

GCSE DRAMA

Example candidate answers

8261 Paper 1

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Command words

Describe – set out characteristics

Explain – set out purposes or reasons

Analyse – separate information into components and identify their characteristics

Evaluate – judge from available evidence

Section B: Study of set text

The Crucible – Arthur Miller

Comments

5.1 You are designing a **costume for Elizabeth** to wear in a performance of this extract. The costume must reflect the context of *The Crucible*, set in a Puritan community in the 17th century. Describe your design ideas for the costume.

[4 marks]

Example response

I would have Elizabeth wearing clothes that are plain in colour to highlight her personality, and the community of Salem that the play is set in. ¹ At this stage in the play, Elizabeth is exhausted, and the state of her costume must make this clear to the audience. ² Elizabeth would wear a long (floor-length) cotton skirt. ³ It would be dark brown. Elizabeth would also wear a white cotton blouse which would be fully buttoned-up due to the nature of the religious community ⁴ that she lives in. Finally, in addition to this, Elizabeth would have a thick black woollen shawl and plain headscarf because of the weather conditions in Salem. ⁵ She would wear plain black leather shoes that are flat with no heel. Elizabeth believes in a duty to God and her husband ⁶ so her focus would not be on her appearance in this extract.

Commentary

An excellent description, with precise details of the costume provided throughout. A sense of Elizabeth's emotional state is also communicated, and the creative ideas and suggestions demonstrate an excellent knowledge and understanding of the play.

Band 4

5.2 You are performing the role of Elizabeth. Describe how you would use your vocal and physical skills to perform the line below and explain the effects you want to create.

'You – have been tortured?'

[8 marks]

Example response

The first thing that is immediately clear is that Elizabeth is shocked at seeing her husband like this, exhausted and frail. I would show this shock firstly in her voice. I would use the dash in the line for a pause, and on this pause I would slowly cast my eyes over ⁷ (the actor playing) John so that I can clearly see how weak and pitiful he is. This pause would emphasise how Elizabeth was struggling with the situation. ⁸ Obviously, in this scene, Elizabeth has seen John before, but only in this moment does she register his physical weakness and that he is breaking down. ⁹

I would continue to show how shocked I was by changing the pitch and tone of my voice as the line changes. At the start of the line, I would say the word 'you' as though I was making a bold statement or an accusation, and use a strong and clear tone of voice. ¹⁰ However, after the shock of seeing John in such a state, I would say the words

1. Understanding of the play's context.

2. Awareness of the audience; this is a performance.

3. Precise details provided.

4. Knowledge and understanding links costume and context of the play.

5. Precise details provided.

6. Knowledge and understanding.

7. Combination of physical and vocal skills in precise detail.

8. Knowledge and understanding; entirely appropriate to the role.

9. Suggests her 'motivation' behind the line here.

10. Precise details on vocal skills. A sense of the line emerges.

'have been tortured' in a much softer and kinder tone. I would almost whisper them to him, and try to show just how much Elizabeth cares for John and how upset she is by what he is being put through ¹¹ by the people of Salem.

I would use my physical skills to show how compassionate and caring Elizabeth is, but also how scared she is for what might happen to John. ¹² As I say the word 'you' I would slowly bend down and get on my knees on the floor so that I am level with John. This is so I can look directly into his eyes and show just how much I love him. ¹³ I will gently take hold of his two hands in mine ¹⁴ to show how much I love and care for him, and that – because he is my husband – my instinct is to protect him.

Finally, I would want to ensure that the audience feels sympathy for me and for John, ¹⁵ and so on the words 'have been tortured' I would carefully pull John towards me and clutch him to my chest. ¹⁶ This way, I can embrace him in my arms, and show that despite what he did with Abigail and the lies he told, I still love him and am proud that I am married to him. This is only a short line but the combined use of my physical and vocal skills mean that I can use these four words and a pause to show real tenderness and warmth to John. ¹⁷

Commentary

An excellent description of the physical and vocal skills that would be used to communicate this line, both separately and in combination. Also, an excellent and comprehensive explanation of the effect of these, and what would be communicated to the audience. Precise details are used throughout, and the suggestions here are all appropriate to the role.

Band 4

5.3 You are performing the role of Elizabeth. Focus on the shaded part of the extract. Explain how you and the actor playing John might use the performance space and interact with each other to **create tension** for your audience.

[12 marks]

Example response

This part of the extract takes place in a jail cell which would be very cramped and uncomfortable, and not have nice living conditions; especially in the 17th century ¹⁸ when *The Crucible* is set. Because of this, John and I would have a limited amount of space ¹⁹ in which we could move, and we would have to be very careful in terms of how we used this space to create tension.

Up until this point in the play, Elizabeth and John have had a very turbulent relationship ²⁰ because of his lies and the accusations against him. It would be important to show this in the extract, but also that these two people love each other despite everything that has happened – this is what helps to create the tension. ²¹

Comments

11. Clear and comprehensive explanation.

12. Knowledge and understanding of the role, as performed.

13. Clear, appropriate justification.

14. Precise details on physical skills.

15. Awareness of the audience; this is a performance.

16. Precise details on physical skills.

17. Excellent understanding demonstrated.

18. Knowledge and understanding of the play/context.

19. Practical consideration for performers.

20. Knowledge and understanding of the play/context.

21. Addressing the question.

When John asks Elizabeth how Giles Corey dies ('Then how does he die?') the actor playing John should move towards me quickly and with his arms outstretched ²² to place them on my shoulders. John is terrified of the manner in which he will die and this line is like an accusation. ²³ He should start to lose patience with Elizabeth, even though she is trying to be kind and keep the truth from him. With John very close to Elizabeth there will be real tension between them as she is forced to say 'They press him, John,' ²⁴ with a pause before that. As I say this line I would nervously avoid eye contact ²⁵ and look away from John so that I did not have to directly look into his eyes as I start to reveal what will happen to him. This will create further tension for the audience because the characters are physically close, ²⁶ but Elizabeth is trying to avoid the truth.

When Elizabeth finally reveals about the crushing of Giles – and of what will happen to John – I would have the actor playing John's mouth slowly fall open in a mixture of shock and fear ²⁷ as if he had never imagined that such a thing could happen to him. As he says the line 'More weight' I would have his arms drop from Elizabeth's shoulders and have him stagger backwards slightly. ²⁸ Because he is so weak and disoriented anyway, this would mean he could collapse backwards against the wall of the cell, as the realisation sinks in.

Finally, when John suggests to Elizabeth that he will confess to clear his name – something he has been determined not to do throughout the entire play – I would have him stay leaning against the wall, but make very strong and clear eye contact with Elizabeth. ²⁹ This is because the question is so important – it is literally life or death, and this would generate tension waiting to see how she will respond. There would then be a deliberate pause waiting for her response. I would have her shuffle slightly, and look down at the floor, so the audience cannot properly see her face and won't know exactly what she is thinking. ³⁰ Again, this will create tension. As she says the line, 'I cannot judge you, John,' I would have her turn away from him, and face the door of the cell. Although their bodies are close because it is such a small space, she is so scared of him seeing her true feelings, and that she cannot bear to look at her husband. ³¹ This would create tension because the extract will end with them physically close but not connected because of John's fate.

Commentary

An excellent explanation of how the two performers will use the performance space and their interaction with each other to create tension. The effect of this is clearly explained through the use of precise details and in a number of ways. The explanation develops the dynamic of the relationship between Proctor and Elizabeth throughout the extract.

Band 4

Comments

22. Precise details bring this line of dialogue to life.

23. Understanding of the effect of this line in performance.

24. Using dialogue to support the brief in the question; entirely appropriate suggestion.

25. Precise details provided.

26. Knowledge and understanding of the play/context, and its effect in performance.

27. Precise details provided.

28. Awareness of the uses of space; exact explanation.

29. Understanding of non-verbal communication of tension.

30. Precise details bring this action to life here.

31. Detailed sense of spatial awareness.

5.4 You are performing the role of Proctor. Describe how you would use your acting skills to **interpret Proctor's character** in this extract **and** explain why your ideas are appropriate both for this extract and the play as a whole.

[8 marks]

Example response

John Proctor is a complex man who is a product of the society that he lives in.³² Because the town of Salem in the seventeenth century is so ruled by fear and religion, people believe completely in God and Satan and witchcraft. John Proctor is a tragic figure throughout the play.³³ We know that he is thought of as a weak man because of what he has done with Abigail, and also because he has lied about this to his wife.³⁴

In this extract specifically I would want to show this as it is towards the end of Proctor's journey through the play. He has been gradually ground down by those around him and the events of the witchcraft trials and he has no energy left.³⁵ In this extract he is not angry with Elizabeth, and I would want to show a sense of his shame for what he has put her through, and perhaps fear when he learns of his fate.³⁶ I would show this by my having limited eye contact with Elizabeth throughout, and letting her initiate all the physical contact. I would be sitting on the floor of the cell, with my back against the wall, and hugging my knees to my chest.³⁷ This would show just how far Proctor has fallen from grace and how small he now seems. To show the fear I would have real moments of hesitation. The stage direction says that he looks at her 'incredulously' and I would use this moment to convey the shock and horror upon finding out that Giles is dead. I would stare at Elizabeth with my mouth open and my eyes wide, my arms hanging limply by my sides.³⁸ This would be a key moment for me in interpreting the character because I would choose to reveal the fear that he now knows for sure that he will die to unless he confesses.³⁹

Near the end of the extract, John suggests to Elizabeth that he could confess to clear his name. This would be a huge moral issue for him, and throughout the play I would have communicated Proctor as a deeply moral character who believes in honesty and truth⁴⁰ and justice (apart from the issue with Abigail). In this moment I would want to communicate my frustration and despair that Elizabeth will not satisfy me with an answer, and that I am looking to her to save my fate. On the lines 'What say you? If I give them that?' I would bang the floor of the jail cell with my fists, although in a weak way because I am tired and frail.⁴¹ I would beat the floor to try and get Elizabeth to react but also to show just how desperate and frantic I am to change the situation.

