

DRAMA

Paper 0411/11
Written Examination

Key messages

The Written examination seeks, through discussion, to isolate and identify *practical* application in drama. Literary approaches should be avoided and responses which focus on narrative or character *per se* without exploring the practical application of dramatic skills and techniques cannot access the higher mark bands.

In **Section A**, candidates should pay close attention to the number of marks available for each question. Lengthy responses for a two- or three-mark question are unnecessary and will inevitably result in less time to respond to the longer-answer essay questions in **Sections B** and **C**.

In **Sections B** and **C** technical and design questions demand an approach which is both informed and able to discuss the application of technical method to the dramatic intention. Centres are advised to work on improving candidates' understanding of design elements, as associated questions continue to be challenging to many. Candidates who do not have basic understanding of any given technical or design skill should steer clear of essay questions which require knowledge of these areas.

General comments

Approaches to this paper were somewhat variable this session. Many candidates demonstrated effective engagement with the devised work whereas it was not always obvious that they had adopted a practical performance approach to the play extract.

A significant number of candidates approached the practical aspects of the examination in an overly literary vein. When asked how they might bring out certain dramatic qualities in performance, candidates responded by writing what in effect proved to be a character analysis. These were often very detailed but did not actually address the question, which asked for practical solutions to performance problems.

Another area which continues to prove challenging is the notion of 'structure' and some candidates appeared to equate structure with narrative.

There is still some progress to be made in enabling candidates to engage effectively with questions which deal with technical issues, although answers to questions on lighting were improved this session. There continues to be some confusion between 'props' and 'set' although credit was awarded where the two areas could reasonably be considered to have blended or crossed over, such as tableware, for example.

There were still many candidates who did not appear to have read the question properly. Candidates must answer the question set rather than one they had prepared for. A few attempted all the questions in **Sections B** and **C** and in such cases benefit was awarded to the answer which addressed the greatest number of assessment criteria. Naturally, because of the time required to produce a strong answer for a 25-mark question, these candidates were unlikely to score high marks for each section.

In some cases the quality of candidates' handwriting made it difficult to decipher their responses. Centres are requested, as far as is reasonably possible, to encourage their candidates to write legibly. Examiners often spent a significant amount of time working laboriously through some scripts trying to make sense of the handwriting. Candidates whose work is illegible are self-penalising, since credit cannot be awarded to ideas that are indiscernible.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Questions 1 – 5 *The Visit*

Question 1

Many candidates were able to engage with the question and gave good responses. There was a tendency, however, to generalise about Alfred III's relative poverty in the context of the town itself and not to acknowledge his role as a shopkeeper. Responses that simply recommended 'old' or worn out' clothes could not be awarded both marks.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to discern critical similarities and differences between the pairs Roby and Toby and Koby and Loby although a number of responses did not offer a complete answer omitting one or more aspects of the relevant information. A significant number of candidates seemed to misinterpret the question and sought to show differences between each individual within a given pair.

Question 3

There were some good responses to this question and generally speaking most candidates were able to offer some useful practical advice as to how the speech could be played. A few candidates focused on the psychology of the character in terms of the plot and in doing so missed opportunities to gain full marks. Others produced somewhat basic answers wherein they cited 'a loud clear voice', for example. More than this was needed and only where such advice was linked to a specific moment from the speech did it truly address the requirements of the question.

Question 4

Candidates found this question the most challenging in this section. The majority did not understand what is meant by the term 'sound design' and, consequently, focused on giving advice related to vocal clarity and volume or the use of cinematically inspired mood-music to create tension. Though the latter may have its place in some aspects of production, it overlooks the many real opportunities available to the sound designer.

A few candidates recognised what was required and were able to make useful and practical recommendations involving such textual elements as the train noises, bells ringing and the sound of the panther and its eventual death. Candidates should become conversant with this area that calls for a basic grasp of how technology is used in theatre to achieve specific sound effects and to create diegetic soundscape.

