage, taking rigid steps along the back of the stage.

Connor notices and slowly turns his head to the side, with wide eyes and furrowed brows, with his mouth partly open, revealing a sense of shock and fright, gaining the audience's attention.⁹

Immediately after the Woman's exit, Connor turns to James and asks the line "Who was that woman?", his pace is hurried and his tone is panicked with quick, short breaths, furrowed brows and wide eyes, joltingly moving his head around the room, shifting his gaze in panic.¹⁰ James replies with a puzzled look, muttering the words "There was no woman."

As soon as James has said this, he moves to the side of the stage ready to leave, and The Woman then runs on through the curtains which are placed upstage, Connor screams in terror and falls to the ground with wide eyes, raised eyebrows and his mouth open wide, revealing how frightened he is. This scene was totally absorbing and thrilled the audience by creating extreme levels of tension and shock.¹¹

When it is time for Connor, still as a young Arthur Kipps, to go back to Eel Marsh house, James, still as Daily, aware of the terrifying nature of the property, says the line "you can't go alone, take a dog" in a concerned way; Connor responds with "I don't have a dog", in a questioning nature, by showing a quizzical look on his face through furrowed brows, squinted eyes and a scrunched up mouth.¹² James then responds cheerfully, "I do, come here lass", and he gets his 'dog' to come.

James and Connor both then gaze slowly in unison to the side of the stage, following their gaze across the stage to watch the 'imaginary' dog slowly move across. James then stiffly jolts his leg forward as if kicking the dog, to which they both look down, then shift their gaze to Connor's feet and then lift up their head and eyes, following the 'dog' offstage. All of this is done with both James and Connor having wide eyes and raised brows and their mouths hanging slightly open. In this scene Connor worked well with his acting partner to create comedy for the audience by realistically creating the idea that there was actually a dog there, creating an engaging and entertaining performance for the audience.¹³

The final scene of the play shows the 'play within the play' coming to an end, Connor now back as the actor, delivers the line "Who was that young woman?" in a shocked and excited tone, saying it with wide eyes and a grin on his face and raised brows. This maintains audience engagement.¹⁴

8. Term?

9. Some performance detail here.

10. Some detail here.

11. Evaluation of the effect of the acting.

12. Some detail here.

13. The skill of working in sync is evaluated.

14. Focus on question but an assertion.

Comments

15. Some more useful detail.

16. A clear conclusion that contains a personal view related to the question focus.

When James, as Kipps, asks “young woman?! I did not see a young woman.” Connor responds by widening his eyes, raising his eyebrows and dropping his jaw and looking towards James quizzically and then at the floor, breathing heavily. This was then followed by a blackout signalling the end of the play.¹⁵

Both actors worked well together and created terror, tension and comedy for the audience, however, my view was that Matt Connor gave a riveting performance in the play and in the ‘play within a play’ and kept me completely engaged throughout.¹⁶

Word Count: 1016

Commentary

The student maintains a good focus on the question and all moments are described with clear reference to engaging the audience.

A little formulaic in the analysis of skills, however there are a range of moments described here which provide a good flavour of the production.

AO3

Quite thorough knowledge and understanding of production’s style is communicated.

Knowledge of aims is demonstrated; the student demonstrates a thoughtful response to how meaning is conveyed.

Band: Band 4

AO4

Quite detailed and well-structured work with thoughtful evaluation of the success of the interpretation of the text, at times. Analysis of skills could be more developed.

Band: Band 4

Example 10

16.1 Explain how the sound design was used to enhance the tension at **two** specific moments. Analyse and evaluate the success of the effects created.

Example response

On the 10th February 2015 I saw Miller's modern Tragedy, *A View from the Bridge* directed by David Thacker in the Octagon theatre, Bolton. Set in the nineteen fifties, the play explores the tensions that exist in the Carbone family, in the dock workers' community of Red Hook.¹

Often a successful sound design is one where the audience don't really notice the sound, and this was the case up to a point in this production of the play that was set very definitely in Brooklyn in a semi-realistic setting with gantries to suggest the 'bridge' and large black and white images of Manhattan and Brooklyn on the 'backdrop' behind them.²

Most of the sound used was diegetic and supported the action, so the phonograph played 'Paper Doll' when required and there was the clatter of plates and cutlery from the kitchen, off stage, when the table was cleared.³

The director had also included an ensemble of extras to represent the Red Hook community and often their chattering, or horrified gasps underscored some moments of action.