In the scene – where she serves him his dinner – I would show that he is a strong man and a calm man, but that he loses his temper with Elizabeth. When he says 'You forget nothin' and forgive nothin'! Learn charity, woman!' I would shout this with a raised voice.⁴² I would stand up from my seat at the table and kick my chair over backwards as I did so to show my strength and physical presence.⁴³ I would walk over to Elizabeth as I said this line, and make it an accusation, shouting it at her and pointing at her too. This side of

Comments

32. Knowledge of the play as a whole.

33. Understanding of the nature of the role.

34. Knowledge of the play as a whole

35. Understanding of the role.

36. Calculated effect of the interpretation of Proctor here.

37. Precise details of physical interpretation.

38. Precise detail highlights interpretative choices.

39. Shows detailed understanding of the subtext of the extract.

40. Knowledge and understanding of Proctor and the play as a whole.

41. Precise details of physical skills.

42. Precise details of vocal skills.

43. Physical skills and action supports the character and the intention.

Proctor would be a total contrast to how he is with Elizabeth in the jail cell in the extract. ⁴⁴

Proctor does love his wife, even though the dinner scene shows that they have something of a cold marriage at this stage of their lives, when he says 'I mean to please you, Elizabeth.' I would also contrast this with how I interpret Proctor as he is when he is alone with Abigail. In the first part of the play – act one – he is alone with her and behaves very differently to how he does with his wife. ⁴⁵ Abigail still flirts with him, and he responds back when he says 'What's this mischief here?' As he says this line, I would have him saying it with a sly smile, and him acknowledging what he has done with her even in the past. ⁴⁶ I would show Proctor as being firm and direct with her, but choosing not to have any physical contact with her. ⁴⁷ This is the main challenge in portraying Proctor, to show and interpret his strength and weakness at the same time. In the moment with Abigail he can show that he is trying not to respond to her flirting, ⁴⁸ but that she somehow manages to get the better of him.

Commentary

An excellent description and explanation of Proctor's character here in the extract, and elsewhere in the play. The ideas here are all well supported and precise details of a range of theatrical skills used help to further justify the ideas. There is a clear and detailed understanding of the role and of the play as a whole, with a sense of Proctor's moral conflict. There could, perhaps, be more said on the dynamic of the relationship with Abigail, but there is still enough here for Band 4.

Band 4

Comments

44. Understanding of variety within the role.

45. Knowledge and understanding of the play.

46. Precise details of facial expression.

47. Considered choice to not have physical contact; clearly explained.

48. Intention is clearly explained.

Blood Brothers – Willy Russell

- 6.1** You are designing a **setting** for a performance of this extract. The setting must reflect the context of *Blood Brothers*, set in a working-class community in around the 1970s. Describe your design ideas for the setting.

[4 marks]

Example response

It is important to show the difference between the sort of classroom in the school that Mickey and Linda go to ¹ compared to the school Eddie goes to. As I design my set, I would want lots of detail to show the period of the play and that it is a working-class school. ² The desks and chairs would all be made of wood and also be very shabby and worn. ³ They would not be set out in neat rows either. ⁴ The blackboard would be an old-fashioned painted blackboard on wheels ⁵ and on this there would be graffiti which said 'Mickey Luvs Linda 4 Eva' on it to show more about their characters. ⁶ There wouldn't be much colour in the design for my set at all.

Commentary

A good description of the setting for this extract, with secure knowledge and understanding of the play and its context. There are a number of precise details provided to support the design, but not all of them give enough information. The design is appropriate to the brief in the question.

Band 3

- 6.2** You are performing the role of Linda. Describe how you would use your vocal and physical skills to perform the line below and explain the effects you want to create.

'Leave him alone, will y'

[8 marks]

Example response

Linda is absolutely obsessed with Mickey ⁷ at this point in the play and worships everything that he does. She loves that he is a bit of a 'bad boy' and gives cheek back to teachers too. I would want to show the audience that Linda both wants to be just like Mickey is (cool, and a rebel) and also that she is in love with him. ⁸ I will use my physical and vocal skills to do this.

When I say the line, I would stand up with force and push my chair backwards so it crashes on the ground. ⁹ This will show that I am trying to be as cool as Mickey and a rebel ¹⁰ to the teacher. I will then walk out from my place behind the desk and go and stand by Mickey and put my arm round his shoulder. ¹¹ This would show that I had solidarity with Mickey and that I loved him a lot too. ¹² The audience would be able to see this.

Comments

1. Understanding of the play; social context.
2. Intentions are stated; follows the brief in the question.
3. Design detail included; does not say how they would look worn/shabby.
4. Creative design idea.
5. Precise detail; follows the period in the brief.
6. Creative design idea; lacks detail on how this will be achieved.

7. Understanding of the character.

8. Intention clearly stated; awareness of the audience also.

9. Precise detail of physical skills used.

10. Justification of this choice.

11. Precise detail of physical skills used.

12. Does not describe how both of these would be achieved.

I would say the line as a shout, and in a loud and accusing tone ¹³ to show the teacher what I thought of them hassling Mickey. I would say this line with my arms stretched out as I walked, as though I was ready for a fight and trying to 'take on' the teacher. ¹⁴ As I finished saying the line, I would push my chin out to try and be threatening. ¹⁵

I would want the audience to be surprised that Linda would act this way. ¹⁶ They would know that she was obsessed with Mickey, but this line could also show that she is trying to be like him too, so that she can get him to like her back. ¹⁷

Commentary

Good description of how vocal and physical skills can be used to deliver this line, and explore the dynamics of the role. There are moments when there isn't sufficient precise detail, in explanation of the effects that would be created. There is good understanding of the role and of the subtext of this line, too.

Band 3

6.3 You are performing the role of Linda. Focus on the shaded part of the extract. Explain how you and the actors playing Mickey and the Teacher might use the performance space and interact with each other to **create comedy** for your audience.

[12 marks]

Example response

This extract has lots of comedy in it, ¹⁸ as Linda and Mickey join forces and leave the Teacher looking pretty useless and powerless in front of his class of students. ¹⁹ At the start of this part of the extract, when Mickey says his line about 'pygmies' I would find this absolutely hilarious and want to show that I supported Mickey as he was being so rude to the Teacher. ²⁰ As he said this, I would cheer, and punch the air and shout 'ooh ooh ooh!' to encourage Mickey. ²¹ This would also show my disrespect for the Teacher, too.

When the Teacher says 'Shut up. Shut up' he is trying to control the class and he would walk into the room and try to look scary and threatening to them. ²² As he did this, I would stand behind his back and make rude gestures (the 'V' sign with my fingers) ²³ behind his back, to show the class that he lacks any power or authority. ²⁴ They would all laugh at this also.

When I say the line 'Take no notice, Mickey. I love you,' I would stand in front of Mickey to put myself between him and the Teacher. I would block their way. ²⁵ I would then wrap myself round Mickey to show that I loved him, ²⁶ and this would create comedy here on this line.

When I call the Teacher 'Y' big worm!' this should be really shocking, ²⁷ and as I did this I would shout this line in the Teacher's face and also make a gesture by wiggling my little finger on the word 'worm' which might mean another rude insult also. ²⁸ As I finished saying it, I would turn very quickly and walk away back to Mickey. I would do this to show that I was not in any way scared of the Teacher. ²⁹

Comments

13. Vocal skills considered, though lacks precise detail.

14. Physical skills considered, though lacks precise detail.

15. Precise detail of physical skills used.

16. Awareness of audience; impact of role.

17. Understanding of the role.

18. States comic potential.

19. Understands the role of Teacher.

20. Intention is clearly stated.

21. Acting skills described, with an explanation of the intended impact.

22. Understands the role of the Teacher.

23. Precise detail of physical skills.

24. Intended effect stated.

25. Physical skills stated; lacks precise detail.

26. Physical skills stated; lacks precise detail.

27. Intended effect stated.

28. Precise detail of physical and vocal skills.

29. It isn't clear how this would be achieved.

At the end of this part of the extract, Linda says 'I'm goin'... I'm goin'...' and I say this I would create comedy by making a gesture in the air with my right hand to the teacher. ³⁰

Commentary

A good explanation of how Linda could interact with both Mickey and the Teacher to create comedy and a sense of anarchy in this extract. There is good knowledge and understanding of the role(s), and a clear explanation of how this would be achieved. Some moments of explanation use precise details, whereas some do not, however.

Band 3

6.5 You are a designer working on **one** aspect of design for this extract. Describe how you would use your design skills to create effects which **support the action** of this extract **and** explain why your ideas are appropriate both for this extract and the play as a whole.

[20 marks]

Example response

I am going to work as a lighting designer ³¹ on this extract from *Blood Brothers*. This scene takes place in a shabby comprehensive school in the 1970s that Mickey and Linda go to. My design would take place in a traditional proscenium arch stage ³² and would also have to take into account the fact that this extract is next to an extract which shows the sort of school Eddie goes to and how different they are. ³³

I would have a general wash of light across the whole stage, ³⁴ and this would mean that all of the action could be seen and it would look like it was lighting from indoors that had been produced by electric lights. ³⁵ I would also use lights on a bar (in the wings so they can't be seen) to shine a brighter white light in three places in to the side of the scene. ³⁶ This is to create the effect that there is bright sunlight coming into the classroom, ³⁷ and we could understand that the students would not want to be stuck indoors in such a boring lesson. These lights would be bright and would be on throughout the extract. ³⁸

I would also use fluorescent strip lights, the type that you would see in most schools. ³⁹ These would be above the rows of desks and would be very bright indeed. ⁴⁰ They would be on throughout the extract, and give a sense of giving off a bright light but a cold light too. ⁴¹

I would contrast all of this with the lighting I would use for Eddie's school classroom ⁴² in the next scene. I would have a bright wash fill the stage once again, but I would use warmer colours, a mix of yellow and orange to create this. ⁴³ I would fade into this lighting state ⁴⁴ from the previous extract so the change was not too sudden.

There are other points in the play when I will use my lighting design to create different effects with subtle changes. In the scene later in the play when Mickey is depressed and asking Linda to give him his pills, this scene takes place in a grotty flat ⁴⁵ that Mickey and Linda live in with their baby. I would use a light with barn doors on it to mark out a rectangle of light on the floor. It would not be very bright ⁴⁶ and would

Comments

30. Physical skills implied. What sort of gesture?

31. Design skill identified.

32. Staging configuration stated.

33. Knowledge and understanding of the whole play.

34. Lighting detail stated; what colour would it be?

35. A sense of the type of lighting. How bright is it?

36. Precise detail of lighting used.

37. Intended effect clearly stated; achieved through design.

38. Further lighting detail.

39. Lighting detail stated

40. Explanation of this. Positioning of lighting isn't clear.

41. Precise detail of lighting used.

42. Understanding of the play as a whole.

43. Precise detail of lighting provided.

44. Technical language used here.

45. Understanding of the whole play.

46. Precise detail of lighting used; brightness stated.

be quite dingy to show that the flat isn't nice.

In one of the early scenes where Mrs Johnstone is cleaning Mrs Lyons's house, I would have large windows, with bright, warm sunlight coming in from outside.⁴⁷ I would also have several small lamps with lampshades on coffee tables on the set, to show that the Lyons family is well off⁴⁸ and have lots of nice touches in their home. All of these lights would actually be on with a real light bulb in them,⁴⁹ but I would also rig a light directly above each lamp, on the lighting rig, so that when they were turned on, these extra lights would create the effect that the lamps are giving out big pools of warm lighting⁵⁰ in the Lyons' house.