Question 5

A number of candidates also found this question challenging. It required a discussion of how physical theatre may be applied to non-naturalistic elements of production. Many candidates perceived at least some of the directorial possibilities afforded by the Men taking on the role of trees, and some also appreciated the opportunities for achieving the grotesque by featuring Claire's artificial limbs. For the most part responses simply concentrated on character physicalisation in the sense of basic physical action regardless of the scenic or narrative tone established by the playwright.

Questions 6 – 8 *Devised work*

Question 6

The subject matter of the original stimulus seemed to have resonated almost universally and this question produced the most comprehensive responses of the three on the devised work. Most candidates were able to identify two effective dramatic moments and to give at least one reason why.

Question 7

Candidates were in most cases able to provide a clear explanation as to what the cause of the laughter was but many found it difficult to explain how this was communicated, often reverting to a narrative step-by-step version of what happened rather than an explanation of style and intent. Dramatic techniques were often sidelined by a simple retelling of the plot.

Question 8

All candidates were able to choose a character. Costume suggestions were often described generically and produced somewhat bland 'fashion-related' or 'generic poverty' descriptions. Many candidates were unable to explore the significance of their design choice and how it may have affected aspects of performance.

Section B

Questions 9 – 11 *The Visit*

Question 9

Most candidates who chose this question were able to perceive the function of the Men as chorus with a very few appreciating the role that they had in the physicalisation of dream-like or imaginative constructs.

Question 10

A minority of candidates selected this question and most chose to discuss the play from a literary or psycho-sociological context forgetting that the question asked for a directorial perspective and one which sought to explore practical performance issues.

Question 11

This was the most popular question and it engaged candidates to the degree that many wrote at length and in considerable detail about opportunities for an actor to bring out Claire's motivation. All candidates understood what this motivation was, more or less. Answers ranged from the highly functional to the subtly psychological but in all cases the candidates who focused on the utilisation of dramatic skills and techniques in the context of motivation were able to address the assessment criteria most effectively.

Section C

Questions 12 – 14 *Devised work*

Question 12

This question proved especially challenging. Several candidates chose neither props nor lighting but instead produced a hybrid response covering all aspects of production including costume. There was very little understanding shown of how props especially, but also lighting, might be used to enhance performance. Most responses were insecure discussing props, and in many cases there was an obvious confusion between props and set. The few that did show understanding were able to focus on the use of hand props and to differentiate where an item of set was used as a personal prop.

Question 13

The majority of candidates did not understand the meaning of 'structure' and, as a consequence, produced vague, narrative-led answers which often amounted to little more than a retelling of the story. The best responses included appropriate terminology such as *climax*, *exposition*, *rising action* etc. in a way that demonstrated understanding of how these concepts operated during the construction of the performance and how they assisted in achieving the dramatic intention.

Question 14

This was a popular and well-answered question. The best responses were those that identified the significance of individual characters and the dramatic techniques employed to achieve contrast between them. The use of costume, make-up and lighting were valid influences and candidates who were able to present a comprehensive overview of each character and the contrasting features between them, together with a clear discussion of how this was achieved, provided the most effective and high scoring responses. Those candidates whose production was centred on a single character and which contained much in the way of monologues found it difficult to discuss contrast effectively.

DRAMA

Paper 0411/12
Written Examination

Key messages

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In **Section A**, candidates should pay close attention to the number of marks available for each question. Lengthy responses for a two- or three-mark question are unnecessary and will inevitably result in less time to respond to the longer-answer essay questions in **Sections B** and **C**.

In **Sections B** and **C** technical and design questions demand an approach which is both informed and able to discuss the application of technical method to the dramatic intention. Centres are advised to work on improving candidates' understanding of design elements, as associated questions continue to be challenging to many. Candidates who do not have basic understanding of any given technical or design skill should steer clear of essay questions which require knowledge of these areas.

Questions requiring simple and straightforward answers were generally done well, while the answers to more stretching questions such as those in **Sections B** and **C** often needed to contain more explanation and/or discussion relating particularly to creative, practical solutions. Explicit reference to the use of dramatic techniques is needed to achieve higher marks.