The sound designer, Andy Smith, opened the production, in blackout, with the sound of pitching coins, but underneath this sound of clinks and thuds and occasional grunts from the 'pitchers', there was an expressionistic, metallic, non-naturalistic, whining noise that might have been intended to suggest pulleys on cranes in the docks, but also successfully offered a chilling sense of premonition about what might unfold in front of the audience.⁴

This sound effect was played more than once, for example, in addition to creating tension here, it was played after Rodolpho had led Catherine into the bedroom and before Eddie returned from the Dockyard with the stolen Whiskey. It was played again, as Eddie approached the phone booth in Act 2 to make the fatal call to immigration.⁵

But at this moment, at the beginning of the play, before Alfieri addresses the audience directly, the noise was a bit like 'white' noise and it unnerved the audience and successfully created a tense start to the play. The noise was faded out once Alfieri began to speak and his reassuring style of delivery made the audience begin to relax. But then Smith introduced another sound effect, this time of a blaring fog horn which he brought up suddenly and at high volume after Alfieri had said, 'This is the gullet of New York, swallowing the tonnage of the world'. This time the sound effect had the effect of making the audience jump as we were not expecting it and we began to anticipate that there might be more surprises to come.⁶

Comments

1. Useful, brief context.

2. Sense of the style of the production.

3. General references to sound used in the production as a whole.

4. Well described sound effect directly linked to tension; evaluation.

5. Valid discussion of the use of the same effect at different points in the play.

6. Good exploration of the moment and its various sounds; analysed clearly.

Comments

7. Another clear moment is identified.
8. Refers specifically to cues for the sound effects.
9. Vividly described; evaluation implicit.
10. A clear and effective conclusion with evaluation.

Another moment when sound was used to enhance tension was before the Immigration Officers arrived.⁷ There had been a repetition of the whiny metallic sound before Eddie called Immigration. In the section of the play before the officer arrived, there were very brief bursts of the same sound effect when Eddie asked Beatrice ‘She got other boarders up there?’ and it began to dawn on Eddie that he had endangered the futures of his neighbours as well as his wife’s cousins. Added to this, Smith included the sound like the rapid pulling of a bow across a violin when Eddie, thinking out loud, said ‘They got a temper that family’.⁸

This ominous sound, coupled with our knowledge of what Eddie had done, put the audience on the edge of their seats. However, even though we were expecting it, the thunderous knocking at the door, which Smith had amplified and played in surround sound made the audience jump again and the thud, thud, thud of the Officers’ fists pounding on the door signaled the end for Eddie.⁹

Altogether, the non-naturalistic sound design that underscored this production helped to create as well as to support the building tension that reached its terrifying climax as Eddie dies in his wife’s arms – at this point all sound was cut and we were left in silence to contemplate the tragedy that had unfolded.¹⁰

Word Count: 661

Commentary

This is a very detailed and confident account of how tension was enhanced by the sound design in two specific moments from the production. A very thorough and thoughtful approach to the demands of the question is shown.

There is a consistent attempt to evaluate the success of the sound design.

AO3

The student demonstrates well developed and insightful knowledge and understanding of the production, and of how meaning is created through production elements.

Band: Band 5

AO4

Precise detail about the use of sound with sustained focus on the question and consistent assessment of the designer’s work.

Band: Band 5

Comments

16.2 Explain how **one** performer used their skills to create a convincing character at **two** specific moments. Analyse and evaluate their success in doing this.