Commentary

A good description of the lighting used which are appropriate to this extract. This response also details different types of interior lighting which indicate a good knowledge of the play as a whole. There is an understanding of how these effects will be achieved to support the action, but there is not always precise enough detail – or use of technical vocabulary – to make these completely clear.

Band 3

Comments

47. Effect is stated. How would this be achieved?

48. Understanding of the play; lighting enhances this.

49. Detail of lighting used.

50. Precise detail of lighting used; technical detail and intended effect.

The 39 Steps – Patrick Barlow/John Buchan

Comments

- 7.1** You are designing **props or items of furniture** for a performance of this extract. The props or items of furniture must reflect the 1930s period setting of *The 39 Steps*. Describe your design ideas for the props or items of furniture.

[4 marks]

Example response

This extract is set in Hannay's flat and the play takes place in the 1930s so the props and furniture would all need to look authentic. ¹ Firstly, I would have an armchair ² for Hannay in the flat. This would be made from leather (green) and would be very straight at the back ³ and uncomfortable to sit in. Because Hannay is posh I would have the armchair in really good condition with no scratches or scuffs. ⁴ In terms of a prop, I would have a cocktail set ⁵ on a drinks trolley next to the arm chair, as these were popular in the 1930s. ⁶ This would be a whisky decanter and a set of glasses ⁷ and also an ice bucket.

Commentary

A good description of a piece of furniture and a prop here. A number of precise details are provided, but not consistently throughout the response. The suggestions are appropriate and shows secure knowledge and understanding of the play and its period.

Band 3

- 7.2** You are performing the role of Annabella. Describe how you would use your vocal and physical skills to perform the line below and explain the effects you want to create.

'The police! They would not believe me any more than you did! With their boots and their whistles!'

[8 marks]

Example response

Annabella is German and part of the comedy from this comes from the fact that she laughs at British police, something which would have been shocking in the 1930s. ⁸ I would say this line in a loud and confident voice ⁹ and make each of the three sentences a declaration ¹⁰ – because there is an exclamation mark there. In the middle sentence I would stress the word 'you' and I would point my finger at Hannay as I said this. ¹¹ Also I would speak this line in a comedy German accent so that when I said 'whistles' it would be pronounced as 'vhistles' ¹² for comic effect. I would also use my physical skills to create shock for Hannay with this line. When I said 'The police!' I would throw my hands up in the air as if I have heard enough and think the Police are actually ridiculous. ¹³ Also when I said 'boots' and 'whistles,' I would pretend like I was so offended by the Police that I would clutch my stomach like I was going to throw up or retch. ¹⁴ This would create shock for Hannay and then comedy ¹⁵ for the audience.

1. Appropriate design idea for the brief.

2. Could benefit from further detail. What type of armchair?

3. Better detail is provided here.

4. Understanding of character and the play shown here.

5. An appropriate prop is suggested.

6. Justifies the choice of prop.

7. Some detail here, but not consistently so.

8. Understanding of the extract and the comedy created.

9. Detail of vocal skills.

10. A sense of the effect.

11. Precise detail of physical and vocal skills together.

12. Precise detail of vocal skills and the effect.

13. Detail of physical skills used.

14. Detail of physical skills.

15. Intended effect.

Commentary

A good description of how physical and vocal skills would be used here, although the precise effect that would be created would benefit from a more detailed explanation. There are a number of precise details throughout the response, although not consistently so. The response shows a good understanding of how Annabella could be performed.

Band 3

7.3 You are performing the role of Annabella. Focus on the shaded part of the extract. Explain how you and the actor playing Hannay might use the performance space and interact with each other **to show the romantic tension** between the couple for your audience.

[12 marks]

Example response

There is romantic tension between Annabella and Hannay all the way through this extract and especially in this end part. She is trying to seduce him ¹⁶ but he also is confused by her and the situation he finds himself in. This can be funny too. ¹⁷ When Annabella says 'A map of Scotland' I would have her saying this in a really sexy and breathy tone of voice and move slowly towards Hannay as she says it. ¹⁸ This is because a map of Scotland isn't sexy but she is saying it like it is. Hannay would stand absolutely still and be shocked ¹⁹ that Annabella was being so forward with him. As I said the word 'Scotland' I would pick up Hannay's tie and slowly let it fall against his chest ²⁰ so he would know I was seducing him.

When the stage direction says that Annabella 'looks around her' I would do this by very slowly walking around Hannay. ²¹ I would do this so that I was checking that no one was listening to what we were saying but also a way of seducing him. ²² I would keep one finger on his chest and as I walked round him I would run my finger across his chest, then his shoulders and round his back in a full circle. ²³ Hannay would stare straight ahead and not react. This would show tension. ²⁴

When Annabella says 'Bring it to my room' I would lean forwards really close to Hannay and whisper the word 'room' in his ear and giggle ²⁵ as I said it so he would know what I really meant. This would create tension here too. ²⁶

Finally the stage direction says that she turns 'seductively' away. ²⁷ This would create tension, so I would follow this stage direction and do it, by turning slowly but so that my body brushed past Hannay's and then I would look back over my shoulder ²⁸ as I walked to the door, and then flick my hair. Throughout all of this Hannay would stand still and not move. ²⁹

Comments

15. Understanding of Lola and the dynamic of the girls' roles.

16. Understanding of her motivation.

17. Understanding of comic potential.

18. Precise detail of physical and vocal skills used; a sense of seduction is implied.

19. Clear explanation; would benefit from further detail.

20. Precise detail of physical skill; doesn't clarify comic purpose.

21. Understanding of stage directions; detail of physical skills.

22. Understanding of motivation.

23. Precise details of physical skills used.

24. Intended effect is stated; would benefit from more detail.

25. Precise detail of physical and vocal skills.

26. Intended effect is stated; would benefit from more detail.

27. Understanding of stage directions.

28. Precise details of physical skills used.

29. Justification of this choice is missing.

Commentary

A good explanation of how Annabella and Hannay could create romantic tension, although there is much more detail about what Annabella does, and less on Hannay, even in his reactions to her. A number of precise details are provided for Annabella, but not for Hannay. The response is appropriate to the brief and shows a good understanding of the play.

Band 3

7.4 You are performing the role of Hannay. Describe how you would use your acting skills **to interpret Hannay's character** in this extract **and** explain why your ideas are appropriate both for this extract and the play as a whole.

[20 marks]

Example response

The 39 Steps is a spoof of an old spy novel and film ³⁰ so it places Richard Hannay as an innocent man at the centre of the story. Because of this, Hannay basically reacts to everything that is going on around him, because it is happening to him. ³¹ The play is definitely a comedy but to play Hannay I would focus on playing the character 'straight' because that would be even funnier for the audience. ³² His reactions to things in this extract – and actually in the whole play – are very important.

Hannay is a posh and upper class man from the 1930s, and very much a 'gentleman.' ³³ So when he says the line 'You can – sleep in my bed,' I would do this by not looking directly at Annabella so she didn't think I was suggesting that we do anything in bed together. ³⁴ I would also use a pause and hesitate in the line to show how nervous Hannay is and that he wants to continue to be seen as the perfect gentleman. ³⁵ I would stare straight ahead as I said this. ³⁶

Then when Hannay says 'I'll get a shakedown on the armchair' I would move at a fast pace to the leather armchair and pat it as I did to show how comfortable it looks ³⁷ and how I was looking forward to sleeping on it, even though it isn't comfortable at all. I would say this line with a smile on my face and be looking directly at Annabella also. ³⁸

When Hannay says 'I beg your pardon?' as Annabella slowly says the name Altnashellach, I would deliver this line as though he is reacting to her sneezing. ³⁹ So that rather than her pronouncing a difficult Scottish place name, she is making the noise when she sneezes. As I said the line, I would pull out a handkerchief from my pocket and offer it to Annabella so that she could take it from me. ⁴⁰ She would not take it from me, of course.

This is at the start of the play and Hannay is only really at the beginning of the adventure so he is very confused and bewildered here. ⁴¹ To interpret the character for the audience throughout the play, as the plot gets even crazier, I would keep Hannay confused but he would get more angry. ⁴² So as an example, when he gets to Scotland and he meets the innkeeper and his wife, I would have him play this

Comments

30. Knowledge of the play and its context/origins.

31. Understanding of the role.

32. Clear interpretation of the character and a justification for this choice, also.

33. Understanding of the role.

34. Detail of physical skills; justification provided to support.

35. Detail of vocal skills; justification provided to support.

36. Detail of facial expression; missing a justification.

37. Detail of physical skills; lacking precision in how this would be achieved, though.

38. Detail of facial expression; missing a justification.

39. Interpretation of character; appropriate for the play.

40. Detail of physical skills; creative and appropriate.

41. Knowledge of the play; understanding of character.

42. Interpretation of character; lacks detail in justification.

scene as though he genuinely cannot understand their accents and that this is making him more angry and frustrated . ⁴³ This would hopefully be funny ⁴⁴ for the audience though.

Also, it would be important to show that even though he pretends to hate Pamela – who he is handcuffed to – he is actually falling for her here. ⁴⁵ So when they are stuck together and running across the moors, all of his lines show that he finds her really annoying, ⁴⁶ but I would actually put in some subtle glances at her where he looks at her fondly as though he realises how much he likes her. ⁴⁷ She (Pamela) would not see these, but I would be sure to time them ⁴⁸ so the audience did.

Commentary

A good description of how Hannay could be interpreted in this extract, with a good knowledge of the play as a whole demonstrated, also. There are a number of precise details provided, but not consistently so. The response seems to ‘run out of steam’ and the references to other parts of the play (outside of the extract) lack detail. There is a range of appropriate acting skills used to successfully interpret the character.

Band 3

Comments

43. Interpretation of character; understanding of play as a whole. Lacks detail on how this would be achieved. A quote would be useful here.

44. Intended effect stated; lacks explanation.

45. Understanding of the role.

46. Lacks precise detail; a quote would be useful here.

47. Precise detail on physical/facial expression skills here and their intended effect.

48. Understanding of the role in performance; importance of timing.

Hansel and Gretel – Carl Grose (Kneehigh Theatre)

Comments

8.1 You are designing a **costume for Diane** to wear in a performance of this extract. The costume must reflect the conventions of contemporary story-telling theatre used in *Hansel and Gretel*. Describe your design ideas for the costume.