The most successful answers in **Section C** were those where candidates had explored the stimuli practically and therefore had developed an understanding of a range of design elements and performance considerations.

General comments

Candidates must show a full understanding of the play extract and consider the subject matter carefully. They need to respond to the question that is set; those who wrote lengthy responses for a question they had prepared for rather than the question on the paper were limited to low band marks. Additionally, candidates should ensure that they read questions carefully as there were examples of responses about Schott rather than Fasch or about lighting rather than sound.

Most candidates wrote their answers in considerable detail, although there was a tendency by a few to ignore the allocation of marks, so that **Question 1**, worth two marks, received as much attention as **Question 5**, worth five marks, or even a **Section B** question, worth 25 marks.

The best responses to the stimuli covered in **Questions 6-8** and in **Section C** showed a thorough understanding of drama rather than narrative and were able to show evidence of imagination, creativity, a sophisticated exploration of cultural ideas and an awareness of how to create drama. Weaker responses were characterised by themes such as homosexuality, prostitution, rape and sexual abuse, usually expressed in the language of teen magazines and TV programmes. Centres should note that whilst candidates are usually generally confident on plotlines and narrative, there are few marks available for these aspects.

Less focused responses were characterised by a tendency to generalised comment and were not supported by a detailed understanding of the text. **Sections B** and **C** were not always adequately addressed; the best responses showed a clear understanding of subject-specific terminology and creative, practical solutions to design or dramatisation.

In **Section C** the best responses were from candidates who had had opportunity to perform their pieces. Those who had not had this experience had to rely on their imagination and had not benefited from the learning process that the practical experience would have given them. In a number of cases the improvisation work on the three stimuli was characterised more by 'sketches' than fully formed theatre pieces, and therefore design questions based on these items proved particularly challenging to answer.

Design questions presented a challenge to many candidates and a greater practical understanding of set design, lighting, sound and props would have improved responses.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Questions 1 – 5 *Bach at Leipzig*

Question 1

Many candidates were able to correctly identify the use of wigs (which was permitted although not strictly considered costume), travelling cloaks (which was listed in the stage directions) or buckled shoes. Credit was given for suggestions that showed some understanding of the kind of clothing worn in the 1700s. Typically, candidates wrote lengthy responses to this question despite it only being worth two marks. Some candidates provided responses which explored what the costumes were for and what they symbolised; credit could not be given without specific reference to the features of such costumes. In some cases, candidates gave two features for a number of different characters and in doing so would have lost valuable time to answer the longer-answer questions later in the paper.

Question 2

Many excellent responses contained good examples of similarities and differences between the two characters. Credit was given for more superficial responses such as 'both married'. Candidates also needed to understand and communicate how characteristics might be brought out in performance through the identification and explanation of the use of dramatic techniques. This did not always seem to be fully understood.

Question 3

The question asked candidates to explore the character of Johann Fasch and make comment on the tone of his speech in Scene One. Some of the responses were excellent with creative examples of how the speech might be delivered, offering specific stage directions to the actor. Others displayed a good understanding of the character. Credit was given for any reasoned interpretation that captured the passion of the speech in setting the scene for the treachery that follows. The best examples were typified by three simple bullet points that showed a clear understanding of the character and/or the tone of the speech.

Question 4

Candidates found this question challenging and were often unable to show a full understanding of the role of a sound designer. They needed to understand that the role of sound designer involves some consideration of the location where the play is set and the intended atmosphere that is to be created. Responses needed to go beyond listing associated sounds. Many were too brief and did not communicate how to approach the task. References to voice and amplification were not credited unless they were supported by comment relating to location and/or atmosphere. There were some good responses which explored how an echo might be created in a large expanse of space such as the church.

Question 5

There were some responses that showed recognition of the conflict that exists within this section of dialogue. The best addressed the subtleties of the interchange and were also able to offer specific practical solutions through the use of dramatic technique in bringing out the drama. Candidates need to be more specific in their responses, avoid the narrative, and instead explore practical performance issues and how one might effect these in the drama.