Example response

On the 10th February 2015 I saw Miller's modern Tragedy, *View from the Bridge* directed by David Thacker in the Octagon theatre, Bolton. Set in 1954 the play explores the Carbone family in the docking community of Red Hook, a close-knit Italian American country. One actor who successfully created a convincing character was Colin Connor, playing Eddie.¹¹

In the first act after Beatrice's impoverished cousins Marco and Rodolpho come to America from Sicily to seek their illegal fortunes, Eddie's tension rises as he sees his niece, Catherine, with Rodolpho at which his over fatherly concern becomes more apparent as he dislikes them being together. This was shown successfully as Connor stood on the bridge above the stage waiting for Catherine, his hands gripping the railing hand showing his tension and his jaw locked. His eyes were narrow with furrowed eyebrows and he tapped his foot impatiently. This conveyed his concern for Catherine and frustration that she was not back yet. When his wife Beatrice entered, he turned the opposite way, stage right, in a sharp and decisive movement. He breathed heavily and jolted his head further forward his eyes narrow as if looking for Catherine.¹²

This created a believable character as his over-protectiveness of his niece was apparent. Connor also in this moment, showed his dysfunctional relationship with his wife by turning his head away from her as she enters the bridge. When Beatrice asked him, "When am I gonna be a wife again" he looked down uneasy; his shoulders raised up to his head showing his uncomfortableness in talking to his wife. He said "I aint been feeling good" in a quiet voice with a depressive tone still looking at the floor his arms now folded and jaw locked showing his frustration that she has questioned his manhood.¹³ Connor then looked stage right, away from Beatrice, again looking for Catherine walking away from her, the increase in proxemics highlighted their distant relationship. Connor walked with a wide gait his hands folded, closed off from Beatrice showing he wasn't interested in what she was saying. This successfully created a convincing character showing he was more interested in his niece than his wife, showing his dysfunctional relationship and creating pity from the audience.¹⁴

11. Could be more detail on acting style here.

12. Very good detail about the non – verbal skills of the actor.

13. Very clear detail.

14. Evaluation.

Comments

Another moment where Connor created a convincing character was at the start of Act 2 when Catherine and Rodolpho are alone together for the first time and Eddie catches them.¹⁵ Connor convincingly showed Eddie as drunk by entering from the back of the stage with a wide gait and heavy slow steps.¹⁶ He used large, lethargic movements such as swaying his arms by his sides and his head swaying from side to side as he walked. When he reached centre stage he held onto the kitchen table to steady himself, his hands gripping hard and body still swaying. His mouth was slightly open and eyes dropped showing his lack of control over his body convincing the audience of his drunken state. Connor shouted "Beatrice" in a loud slow voice, slightly muffled turning his head sharply causing him to sway and hold the table tighter to steady himself. He repeated "Beatrice" louder his voice slurred, showing his intoxication convincingly.¹⁷

This created tension and fear for the audience as they knew he was about to catch Catherine and Rodolpho. As Catherine entered from the bedroom followed by Rodolpho, Eddie's anger rose. Connor showed this successfully by jerking his body back in realisation that they had been together. His eyes narrowed, fixed on Rodolpho and his hands grew into tight fists conveying his anger. He took a large step towards Rodolpho, uneasy swaying slightly showing he was drunk, and looking into Rodolpho's eyes. His jaw clenched as he raised his head threateningly. As Catherine started to leave, Colin grabbed her arm tightly with a firm grip. His head darted in her direction; his eyes wide in fear that she would leave. This showed his concerning character and love for Catherine. He said "Where are you going" looking at her his eyes wide as if warning her not to leave. His voice was loud with an aggressive tone creating a threatening character, making the audience fear for Catherine and create frustration towards Eddie.¹⁸

Overall Eddie, played by Connor, successfully convinced the audience of his character through his concern for his niece Catherine which was shown in the two moments that I have described as well as his jealousy of Rodolpho and rage when he discovered them alone. His convincing character was achieved successfully as he managed to create tension, shock and despair from the audience throughout the play.¹⁹

Word Count: 766

15. Good focus.

16. Evaluation.

17. Very clear detail.

18. The portrayal of Eddie's angry character has been carefully recorded and evaluation is implicit.

19. Evaluation.

Commentary

This is a very detailed account of the performance of the actor playing Eddie, in two specific moments from the production, aspects of character are clearly recognised and the performance is related with care. Throughout the answer, the student keeps the term 'convincing' at the forefront. There is a consistent attempt to evaluate the success of the actor's performance.