[4 marks]

Example response

I would have the actor playing Diane in a costume which was a deliberate mixture of human and animal, to emphasise both parts of her character. ¹ She would wear yellow rubber welly boots, on the toes of which I would paint the webbing effect of chicken feet using bright orange paint. ² I would have the actor in a pair of dark blue denim dungarees, and I would stitch bright coloured yellow and orange feathers all along the straps over the shoulders. ³ I would stitch a tail of larger, bright orange and yellow feathers on to the back of dungarees, just above the backside. ⁴ I would also have the actor wearing two gloves on their hands that are bright orange and painted to look like a chicken's beak, ⁵ so that every time they say one of Diane's lines, they can hold their hands up and make the 'beak quacking' movement ⁶ with their hands as they talk.

Commentary

An excellent description with precise details of the costume throughout, which really brings to life the idea of Diane as a chicken and a human. There is knowledge and understanding of the play and the extract in the response, the design ideas are a creative and appropriate response to the brief in the question.

Band 4

8.2 You are performing the role of Diane. Describe how you would use your vocal and physical skills to perform the line below **and** explain the effects you want to create.

'We are, Maureen. They're kind, they're loving, and they look after their own.'

[8 marks]

Example response

I would want to create the effect that Diane and Maureen are both really good friends and very likeable characters. ⁷ The audience should like them and be pleased to see them whenever they appear on stage. ⁸ Diane is something of the 'Mother Hen' figure here, and I would want to communicate this sense of her status and also how happy and settled she is. ⁹ I would play Diane with a warm, Lancashire accent, with soft vowel sounds and would roll my 'r's as I spoke. ¹⁰ This would create the sense of her being a rural character, and would also give a 'country' quality to how she spoke. I would chuckle gently ¹¹ as I said 'We are, Maureen' to show that Diane is happy and contented and really likes living on the farm with Maureen. As I spoke this line, I would also use my elbow as a 'wing' to nudge

1. A clear understanding of the theatrical possibility of this extract.

2. Precise costume details support the design brief.

3. This precise detail helps the idea of chicken/human.

4. This precise detail helps the idea of chicken/human.

5. This precise detail helps the idea of chicken/human response to the brief.

6. Understanding of how costume and actor can work together.

8. Awareness of the audience; a sense that this is a performance.

9. Understanding of the character.

10. Precise details of vocal skills and their effect.

11. Precise details of vocal skills.

Maureen. This would create the effect that they are good friends,¹² but also reinforce the idea of a human actor playing a chicken that speaks.

On the words 'They're kind' I would point behind me¹³ at the feast of corn that we have just been at together. As I say, 'they're loving' I would put my arm around Maureen's shoulder to create the effect that we have a strong friendship¹⁴ and are contented with the surroundings. And, as I say 'and they look after their own' I would rub my stomach with both beak-hands, and puff out my belly to create the effect that we have been well fed from the feast we have just been at.¹⁵ At the end of the line, I would give another soft chuckle and a burp to show how full I was. This would create the effect of the talking animal character Diane being larger than life.¹⁶ There is a real innocence about the characters – as they are not aware why they are being so well fed¹⁷ – and I would perform this line with full sincerity¹⁸ to show that Diane truly believes what she is saying here.

Commentary

An excellent description of how the actor could use their physical and vocal skills together to create the idea of this larger-than-life human-chicken. There is also an excellent explanation of how these skills would be used, with precise details throughout, and the effect that this would have in performance.

Band 4

8.3 You are performing the role of Diane. Focus on the shaded part of the extract. Explain how you and the actor playing Maureen might use the performance space and interact with each other **to show a joyful response** to the corn feeder for your audience.

[12 marks]

Example response

I would be inspired by the performance style of Kneehigh Theatre who use all sorts of non-naturalistic devices to bring their plays to life.¹⁹ They use song and dance and music and 'break the fourth wall' a lot to involve the audience. To help achieve this, I would have a thrust stage performance space,²⁰ with a large metal structure, and at the top of this I would position Gretel and the corn feeder.²¹ At the start of this extract, Gretel starts the corn feeder, and the actor playing Maureen and myself have to react to it. We do not have any dialogue in this part of the extract, but it is important that the audience sees just how excited we are by the corn.²²

As Gretel says 'Plump' I would stick my head around the upstage-left corner of the metal frame and make a loud chicken 'squawking' sound with my eyes wide,²³ and a big excited grin on my face. Then, as Gretel says 'Happy' the actor playing Maureen would place her head around the upstage-right corner of the metal frame and make the same sound, so that we both maintained full eye contact with each other.²⁴ As Gretel says 'egg-laying chickens' we would both waddle into the centre-stage space, flapping our arms (wings) and making little clucking sounds.²⁵

Comments

12. Precise details of physical skills – with vocal skills – and their intended effect.

13. Precise use of physical skills.

14. Precise use of physical skills and the effect of this.

15. Precise use of physical skills and the effect of this.

16. Understanding of the character and how this would work in performance.

17. Knowledge and understanding of the character and the play.

18. The effect is considered here.

19. Knowledge and understanding of the play and how it could be performed.

20. Staging configuration stated.

21. Precise details of the use of stage space here.

22. Understanding of the actors' potential here; refers to the brief.

23. Precise use of physical and vocal skills and facial expression.

24. Statement of the actors working together to achieve a connection between the characters.

25. A further sense of physical interaction between the characters.

As Mother says her line to Gretel, Diane and I would stand mesmerised ²⁶ by the corn feeder above us. We would face upstage and waddle quickly from foot to foot ²⁷ and stare at it and Gretel, waiting for it to start. We would squat a little and flap our wings as we waited. Then, as the corn feeder started, we would both run and scream wildly around the performance space, leaping with our arms in the air as we tried to catch the falling corn. ²⁸ We would make loud gobbling sounds as we mimed chewing and eating the corn and we would run towards each other upstage-centre so that we could dance together. ²⁹ There would be a platform here which would work as the lift and the chopping block, so that we would be standing on it at the end of the extract. As the lift/block moved upwards into the air, I would be stuffing handfuls of corn into the pockets of my dungarees and shirt and grinning because I was so happy. ³⁰ The actor playing Diane would say the line ‘Oh, Maureen’ with real warmth and happiness, and as she said it, we would do our signature dance where we would flap our wings in time with one another, turn with our backs to one another and wiggle our bottoms and then finally turn to peck/kiss each other’s cheeks. ³¹

Commentary

An excellent, well-developed explanation of how the two performers can interact with one another, with a clear focus on the shaded part of the extract, and how this can be used for maximum comic effect. Precise details are embedded throughout the response, and the response is entirely appropriate to the brief in the question.

Band 4

8.5 You are a designer working on **one** aspect of design for this extract. Describe how you would use your design skills to create effects which **support the action** of this extract and explain why your ideas are appropriate both for this extract **and** for the play as a whole.

[20 marks]

Example response

I would work as a designer to create the set and props ³² for a production of the play, and would take inspiration from Kneehigh’s style. ³³ My aim would be to create a bright, colourful set which is non-naturalistic so that it can be changed and adapted quickly and easily to show all of the different locations of the play. ³⁴ The set must work in a functional way to achieve everything that the actors and the director need, but must also create the sense of the world of the play and the world that the characters live in. I would create the set in a thrust stage configuration, so that the actors can easily get close to the audience when they need to speak to them directly or address them. ³⁵ This will also help the audience feel as though they are a part of the show ³⁶ and will help break down barriers.

At the back of the performance stage, the most upstage I can go I would have a huge cyclorama, covering the full width of the stage. ³⁷ I could then use this to project different colours and atmospheres on to suggest different times of day. I would want this extract to take place on a bright summer’s day on the farm, so I would fly in a large sun so

Comments

26. Use of the stage space and connection between the characters.

27. Precise details on physical skills.

28. Precise details on physical skills.

29. Precise details on physical and vocal skills and the use of stage space.

30. Use of physical skills and facial expressions together.

31. Precise details of how the actors could work together and interact physically, and use unison.

32. Design skill stated clearly.

33. Understanding of the performance style.

34. Clearly stated design style and a sense of practicality and function also.

35. Staging configuration stated, with clear justification.

36. Awareness of the audience; a sense of performance.

37. Design vocabulary is used here with precise detail.

that it hangs above stage-right. ³⁸ Because of the storytelling style of the play, I would have the sun look like it had been drawn by a primary school aged child with crayon, but paint this on a large one meter diameter piece of plywood so that it could be flown in and out. ³⁹ In the centre of the sun, which is painted bright yellow, I would use black to create a smiley face. I think this would definitely appeal to any young children in the audience. ⁴⁰

The main piece of my set would be a large metal structure, with different platforms and levels that stretches across most of the width of the stage, and is upstage. ⁴¹ The metal would be painted brown and green to look like a rural location and outdoors. I would have a fireman's pole at each end of it, so that if characters wanted to get down quickly, they could slide down the poles. ⁴² This could also be playful and funny. There would be ladders at the front and back of the structure also connecting the different levels and platforms. In the centre would be wooden platform that would act as the lift and also the chopping board ⁴³ in this extract. This would be operated by other actors using winches and pulleys at the side of the structure and this would not be hidden from the audience, to keep with Kneehigh's style. ⁴⁴

In this extract, Gretel would stand at the corn feeder at the top. Which would be on a platform. This would be a large contraption and it would look deliberately like a child had built it from junk and things found in a garage. ⁴⁵ The main box would be made of large Daz washing up boxes held together with gaffer tape. On one side would be an old bicycle wheel which Gretel would turn as she poured the corn in. ⁴⁶ On the other side would be a horn which she could sound as the corn was about to start flying. At the top would be a metal funnel which Gretel would pour the corn into, and a painted wooden arrow sign would read 'CORN IN' and this would point to the funnel. ⁴⁷ At the front, would be two lengths of old drainpipe – plastic, put painted to look metallic and orange with rust ⁴⁸ – which the corn will fly out of. The idea is to create a funny and imaginative machine which would appeal to children and also be a bit crazy. ⁴⁹

It is important that the pace of this play is fast so the audience is engaged all the time, and my set with multiple locations in one will help achieve this fast pace. ⁵⁰ For example, on page 23 where there is the hurricane/howling wind and Hansel and Gretel's 'home is decimated' I would do this by having a large wind machine be carried on by two of the actors to create the hurricane. ⁵¹ The audience would see this and it would not be hidden. Another actor would carry a platter in two hands on which would be a foam model of Hansel and Gretel's house. The wind machine would follow the model around the stage, and I would have the lighting flash, so that the actor carrying the model could then squash it ⁵² – because it's made of foam – with his free hand and do this in slow motion. This would be really entertaining and in the style of Kneehigh and would not need a full set change to achieve this. ⁵³

Comments

38. Design vocabulary is used here with precise detail.

39. Practical and creative suggestions are made with clear justification and support.

40. Awareness of the audience and of the intended effect.

41. Design vocabulary is used here with precise detail.

42. Design vocabulary is used here with precise detail, and this connects to the style also.

43. Creative design idea which considers the requirements of the extract.

44. Clear justification and support of the style of the set.

45. Consideration of a prop; connects to the stylistic choices.

46. Design ideas, with creativity.

47. Design ideas, with creativity.

48. Awareness of the design skills needed to achieve this effect.

49. Support and justification of the design ideas and their intended effect.

50. Understanding of the play, its style, and how the design skills contribute to this effect.

51. Understanding of the whole play; creative design suggestion for a stage direction.

52. Understanding of the whole play; creative design suggestion for a stage direction.

53. Justification of design choices, connected to the style.

Commentary

An excellent description of the set and props for this extract, and an explanation of the multi-functional set and how this will support the action of other parts of the play. Precise details are given throughout and there is a strong sense of style communicated here, with exact ideas which are well supported throughout the response. There is an awareness of the design skills needed to achieve the ideas here, also.