Questions 6 – 8 *Devised work*

Question 6

The focus of this question was on the creation of dramatic work as opposed to the bringing to life of a story or plot. Many excellent responses showed a good understanding of what made their 'moments' effective in terms of audience reaction. Some candidates provided purely narrative responses and no credit could be awarded for this.

Question 7

There were responses in which candidates expressed the ways in which their thematic material was dramatised and which showed a detailed understanding of dramatic technique. Candidates needed to understand the techniques that are used to turn an issue or indeed a story into a piece of drama. Candidates in Centres that encouraged an imaginative approach to devising tended to fare better because they had utilised a range of techniques that they were then able to explain in their answers. Again, there were some purely narrative responses for which no credit could be given.

Question 8

Many candidates were able to list various costume that was used. Fewer were able to identify *how* the costume was used or its significance in the drama. Some candidates stated that they did not have any costumes, in some cases because the piece had not been performed, but instead gave a hypothetical discussion as to how it might have been utilised. This was a perfectly valid approach and marks were awarded as appropriate.

Section B

Questions 9 – 11 *Bach at Leipzig*

Question 9

This was the least popular question in this section. There were some misconceptions that caused problems: some candidates wanted to create different sets for different scenes, some thought that an anteroom is necessarily a small space and some did not know what an eighteenth century Lutheran church might look like. There were a few unusual ideas, like setting the whole play inside a representation of a pipe organ, and candidates needed to provide detailed discussions to support such suggestions. No marks are awarded for simple sketches; annotated sketches, however, can help to clarify a written account. Most candidates did specify the type of stage they would use, but many did not explain how the set might be used by the actors or what effect it might have on the audience. The best answers integrated a clear understanding of the challenges that such a set might present with convincing discussion as to how such issues might be realised in performance.

Question 10

This was a popular choice and often quite well done, although many did not provide any kind of overview, simply listing a series of separate comic moments drawn from the script. Of these, the best responses explained why each section was funny and provided some practical suggestions for playing the scene. Responses which added comedy on to the play rather than drawing out the comic potential already there were less successful. Candidates should avoid writing lengthy responses that do not address the actual question asked. Some took a literal view of the question and simply cited points where comedy could be brought out without explaining why or, in particular, how.

Question 11

This was also a popular question. Schott is a complex character, but there were some commendable responses, although some offered a few dubious and sometimes contradictory suggestions without any reference to the text. Responses were typified by comments that made perceptive use of the text to explain Schott's character but without offering practical suggestions about how an actor might approach the role. The dramatic techniques adopted tended to be relatively unsophisticated.

Section C

Questions 12 – 14 *Devised work*

Question 12

Weaker answers were characterised by a tendency to generalised comment covering props *and* lighting, and in some cases other design elements not specified by the question. In some responses there was a limited understanding of how props and lighting could be used to best effect.

Question 13

The best answers showed a good understanding of the intention of the piece and how the structure served that intention. The very best essays made a clear statement of what the piece set out to achieve and then discussed clearly the way the piece was constructed including the positioning of climaxes, entrances, speeches etc. To access the higher bands responses also needed to include an evaluation of the success of the drama in realising its intentions. Weaker answers were characterised by a lack of understanding of the term 'structure' and instead focused on props, lighting and sound. Narrative responses were not credited.

Question 14

Many candidates were able to insert references to contrast into their character descriptions or into the story they were telling, but very few expressed either character or contrast in dramatic terms. There was little understanding evident of how to create character in performance and even less of the creation of contrast.

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Paper 0411/13
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General comments

In some responses there was a noticeable improvement in the appropriate use of performing arts vocabulary and application of those concepts. Many candidates are showing greater knowledge of some of the technical aspects of performance, although with some imbalance. Sound design and the significance of sound/music in performance proved to be a particular challenge this session.