AO3

The student demonstrates well developed and insightful Knowledge and understanding of the production, its aims and the interpretation of the play.

Band: Band 5

AO4

Precise detail about the performance with sustained focus on the question and consistent assessment of the actor's work.

Band: Band 5

Example 11

Comments

17.1 Explain how the set designer created a set or settings appropriate for the action of the play. Analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the designs at **two** specific moments.

Example response

On the 4th November 2014, I saw a live production of *Othello* at the Bolton Octagon Theatre. *Othello* is a Shakespearian tragedy written by William Shakespeare, performed by Frantic Assembly in heightened realism style.¹

The set designer, Laura Hopkins created an impressive setting for the action of the play which had been transposed to an urban district of West Yorkshire with most of the action taking place around a snooker table in a run-down pub.

Unlike Shakespeare's original text which is set in Venice and Cyprus, Frantic's take on the play sets the play in a context of squabbles and jealousies played out between competitive 'macho' males in a working class environment.²

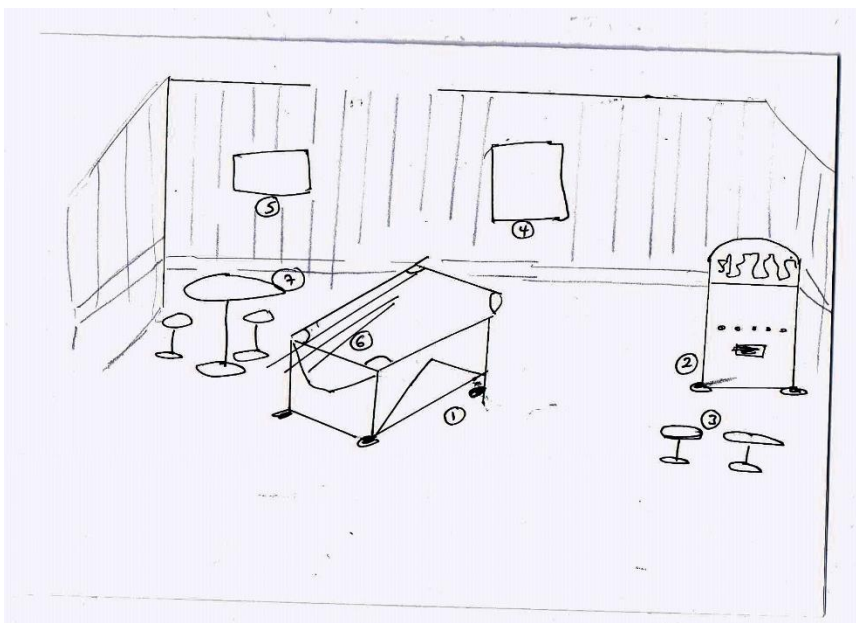
When I first saw the set, I did not think it was going to be very appropriate for the Shakespeare text that we had looked at, in class, before going to see the production. I was expecting something to suggest the Mediterranean setting of the original play. Instead, a snooker/pool table dominated the set. There was a fruit machine stage left and a collection of bar stools and round bar tables dotted around the stage.³ The impression was tacky and cheap.

This was what the set looked like at the beginning of the play

1. Some sense of style.

2. Useful context.

3. Valid consideration of what might be an appropriate setting for this play.



Key:⁴

1. Pool table
2. Fruit machine
3. Bar stools
4. Dirty window
5. Picture
6. Pool cues
7. Pub table

Entrances and exits were stage left and right, down stage (not indicated on sketch).