Band 4

Noughts and Crosses – Malorie Blackman/ Dominic Cooke

Comments

9.1 You are designing a **setting** for a performance of this extract. The setting must reflect the conventions of contemporary 'epic' theatre used in *Noughts and Crosses*. Describe your design ideas for the setting.

[4 marks]

Example response

This scene takes place in the girls toilet at the school so the set needs to show this location to the audience. ¹ Because the style of the play is epic it means that there doesn't have to be a full set which is realistic and full of detail, so my set will just use simple things to suggest ² the girls toilet. I will have a projection of an image of a school toilet cubicle and this projection will be behind the actors. ³ I would then also have three sinks that would just stand on their own in a row at the front, ⁴ so the actors could stand at them. Also, at one side of the stage I would have a simple wooden door frame but with no door in it. ⁵ This way it is epic because the actors can mime the door. ⁶

Commentary

A reasonable description of the setting for this extract. There is an understanding of the tropes of 'epic' theatre, but the design ideas lack detail, and do not fully suggest how they would be realised. There is a sound understanding of the play implied.

Band 2

9.2 You are performing the role of Lola. Describe how you would use your vocal and physical skills to perform the line below **and** explain the effects you want to create.

'We want to have a word with you.'

[8 marks]

Example response

Lola is a bully and a nasty piece of work and is really horrible to Sephy ⁷ in the whole play and in this extract. In this extract she even slaps her. The audience needs to see that Lola is also racist ⁸ and hates Sephy because Sephy is not racist.

I would say this line from the extract in a way to intimidate and scare Sephy. ⁹ So I would use my voice to sound scary and threatening ¹⁰ as I said it to her. Very slowly I would walk up to Sephy and step away from Dionne and Joanne ¹¹ to show that I am the leader and I am in control. As I walk up to her I would say the line, and as I said the last word I would grab her school tie and pull it down so the audience can see just how much of a bully I am. ¹²

Also, as I walk towards her I would look back at Joanne and Dionne and get them to move towards Sephy ¹³ with me so that we can all

1. Awareness of the audience and their expectation.

2. Understanding of the style of 'epic' theatre; justification.

3. Detailed design idea, which lacks precision; what sort of image? what sort of cubicle? Its placement is implied rather than stated.

4. Detailed design idea, which lacks precision. What will the sinks be made of? what will they stand on? Their placement is implied, rather than stated.

5. Design idea appropriate to the brief.

6. Justification, but lacking in detail.

7. Understanding of the role and the play.

8. Awareness of the audience; themes of the play.

9. Intention is stated.

10. Suggestion of vocal skills; lacks detail on how they would be used.

11. Precise use of physical skills here; justification provided.

12. Precise use of physical skills here; justification provided.

13. Understanding of the role; physical skills used.

intimidate and bully her together. This will make the audience hate them ¹⁴ and like Sephy more.

Commentary

A reasonable description of vocal and physical skills, but the response (on vocal skills, in particular) lacks detail on how these skills will be used to perform the line. There is a secure understanding of the role and the character's motivation, but there is an overall lack of clarity in what is a relatively brief response.

Band 2

9.3 You are performing the role of Lola. Focus on the shaded part of the extract. Explain how you and the actors playing Joanne and Dionne might use the performance space and interact with each other **to create the sense of their 'ganging up'** on Sephy for your audience.

[12 marks]

Example response

It is clear that Lola is the leader of the three girls in their bullying of Sephy but also that Dionne and Joanne hate her just as much ¹⁵ too. At the start of the extract when I say 'We want to have a word with you' I have described how I would do this before. But also the actors playing Dionne and Joanne would walk behind me (to show I am the leader here) ¹⁶ but they would walk at the same pace and move at the same time together so it would look really scary ¹⁷ for Sephy.

We would gang up on her by all standing around her and being really physically close to her. ¹⁸ To research bullying I watched videos of bullying on YouTube ¹⁹ and they all stood really close to their victims. Also, I watched bullying going on in my school ²⁰ and this also happened there too. When Joanne shoves Sephy (stage direction) she would be really close to us and she would land on me, Lola. ²¹ I would look disgusted at this ²² as I would not want someone who likes Blankers being near me because I am racist.

When Sephy argues back to us and says 'What's it to you?' I would shake my head and tut at her ²³ and also look at Dionne and Joanne and do the same. This would show that we were all thinking the same thing about her ²⁴ and what she has said. Then I would slap her – very hard ²⁵ – and because we are all so close, she would land on Dionne. This is a good example of how we would work together ²⁶ to gang up on Sephy.

When I say my line about her dad being 'God's almighty self' Joanne would be holding her ²⁷ on to Dionne and I would be standing over her and shouting this in her face to scare and bully her. ²⁸ This would be clear to the audience.

It is important that me and the other two actors work together to show that we are united in what we think and it is three of us against one of her, Sephy. ²⁹ We would show that we were united in the stage direction at the end of the extract where it says we all laugh. As we did this, we would glare at Sephy to show our hatred, and we would

Comments

14. Intended effect.

15. Understanding of Lola and the dynamic of the girls' roles.

16. Understanding of the roles.

17. Detail is provided, but lacks precision. What pace would they walk at? How would they move together? How would this look scary?

18. Clear explanation of use of stage space.

19. Evidence of research; findings are not explored in detail or applied.

20. Evidence of research; findings are not explored in detail or applied.

21. Clear explanation of interaction.

22. Description of facial expression; justification provided.

23. Clear explanation of physical and vocal skills.

24. This lacks clarity.

25. Description of physical skills. Lacks clarity; a real slap?

26. Attempt at justification of their interaction.

27. This lacks clarity.

28. Suggestion of physical and vocal skills; lacks clarity between the characters.

29. Understanding of the potential of interaction.

also high five each other to show that we had done our job ³⁰ – of bullying her for liking the Blankers – well.

Commentary

A reasonable explanation of how Lola can be interpreted and how a sense of ‘ganging up’ could be created. However, there is a sense of the characters ‘ganging up’ on Sephy, rather than specific details of how the actors would use their skills and interact to create this effect for the audience. There are some precise details provided, but not consistently so.

Band 2

9.4 You are performing the role of Sephy. Describe how you would use your acting skills to **interpret Sephy’s character** in this extract **and** explain why your ideas are appropriate both for this extract and the play as a whole.

[20 marks]

Example response

Sephy represents everything that is good in the play and she is the heroine of the play and the audience has to love her ³¹ all the way through it. I would want the audience to see Sephy as:

- strong
- brave
- stands up to the bullies and stands up for what she believes in. ³²

In this extract, I want to show how fearless Sephy is. ³³ Inside she is terrified and tries to stand up for herself, and for Callum, but she must not show this to the bullies. ³⁴ At the start of the extract when the girls shove and slap me, I would keep a blank facial expression to pretend that this isn’t bothering me. ³⁵ I would not stoop as low as they are and would not fight back even as they hit me.

In the bit where I am shoved on the floor, I would show how defiant and determined I am by trying to stand up to them. ³⁶ When Lola pushes me down I would just nod and smile at her to try and belittle her and make her realise how pathetic she was for bullying me. ³⁷ This would show the audience the power and inner strength that Sephy actually has. ³⁸ She is better because she chooses not to fight them back.

Also, the way Sephy speaks to the girls will show how much control she has and how she always stands her ground. ³⁹ Like, for example, the line where she says ‘The news lies all the time...’ she is educating them and showing how intelligent she is and that she does not listen all the time to everything and automatically believe it. I would say this line in a slow and calm voice with an even tone and volume so the audience can hear it. ⁴⁰ This is almost like I am patronising the other girls ⁴¹ for their pathetic views.

At the end of this extract when Sephy ‘flips’ and punches Lola, I would do this with loads of energy and use stage combat ⁴² to make it look completely believable to the audience. Even though the play is a

Comments

30. Suggestion of vocal and physical skills; lacks precise detail on the ‘high five’ part.

31. Understanding of the role and its dramatic potential in performance.

32. All valid choices; lack support in justification or detail.

33. Motivation is justified.

34. Understanding of the role and extract.

35. Clear detail of facial expression and justification.

36. Motivation is clear; how this will be achieved is less so.

37. Clear description of facial expression and physical skills; justification is provided.

38. Audience awareness.

39. Understanding of the role; intentions are clearly stated.

40. Inconsistent level of detail here; pace is clear. Tone and volume lack precise detail.

41. Intended effect is stated.

42. Application of theatrical skills here.

piece of 'epic' this must look real and the audience will be rooting for Sephy⁴³ to get her own back on Lola. So even though I wouldn't actually hit her, it would look very real.⁴⁴

The way that Sephy is in this extract is the way that she is throughout the play⁴⁵ and I would show this in all other scenes too. So the audience can always see that she is strong and clever and brave and stands up for herself.⁴⁶ This would not change as I think it is important to make sure that the character works in all of the scenes.⁴⁷ The play is based on a very popular novel (also by Malorie Blackman) which was then turned into a stage play for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2007. The play got very good reviews and also went on a national tour in 2008.⁴⁸

Commentary

A reasonable description of how Sephy can be interpreted for an audience, with some nice moments where there is enough precise detail to explain how this will be achieved in performance. The level of detail provided is consistent throughout, and there is a greater sense of how the audience will perceive Sephy, as opposed to how the actor will use their skills in their portrayal. The level of detail on the play as a whole lacks precision, and the factual information in the last paragraph cannot be credited here.