The set was amazingly flexible, however. The designer Laura Hopkins has been quoted as saying that she wanted a set that 'danced' with the cast. So, although you can't see it on a static sketch, the flats that made up the back and side 'walls' were fully articulated and capable of undulating with the rhythm of the production.⁵

Frantic Assembly are famous for their physical style of work and *Othello* was no exception. The cast were mainly athletic males but there were female characters, Desdemona, Bianca and Emilia and 'extra' women and the production was frequently interrupted by dance and/or fight sequences that were accompanied by high energy music by 'Hybrid'.⁶

One specific moment when the set design was really effective⁷ was when Iago got Cassio drunk. Cassio admits to Iago that he cannot hold his drink and Iago immediately sees a way to bring disgrace upon his rival for Othello's good opinion. Although Iago tells Cassio he will only drink 'one cup' he manages to trick Cassio into drinking more by singing raucous songs and getting the other 'lads' in the bar to join in a drinking competition. Soon Cassio's head is spinning and this is when the set (the back wall) begins to move, dipping and diving like a concertina, around Cassio, to mirror his feelings of drunkenness.⁸

It was incredibly effective to see the walls start to move and snake into new positions as Cassio insisted, 'I am not drunk now, I can stand well enough', while actually appearing to melt into the undulating walls.⁹ It was both humorous and un-nerving to watch.¹⁰

Another transformation of the set occurred when Desdemona and Emilia are suddenly revealed in the 'Ladies toilets'. The 'wall of the pub' seems to dissolve or retract and a complete 'Ladies' toilet with cubicle, sink and grubby looking roller towel dispenser is trucked forward to reveal Desdemona sitting on the top of the toilet lid, with her knees up to her chin and her arms around her legs sobbing desperately as Emilia tries to comfort her about Othello's sudden jealousy.¹¹

The space in the toilet/washroom appears confined and the walls, sinks and taps looked seedy and run-down – like the rest of the pub. The 'toilet' unit takes up the space of the pool table which simply sinks into a trap-door centre stage. This was really effective in supporting the idea of the play being set in a pub with the Ladies toilet as the only retreat for the women from the aggressive space in the main bar where the boys were constantly sparring and fighting.¹²

Comments

4. The sketch conveys some information.

5. Evaluation implicit.

6. Needs to link this information to the question.

7. Evaluation.

8. A specific moment.

9. The set is evaluated albeit briefly.

10. Personal response.

11. Sense of the transition here.

12. Evaluates the effectiveness of the design here.

Another amazing use of the set is when the pub car park is revealed through the back wall, but that is a third moment and the question only requires two.¹³

Overall, this amazingly versatile set was used throughout to enable the cast of *Frantic* to dance, fight, jump flip, dive and lift in their characteristic style.¹⁴

Word Count: 729

Commentary

There are some very good details about the ways in which the setting complemented the action of *Othello*. The student offers some quite detailed descriptions of the set and provides an adequate sketch of the main setting.

AO3

A thoughtful approach to the aims of the production team as expressed through the setting with good understanding of the ways in which the setting complemented the physical style of the production. The interpretation of the play has been considered and there is evident knowledge of how the set supports this.

Band: Band 4

AO4

There is quite a thorough and thoughtful analysis and evaluation of the setting, referring in some detail to the way in which the set was appropriate to the action of the play. The student's response to the set is enthusiastic and supported with useful examples.

Band: Band 4

Comments

13. Quite, but does show some understanding of the set design as a whole.

14. Rather a neat end to the answer.

Comments

17.2 Explain how **two** performers worked together to create specific effects for the audience at **two** specific moments. Analyse and evaluate the success of their partnership on stage.

Example response

On the 4th November 2014, I saw a live production of *Othello* at the Bolton Octagon Theatre. *Othello* is a Shakespearian tragedy written by William Shakespeare, performed by Frantic Assembly in heightened realism.¹⁵

This play is about Othello who loves Desdemona but it seems their relationship is being manipulated by Iago which leads into a tragedy.

In this production, the partnership¹⁶ between Othello and Desdemona was one of the most effective aspects of a production that was successful on every level; the relationship between the doomed lovers was presented in a highly-charged physical way and the actors, Mark Ebulue and Kirsty Oswald strived to create the effect that their passion for one another was sincere and all-consuming in the early part of the play.¹⁷

At the end of the play, although Desdemona is still in love with Othello, his jealousy drives him to murder her and the actors worked in perfect harmony to depict the destruction of their love.¹⁸