Band 2

Comments

43. Understanding of the intended effect in performance; audience awareness.

44. Precise detail of stage combat is not provided.

45. Attempt to address the play as a whole; lacks specific detail.

46. An understanding of the role, but less detail on how this will be achieved.

47. The idea of 'consistency' is implied rather than stated.

48. Factual information; irrelevant to the question.

A Midsummer Night's Dream – William Shakespeare

Comments

10.1 You are designing a **costume for Bottom** to wear in a performance of this extract. The costume must reflect *A Midsummer Night's Dream's* original setting in ancient Athens. Describe your design ideas for the costume.

[4 marks]

Example response

Bottom's costume would need to indicate his class and status as well as his job. ¹ I would have Bottom wearing a plain white cotton tunic (popular in ancient Athens) ² which I would have dotted with smears of grease and oil to show his profession. ³ I would have him wearing leather sandals and a leather belt, and on the belt I would have different tools that a weaver might use, because in the play we know he is 'Nick Bottom, the Weaver.' ⁴ I would also have Bottom wearing a donkey's head, but I would have this made of natural fabric. The head would be made of plain sack material with loose threads and visible stitching, ⁵ and the ears would be made of different coloured fabrics.

Commentary

An excellent description; an imaginative response which shows understanding of the character – and the play – through the costume suggestions. Precise details throughout the response support these ideas, and the overall suggestion is fully appropriate to the brief.

Band 4

10.2 You are performing the role of Bottom. Describe how you would use your vocal and physical skills to perform the line below and explain the effects you want to create.

'Not so neither; but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve my own turn.'

[8 marks]

Example response

Bottom is a comic character and in this extract he finds himself in a ridiculous situation. ⁶ To most people this would be frightening, but Bottom is bewildered and also flattered and confused. ⁷ It is important that the audience sees all of this, and that it is still a funny scene. This line is a response to Titania complimenting his intelligence and beauty, which is absurd. On the words 'Not so neither,' I would show a puzzled facial expression, but also nod my head in agreement with what Titania is saying. This is creating comedy ⁹ as the nodding agreement ⁸ is the opposite of what the words mean. The rest of the line shows just how pompous Bottom can be because she is flirting with him. I would declaim this line with real confidence, a strong voice, and loud volume ¹⁰ to show Bottom standing his ground and proving what he thinks is his status. Physically, I would place my hands on my hips and stand with my legs apart and my chest puffed out, almost like a classic romantic hero. ¹¹

1. Knowledge and understanding of the play and character.

2. Precise costume details; relevant to context/design brief.

3. Creative suggestions create a clear picture.

4. Knowledge and understanding.

5. Appropriate and creative response to the brief.

6. Understanding of role/play/extract.

7. Intended effects are implied here.

8. Precise use of physical skills; comprehensive explanation.

9. Intended effect is stated.

10. Precise use of vocal skills; comprehensive explanation.

11. Precise use of physical skills and their effect.

This would create more comedy for the audience ¹² because Bottom thinks he is smart and handsome but is actually dressed as a donkey. I would maintain eye contact with Titania throughout all of this line to show my confidence in my appearance and intelligence. ¹³ At the end of the line, I would do a huge ‘neigh’ or snort sound like a donkey might, rolling my head back and shaking it wildly. ¹⁴ This would create comedy for the audience, as Bottom is not in control of the situation, even though he desperately wants to be. The noise would be enormous and exaggerated for comic effect ¹⁵ so it could startle Titania.

Commentary

An excellent description of the physical and vocal skills that could be used to deliver this line, with precise detail throughout which creates a sense of the comic effect which would be created for the audience. There is excellent knowledge and understanding of the role and the dynamic of the relationship between Bottom and Titania here.

Band 4

10.3 You are performing the role of Bottom. Focus on the shaded part of the extract. Explain how you and the actor playing Titania might use the performance space and interact with each other as you perform your song, **to amuse** your audience.

[12 marks]

Example response

This scene takes place in Titania’s bower, her sacred fairy space. She is queen of the fairies and I think this should be a wide, open space with lots of room for her to move with grace to highlight her flirtatious manner with Bottom. ¹⁶ I would have this space configured as a thrust stage, with the audience able to be intimate and close to the performers, ¹⁷ so they can see the detail in facial expressions and gestures and feel a part of the action. However, I would also have lots of low-hanging branches here. Titania, being used to them, would be able to move round them with ease, but Bottom could get his ears and donkey’s head caught on them for comic effect, ¹⁸ which would amuse the audience.

At the start of the extract Titania is asleep. I would have Bottom striding around the space, making a hideous whinnying or neighing sound, like a donkey, but deliberately exaggerated to amuse the audience. ¹⁹ I would use all of the space and gallop around it confidently, with my legs strutting and bucking like a donkey. My hands would be held by my chest like a donkey standing on its hind legs and the noise would be hideous. ²⁰ This would create comedy ²¹ for Titania’s first line, ‘What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?’ As she says this, I would have her sit bolt upright, startled, and look directly at me as I stop in front of her. ²² As she says the line, she would keep eye contact with me, and a big grin would spread across her face. She would slowly crawl/slide across the floor to me, to bring herself up to standing in front of me. ²³ As she does this, I would look startled and look her slowly up and down taking in her beauty. I would also do a ‘double take’ to the audience ²⁴ as she stood up to show that I am aware of how ridiculous and funny this situation is.

Comments

12. Audience awareness; a sense of performance.

13. Precise use of physical skills; comprehensive explanation.

14. Precise use of physical and vocal skills in combination.

15. Intended effect is stated clearly.

16. A sense of performance space and how it might be used.

17. Configuration clearly stated, with justification.

18. Precise details illuminate how the actors could use the set to develop characteristics.

19. Performance space being used; exact explanation with intended effect, relevant to the brief.

20. Precise details of physical and vocal skills, and their effect.

21. Refers to the brief.

22. Precise use of physical skills; comprehensive explanation.

23. Precise use of physical skills; comprehensive explanation.

24. Playful sense of performance skills, audience awareness and comic effect.

I would use the song as a real performance to show how masculine and 'sexy' Bottom thinks he is now she has seen him.²⁵ I would take the lyrics of the song and sing them to the tune of Love Me Tender by Elvis Presley. I would stand with my legs apart and put one foot up on a tree stump like a rock star in a stadium, and I would play an imaginary guitar.²⁶ I would sing the song in a deep Elvis-like voice, which Bottom thinks Titania will like. I will strut and move confidently around her. At this point she is kneeling on the floor, centre stage, clutching her hands to her chest, full of love and admiration for him.²⁷ As I sing the first line, 'The finch, the sparrow and the lark,' Titania will swoon and let out a squeal, like she is at a pop concert. She will keep her eyes on me the whole time I perform, and when I strut past her, and shake my hips – like Elvis Presley – she will try and grab me, as though she is at the front of a crowd at a gig.²⁸ At the end of the song, as I say 'never so?' (and I would speak the last line, not sing it) I would crouch down to her, and very slowly press my hand against hers as she reaches her hand up to me. Our hands will touch at the end of the song, and Titania will squeal with joy and fling herself to the ground.²⁹ I will do a big 'rock star guitar chord' on my imaginary guitar and Titania will scream the line 'I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again!' at me from the floor as she stamps her feet and hands on the ground. All of this will create a hilarious situation to amuse the audience.³⁰

Commentary

An excellent explanation of how the two performers will work together to create a highly comic situation, and use their interaction and the performance space to achieve this. Precise details and a really well-developed explanation support the creative suggestions made, with a clear focus on the brief in the question, and this part of the extract.

Band 4

10.5 You are a designer working on **one** aspect of design for this extract. Describe how you would use your design skills to create effects which **support the action** of this extract and explain why your ideas are appropriate both for this extract **and** the play as a whole.

[20 marks]

Example response

I am working as a costume designer and I have decided to set my production of the play at a summer music festival, like Glastonbury, and relocate it away from ancient Athens.³¹ This is to help make the play relevant for a younger, modern audience. I would have the four lovers as young 'ravers' who have run away to the festival, and get lost in the mayhem and magic. Titania and Oberon would be the festival owners and she would be an older woman who was a 'rock chick' when she was younger,³² while he would be a really cool and smooth guy, like the owner of a record label. I would have Bottom – and all of the mechanicals – as the stage crew, the 'roadies' who help get all the different acts on and off the stage.

Comments

25. Knowledge and understanding of the roles and the play.

26. Precise use of physical skills; comprehensive explanation.

27. Precise use of physical skills; comprehensive explanation.

28. A clear sense of physical interaction here.

29. Precise details; a sense of comic exaggeration here.

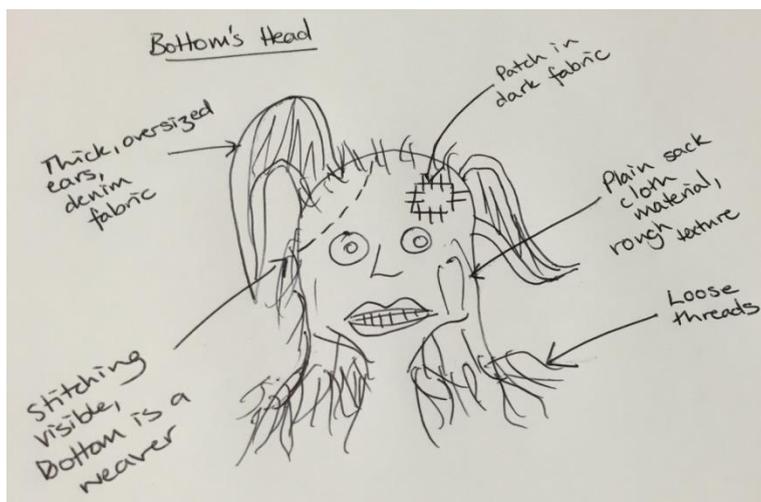
30. Direct reference to the brief.

31. Creative design suggestion here; relocates the action.

32. A clear design concept emerges; well justified.

Bottom would be a classic roadie. I would have him dressed in dark blue denim jeans, which would be too tight fitting around the waist and give him a belly. ³³ I would distress them using flicks of different paint colours and grease ³⁴ to make it look as though he has been working backstage at the festival. I would also use metal snagging tools to create some small rips and tears in the denim fabric to show that the jeans are old and worn ³⁵ and that Bottom is a 'base mechanical' who does not care about his appearance. I would also have him wearing a faded ACDC t shirt, with the band logo on it. ³⁶ I would wash this t-shirt over and over in a hot wash to drain it of colour, and also use sandstones to distress the logo so it lost colour. ³⁷ In addition, I would have Bottom with a belt round his waist with a walkie-talkie, and different metal tools on it. He would also have a pass on a lanyard round his neck with his photo on it and the word 'CREW' clearly written. ³⁸

In this extract, he needs to be clearly seen as having been transformed into an ass, which I would have done by the mischief created by 'drug dealer DJ Puck.' See the sketch below. ³⁹ I would have the donkey's head looking really rough and home-made as though a mechanical himself has made it, maybe with material left lying round at a festival. ⁴⁰ It should also look a bit grotesque, maybe scary, so when Titania thinks he is beautiful this is a ridiculous idea. The head would be made from rough sack cloth, and all the stitching would be done with thick white thread so it is visible. ⁴¹ There would be a rough patch above the right eye hole so it looks as though it has been cobbled together. I would have loose threads dangling from the bottom to suggest that it has not been finished properly or with care, ⁴² like Bottom might have done it. The ears would be made from a darker denim fabric – to match up to Bottom's jeans ⁴³ – and be of different sizes and be filled with foam and wires so they went in different directions. All of this is to create comedy for the audience in this extract, ⁴⁴ and for the four fairies to give a slightly puzzled reaction to when they enter.