In the first 'love scene', the two actors, Ebulue and Oswald work together to engage the audience. They clearly wanted to effect the audience and make them feel the connection between the two characters.¹⁹ In one particular moment, Desdemona sat on the pool table with her legs dangling off, facing the audience. Othello was sat next to her, she glances at his chest, picked her arm up and placed it on his chest. She then traced her hand across his chest, while he followed the path of her fingers with his eyes, fully focused on her. This effectively established the close connection between the two characters.²⁰ Othello then ducked his head beneath Desdemona's arm when her hand finished on his shoulder so that Desdemona ended up with her arm around Othello's neck. This was particularly effective because the audience were left in awe, both at how much love they showed one another as well as by their physical dexterity.²¹

Also in the first love scene Desdemona took up a position standing on the pool table looking down at Othello who was laid down facing up at her. He stretched his arms out just before she fell onto him gently and he cradled her. The strength of Othello surprised the audience because the movement appeared to defy gravity. Before he held her tightly, they balanced on one another, while he had his hands on her shoulders holding her up.²²

The way that he then caught her fall was very effective and amazed the audience because it taught them how much Desdemona trusted Othello and was willing to sacrifice herself for him and the fall and catch were jaw-droppingly accomplished. This was a highly synchronised partnership.²³

15. No point in repeating this.

16. Focus on question and evaluation, although this is assertion.

17. The intended effects are specified.

18. Apt comment/ evaluation but needs exemplification.

19. Intended effect.

20. Clear moment.

21. Some detail here although the specific moment is not totally clear – perhaps this refers to an off-text movement sequence.

22. Useful description of physical expression.

23. There is evaluation here.

At the start of the love scene, there was a particularly effective part where Iago was stood on the pool table and Desdemona and Othello both moved in sync with each other at different ends of the table to rotate that pool table. This was particularly effective.²⁴ The slow movement made the audience feel tension yet intimacy between the two actors.²⁵ It was particularly effective because it showed the audience that perhaps Iago is in between their relationship and moving around the pool table that he is stood on they are constantly revolving around him.

In my second moment, the death scene, where Othello kills Desdemona, it was very effective how Desdemona was in the same position as she was in the love scene; however, Othello was grasping his arms around her neck rather than her shoulders.²⁶ Desdemona was faced down on Othello while he had her held up by his hands around her neck. They worked together, in perfect partnership, to balance and show their agility.²⁷

When Desdemona began to panic, Oswald slapped her hands on Ebulue's's arms to stop him strangling her. The audience were horrified by this sequence because they witnessed Desdemona's fear of having no control so they felt sorrow and shock that her husband is killing her.²⁸

It was truly effective for the audience because they knew that they had both been manipulated by Iago and it was also very effective because they worked together to show heightened realism. The audience were left with despair that Desdemona was struggling to stay alive while her husband strangled her.²⁹

It was effective how they worked together because once Othello showed with his face, that he was putting increasingly amounts of pressure on Desdemona's neck by making his face look strained. Desdemona started to slap even harder on Othello's arm, before finally submitting to the stronger man who succeeded in killing her. The moment when Ebulue went to kiss his dead wife was heart-wrenching to watch because of the strong bond that the two actors had created between the ill-fated lovers through their mastery of both the physical theatre style and the delivery of Shakespeare's heightened language.³⁰

Word Count: 801

Comments

24. Needs more evaluation.

25. Effects intended and achieved.

26. Another useful moment described.

27. Refers to the question.

28. Effect on the audience.

29. Assessment.

30. Although the physical dimension of the performance has been the focus of the answer, there is a brief reference to language here.

Commentary

There are some useful details about the ways in which the two chosen performers worked together to create specific effects. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the partnership is offered, although sometimes it is based on assertion rather than on analysis of the performances. The final sentence refers to Shakespeare's language but there is no reference in the body of the answer to the vocal skills of the performers or to their delivery of the text.

AO3

A thoughtful approach to the aims of the production team as expressed through the two actors here; the physical style of the production receives thoughtful attention.

Band: Band 4

AO4

There is useful and relevant analysis and evaluation referring in some detail to the physical skills of the chosen actors and to their interpretation of the relationship between Othello and Desdemona. The student's own response to the production and to the actors, as well as that of the wider audience is usefully considered.

Band: Cusp of Bands 3 and 4

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