In this extract, at this stage in the play, I would have it set several days into the festival, so Titania looks a bit messier than she did at the start. See sketch below. ⁴⁵ Titania is the ultimate 'rock chick' and hardcore festival-goer. ⁴⁶ Her status as 'Queen Of the Fairies' would be shown in contrast by what she wears to what the other fairies

Comments

33. Precise costume details; well justified.

34. Design skills evidenced.

35. Design skills evidenced.

36. Precise costume details; well justified.

37. Design skills evidenced.

38. Precise costume details.

39. Precise costume details; well justified.

40. Understanding of the role/play..

41. Precise costume details; well justified.

42. Precise costume details; well justified.

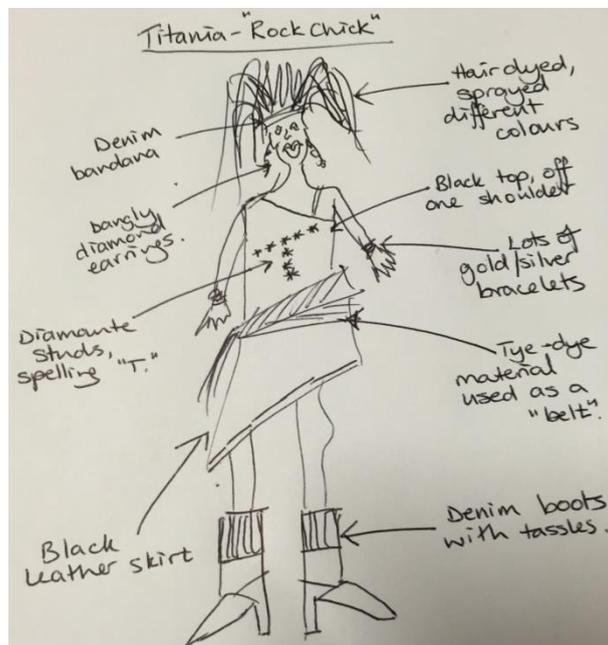
43. Exact idea with real creativity.

44. Focus on the extract, understanding of the play.

45. Precise costume details; well justified.

46. Creative concept for the character understanding of the play.

wear. Their clothes are hippy-ish and have lots of floral prints, whereas hers are made from more expensive materials to suggest power and glamour. ⁴⁷ I would spray her hair and backcomb it in different directions to suggest she hasn't been able to shower for two days, and spray it wild colours, like a peacock or exotic bird. She would have a denim bandana around her forehead, to make a subtle link to what Bottom wears also. ⁴⁸ She would wear lots of metallic makeup and this would continue with long, dangling diamond earrings and lots of vintage gold and silver bracelets. I would adapt and distress her t-shirt, removing the sleeves, so it is more of a vest. It would be a plain black fabric and I would apply diamante studs to the front to spell the letter 'T' for Titania, ⁴⁹ as well as removing the stitching from one of the shoulders so her bra strap is visible. I would distress the garments with limestone, and a grater to make them look worn, as though she has been walking round the festival a lot. ⁵⁰ Like Bottom's costume, the denim shows the connections between them.



Titania's appearance here would be a total contrast from her first appearance in the play when she says 'What, jealous Oberon?' ⁵¹ Here, at the start, before she is poisoned by the potion and falls for Bottom she would need to appear cool and calm and elegant at the start of the festival. I would have her dressed in a white fitted linen trouser suit, with red high heels and a red vest-top underneath. ⁵² She would have bright red-lipstick her hair would be straight and well-groomed. I would use wigs to create the different looks of hair for Titania. ⁵³

Commentary

An excellent description and explanation of how costume design will support the action of the extract and of the play as a whole. The candidate has a clear concept, which works here and uses precise details throughout, as well as knowledge and understanding of design skills (and the play itself) to develop this concept in detail.

Band 4

Comments

47. Understanding of the role, and how this would be realised through design skills.

48. Precise costume details; well justified.

49. Detailed use of design skills.

50. Detailed use of design skills.

51. Knowledge and understanding of the whole play; shown through design skills.

52. Precise details of garments, colours, fabrics.

53. Awareness of how design will achieve this look.

Section C: Live theatre production

Comments

- 11 Describe how one or more of the actors in a particular scene or section used their vocal and physical acting skills to create convincing characters. Analyse and evaluate how successful they were in communicating their character to the audience.

You should make reference to:

- the use of voice
- physical skills
- the actors' use of space.

[32 marks]

Example response

I saw a production of *The Nap* by Richard Bean at The Crucible Theatre in Sheffield. This was a brilliant play ¹ about a young man Dylan (Jack O'Connell) being set up by crooked gangsters to 'throw' a frame of snooker which he is playing. The play was absolutely hilarious ² and the acting in the play really did go a long way to achieving this.

Ralf Little played Tony Danlino, Dylan's manager. The character is really sleazy and tries to be charming but isn't. ³ Whenever he walked into the scene, Little would use deliberately over the top body language and gestures ⁴ to make it look like Tony was best friends with all the other characters. For example, he greeted Dylan's Dad with wide open arms and tried to go in for a hug, even though he knows Dylan's Dad hates him. ⁵ Because he did this every single time he entered, it helped create comedy for the audience, ⁶ and was also very funny. ⁷ Little also did a lot of winking and pointing when he was trying to give Dylan confidence in his snooker game. He would use these cheesy gestures with emphasis at the end of lines, ⁸ like when he said, 'You're gonna be a winner, kid, I'm telling you'. ⁹ Because the other characters also rolled their eyes at what Tony did, this created comedy for us. ¹⁰ Little got better and better as the show went on, ¹¹ and this was because he consistently presented Tony in this way ¹² – a total loser who thinks that he is one of life's big winners.

Little also used a really cocky voice and strolled around the space like he owned it. ¹³ He was deliberately over-confident ¹⁴ in his walk. So he would strut and puff his chest out and hold his mobile phone like it was a weapon, thrusting it in the faces of other characters. In the scene where he was trying to get rid of the two investigating officers, he changed his body language and the way he used the space completely. Suddenly he became very still and nervous looking with shifty eyes and nervous mannerisms. ¹⁵ He started putting his hands in and out of his pockets with nervous energy and kept shifting from foot to foot. This was a total contrast ¹⁶ to how Little had played Tony in all the other scenes, and created even more comedy for the audience. ¹⁷ Little was completely successful in his portrayal of the role of Tony. He played the role with a real swagger, like he was a local smooth character who desperately wanted to be a big time 'player' but failed. ¹⁸ It was really funny and a highlight ¹⁹ of the show.

1. Evaluation.

2. Evaluation.

3. Understanding of the role.

4. Use of physical skills; precise detail.

5. Use of physical skills; precise detail, intended effect.

6. Analysis.

7. Evaluation.

8. Use of physical skills; precise detail, intended effect.

9. Supporting example.

10. Analysis.

11. Evaluation.

12. Analysis; understanding.

13. Physical and vocal skills.

14. Understanding of physical skills; analysis.

15. Use of physical skills; precise detail.

16. Analysis; effect.

17. Analysis; evaluation.

18. Analysis; understanding.

19. Evaluation.

In the same play, Louise Gold played the character of Waxy Chuff, who was a local transgendered gangster who was in charge of the crime organisation. Rather than being scary or threatening, Gold chose to play the role as someone who was useless and kept getting things wrong, which made the part absolutely hilarious.²⁰ To start with, it was the way she walked. Louise Gold is a female actress but playing the part as a deliberately 'butch woman' because she was transgendered. Gold walked in a stereotypical masculine way²¹ – even though she was wearing high heeled boots and a mini skirt – and with a limp, which gave the effect that she had been in dangerous places and around a long time. It also reminded the audience constantly that she was born as a man.²²

Gold used a reasonably deep voice and always spoke in a monotone for comic effect.²³ So she would be giving out orders ('Put the bag over his head and shoot him')²⁴ which should sound scary, but came out as funny because of the monotone voice used.²⁵ One of the best things about Waxy was that she kept using 'malapropisms' and getting words wrong, which were always funny.²⁶ When Dylan asked her if she had any illnesses she replied that she 'had a peanut analogy', which was hilarious.²⁷ This was because Gold played the line absolutely straight-faced.²⁸ The character doesn't know they are getting the words wrong, but the effect for the audience is that it is hilarious.²⁹

Waxy also had one bionic arm – made of metal – from when she was in a fight with Triads. In another play this might have been really scary, but Gold used this as part of the physicality of her character in really funny ways.³⁰ When she was trying to intimidate Dylan, she used the metal arm to stroke his hair. This was funnier than if she had used her real hand instead, and created comedy.³¹ In fact, whenever Gold could use the metal hand instead of the real one, she did so. This emphasised the fact that she had a criminal background, but it was also very funny.³² At one point, she struggled to put the rolls of stolen money into a carrier bag using the metal hand. She could have easily done this with her real hand, but it took much longer and was much funnier³³ by using the metal one instead. Gold was absolutely superb in the role,³⁴ and – like Little – got more laughs by playing the situation as though it was dangerous and for real.³⁵

In conclusion, I think both Ralf Little and Louise Gold were superb in their roles.³⁶ In different ways they used their physical and vocal skills to create moments of comedy. Of course the script itself has very funny lines, but it was the choices that these actors made that made them even funnier,³⁷ and also added things that were not in the script itself.

Comments

20. Understanding of actor's choice; evaluation.

21. Use of physical skills.

22. Analysis; evaluation.

23. Use of vocal skills; precise detail, intended effect.

24. Supporting example.

25. Analysis.

26. Evaluation.

27. Evaluation.

28. Analysis.

29. Analysis; evaluation.

30. Detail of physical skills; intended effect.

31. Analysis; evaluation

32. Understanding of the role/play; evaluation.

33. Analysis; evaluation.

34. Evaluation.

35. Analysis.

36. Evaluation.

37. Analysis

Commentary

An excellent description of how the actors' theatrical skills are used to communicate convincing characters for the audience, and a sense of comedy. Descriptions are exact, and the supporting examples use precise details throughout.

Band 4 (AO3)

An excellent analysis which successfully shows how the actors used their skills to create their roles and create comedy for the audience, with excellent evaluative judgements throughout, fully supported by detailed examples.

Band 4 (AO4)**Comments**

Comments

- 12 Describe how sound was used to support the action in the production. Analyse and evaluate how successful the sound was in helping to communicate the action of the production to the audience.

You should make reference to:

- type of sound
- use of sound effects
- volume, amplification and direction.

[32 marks]

Example response

I saw a production of the play *Our Country's Good* at the National Theatre in London. The play is set in Australia in 1788 and is about the first convicts sent over from England ¹ to set up society in Australia, where they end up putting on a play.

Sound is really important in this production, and the director (Nadia Fall) had hired musician Cerys Matthews to create an original score for this production. ² In the programme, Matthews said that she wanted to use authentic 'world music' from lots of cultures to highlight the action of the play, ³ and also that these people are away from their setting. This absolutely worked and the music was a highlight of the production. ⁴ In the opening scene, when the Aborigine sees the ship arriving, loud aboriginal music was played underneath his dialogue. ⁵ This added dramatic tension to the scene, and created mystery, ⁶ and also a sense of where the scene was actually taking place ⁷ (Australia).

At another point in the play, Ralph is missing his wife at home and is tempted by the women convicts who would sleep with him. At this point, Matthews used the 1950s blues song *Rock Me Baby* and had it sung by the women convicts. ⁸ This was sung a capella outside the tent and helped create atmosphere for the scene. ⁹ It was clever to use a 1950s song in a scene that was set in 1788 ¹⁰ too as it reminded us that this is theatre and not real.

At the end of the play, when the convicts finally perform The Recruiting Officer, Matthews used a song called *Britons Strike Home* which is by Purcell. She had the entire cast sing this on stage ¹¹ – after the last dialogue in the script – and also had this played by live musicians on stage. This was superb ¹² as it felt like a triumph and there were harmonies used (amplified through radio microphones) ¹³ to create a full and glorious sound. This was a brilliant use ¹⁴ of music/sound in the play.

The sound for the play was designed by Arthur Pita and worked with the music and the acting to create a real sense of atmosphere. ¹⁵ At the start of the play, when the convicts are on the ship to Australia, it was pitch black. Sound effects were used of waves crashing against the ship ¹⁶ and the wooden ship creaking and the sails blowing, but all of this was played through speakers that were below the stage, ¹⁷ so

1. Understanding of the play.

2. Technical language used.

3. Supporting example.

4. Analysis; evaluation.

5. Detail of sound choice; could be more precise.

6. Analysis; effect.

7. Understanding.

8. Detail of sound used.

9. Detail of sound; what atmosphere did it create?

10. Analysis; effect.

11. Detail of sound used.

12. Evaluation.

13. Precise detail of sound used; technical language, amplification.

14. Evaluation.

15. Analysis; what sort of atmosphere?

16. Detail of sound effects used.

17. Sense of amplification; directional sound...

that the sound was distant and muffled.¹⁸ Then the stage rose up to reveal the actors vomiting (pretending) and moaning, and this sound effect enhanced this moment.¹⁹ Also, this took place in a storm, and the sound effects of the storm were really loud,²⁰ but also played through different speakers in the theatre.²¹ I thought this was really effective, and very dramatic.²²

Arthur Pita also used sound effects to give a sense of outdoors and wildlife in the new territory in Australia.²³ In the scenes where the actors are outside rehearsing, if you listened, you could also hear distant sound effects which had been mixed cleverly together²⁴ to create a background for the scene. There were crickets chirping, distant bird calls, and various other wildlife.²⁵ All of this was played at a low volume and came from speakers which were behind the actors.²⁶ This was a clever technique as it gave the impression that we were really outside in these scenes.²⁷ I thought this was a brilliant use²⁸ of choosing where to place the sound.

Finally, the sound was clearly very real²⁹ at the start of the play when Sideway is being whipped. Here we could see that the sound effect was actually being created live on stage by an actor using a whip, but not the same as the actor who was whipping Sideway.³⁰ This was a great choice of sound design³¹ as it was a loud and cracking sound which made the audience jump³² every time it happened, and also reminded us that it is not real and being made by an actor.³³ I thought this was a superb use of live sound effects³⁴ being used.

So in conclusion, I can see how recorded music and live music, as well as live and recorded sound effects are all used together to communicate the action of the production³⁵ of *Our Country's Good*. Cerys Matthews and Arthur Pita clearly worked together to help one another,³⁶ and the overall effect was fantastic.³⁷

Commentary

A good description of how sound – effects and music – are used to support the action of the production. There is a clear description of how sound is used, though not all examples have precise detail. There is a wide range of sound design skills reference, with good knowledge and understanding of how theatre is performed.

Band 3 (AO3)

A good analysis of how the sound is used to create meaning and a sense of atmosphere and location to the audience. There is also a good sense of evaluation throughout the response, which would benefit from more precise detail in places. The response is developed and clear, and most of the points made are supported with examples.

Band 3 (AO4)

18. Effect stated.

19. Analysis.

20. Detail of sound effects.

21. Sense of amplification; more detail needed.

22. Analysis; evaluation.

23. Analysis of sound.

24. Precise detail of sound effects.

25. Detail of sound used.

26. Precise detail of sound effects; directional sound, amplification.

27. Analysis.

28. Evaluation.

29. Analysis.

30. Detail of live sound effect.

31. Evaluation.

32. Analysis.

33. Analysis.

34. Evaluation.

35. Analysis; focus on the question.

36. Analysis.

37. Evaluation.

Comments

Comments

- 13 Describe how costumes were used to help create the style of the production. Analyse and evaluate how successful the costumes were in helping to communicate the style of the production to the audience.

You should make reference to:

- sharp and fit
- fabrics and accessories
- colour and texture.

[32 marks]

Example response

I saw the amazing ¹ *The Play That Goes Wrong* at the Grand Theatre Leeds, but it is also at the Duchess Theatre in London's West End. It won the Olivier Award for Best Comedy and is very funny. ²

The play is about a group of student actors putting on a (very bad) murder mystery play, and everything that can go wrong does go wrong. The more badly wrong things go for the characters then the funnier it is for the audience. ³ The costumes worked well ⁴ as part of this, as there were two types of costumes used.

First of all, the character of Trevor and Annie are not part of the play within a play, so their costumes are different. ⁵ Annie is the Stage Manager and Trevor is the Sound Engineer. Annie wears a tight black cotton t-shirt that has the word CREW written on the back in big white letters. ⁶ She also wears black combat trousers and dirty trainers. ⁷ This is because she is working backstage on the play and her costume would need to look realistic ⁸ and like she works in a theatre. She was always wearing a microphone headset round her neck and had tools on a tool belt on her waist. ⁹ This made it seem more believable ¹⁰ that she was a stage manager. I thought this worked well. ¹¹

Trevor wears a similar costume to Annie, and this helps so that we can see that they are both crew members. ¹² His t-shirt is the male equivalent of her t-shirt and is also black with CREW written on the back. ¹³ It was tightly fitted and helped show his character ¹⁴ as a sound engineer.

The actors playing the characters in the play within a play wore more interesting costumes. ¹⁵ These were all 1930s period costumes, because that is when the murder mystery took place. These costumes all used materials and colours from the period to show what they would have been like, ¹⁶ and this made the audience understand when the 'play' was set.

Laurence Pears played the hilarious character of Jonathan. He was meant to be a stupid man, but a rich man and from an aristocratic family who lived in the country. ¹⁷ He wore a bright yellow shirt buttoned up but open at the neck with a spotty cravat ¹⁸ at the top. He also had green braces on as these were popular in the 1930s. ¹⁹

1. Evaluation.

2. Evaluation.

3. Understanding of the play.

4. Evaluation.

5. Analysis.

6. Precise detail of costume used.

7. Further costume detail.

8. Analysis.

9. Needs further detail to be useful.

10. Analysis.

11. Evaluation.

12. This is not clear.

13. Some detail provided, but lacks clarity.

14. Needs further detail to be useful.

15. Analysis.

16. Understanding of the play; intended effect.

17. Understanding of character; intended effect.

18. Precise detail on costume choice.

19. Analysis.

They held up green cord trousers which were tucked into long red socks and brown leather shoes.²⁰ All this showed he came from a rich family.²¹ He also wore a jacket made from tweed material which had patches on the elbows. I really liked what he wore²² and it showed him as being from a different class to some of the other characters²³ which worked well.²⁴

Bryony Corrigan played Sandra who is meant to be the dangerous and sexy lady who has come for the evening.²⁵ She wore a beautiful long red gown which was made of silk.²⁶ This was open so that you could see her cleavage which evening dresses were like in the 1930s.²⁷ The dress was not tight fitted at all, but flowed as she moved. She also carried a black leather small handbag – from the period – and wore sparkly earrings. Her lips and nails were painted red which was the same colour as her dress, so these all connected together.²⁸ At one point, her dress got ripped off ‘by mistake’ and it was clear that there must have been a special catch in the dress to do this,²⁹ so it could come off in one go at the same place each night. This was clever and worked well.³⁰

James Marlowe played Max, the butler. He wore a typical butler outfit of a black tuxedo and bow tie with white shirt and white gloves,³¹ but this is the same in any period, I think. He had his hair in a side parting and had a small moustache which were popular in the 1930s however.³²

In conclusion, the two types of costume in the play helped to show both pieces of the action on stage and also clearly showed that this was set in the 1930s.³³ I really enjoyed the production,³⁴ and the costumes helped.

Commentary

A reasonable description which shows enthusiasm for the performance, but lacks precise detail on costumes and costume design. There is a fair range of costume skills mentioned, though this is not consistent, and there is a lack of specific focus on the question.

Band 2 (AO3)

A reasonable analysis of how costumes are used, but not enough focus on the style of the production, or how the costume design contributed to this. There is a reasonable evaluation of the success of the costumes, but their sense of enhancing the style is not communicated in sufficient detail. The response is reasonably clear, but lapses into description, without fully supporting examples.

Band 2 (AO4)

Comments

20. Description of costume choice.

21. This is not clear; more detail needed.

22. Evaluation.

23. This is not clear; more detail needed.

24. Evaluation.

25. Understanding of the character.

26. Detail of costume used.

27. Understanding of period/style.

28. Costume detail; accessories, analysis of effect.

29. Understanding of technical costume detail.

30. Analysis, evaluation.

31. Detail of costume choice.

32. Analysis; intended effect.

33. Analysis.

34. Evaluation.

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