Understanding of key dramatic ideas is gained through putting those ideas into practice, and, especially in the discussion of the devised work, the strongest responses came from those Centres where ideas had been explored fully and in well-developed performances, such that candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge of how to apply dramatic concepts and were able to reflect critically and confidently on their own experiences of the drama process and the resulting product. Astute answers were clear and detailed and explained the rationale behind creative decision making and problem solving. In many cases, however, candidates did not appreciate the need to go further and trusted that narrative or anecdotal accounts would suffice.

Candidates generally had good understanding of the character of Salieri but were less adept at providing advice on how the role may be played. The analysis of character in a play text requires a different approach to that of literature as it is a stimulus for action. A useful analogy may be that of a map and the landscape it covers. The map is utterly unlike the living terrain but provides an accurate guide to it. The text of a play (with or without stage directions) provides similar authorial guidance, which may be more or less explicit. It is up to the reader to interpret how the words are to become action and to work to ensure that the characters thus played out are true to the author's intention. Where the text had been explored in workshops before being brought to life (with or without audience), candidates were better able to pick out the subtle nuances of character relationships hidden in the text and communicate those through the medium of performance.

There were fewer instances of poor handwriting this year compared to previous sessions. There is always the danger with illegibility that meaning and intention is also obscured.

Finally, it seemed the case that some candidates did not appreciate the need to pace and balance their responses. The questions in **Sections B** and **C** each carry almost as many marks as all eight questions in **Section A**. Some candidates provided a near-perfect answer over a whole page for a question carrying only three marks and then were only able to write the same amount for questions carrying 25 marks each. Some candidates tactically delayed answering some of the questions in **Section A** until they had tackled **Sections B** and **C**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Questions 1 – 5 *Amadeus*

Question 1

Most responses addressed the question successfully and gave appropriate costume suggestions. Marks could not be awarded when answers were generic and unspecific e.g. 'An emperor's costume', or where there was no statement in support of the costume choice. Credit was awarded where specific or broadly appropriate details were given. Period costume details were not essential but a few suggested modern costume without appropriate justification.

Question 2

Most candidates focused on narrative and expository functions and the dramatic effect of the dialogue in performance with some commenting on the fact that in places there was comedic potential, particularly in terms of the Venticelli's interactions. Some candidates seemed not to understand the term 'dramatic function' and gave examples such as 'to talk fast'.

Question 3

This question was generally well answered with the majority of candidates appreciating that Constanze agreed to Salieri's invitation in a genuine yet mistaken belief that she was helping her husband. Many candidates gave advice relating to the stages of Constanze's growing awareness of Salieri's motives and her reactions, but in some cases this did not directly relate to providing practical solutions for playing the role. A proportion of candidates misinterpreted Constanze's purpose suggesting that she was prepared to seduce Salieri and accordingly offered costume advice. Others, in the closing moments of the scene, saw her contemptuous teasing of Salieri as evidence of flirting.

Question 4

Of the text-based questions, this one, on sound design, was the most challenging for candidates. Those who did score well presented a discussion, with appropriate technical terminology of the effectiveness of the proposed design in relation to specific sections of the text. Whilst it is not at all expected that candidates will have the knowledge and expertise of professionals in the field, the majority answered this question in far too general terms, making simplistic suggestions about the use of Mozart's and Salieri's music, for example. Similarly, too many made the point that recorded sound should not 'drown out' the actors' voices, highlighting confusion over the roles in the theatre of sound operator and sound designer.

Question 5

This question was usually answered with some degree of success although not all candidates were able to access the top mark bands. Some focused on the nature of the relationship and the insights we get into both characters through the move from playfulness into momentary seriousness when Mozart's father is discussed, and candidates were credited when action and movement were considered in that respect. The majority concentrated on how the roles could be physicalised as 'cat' and 'mouse' with variable reference to the text but mostly with little sense of the purpose of the scene and dramatic significance of the characters' physicality. This is the audience's and Salieri's first impression of Mozart and the stark contrast between coarse buffoonery and God-approved genius, as Salieri sees it, is made clear here. The best answers took account of the hidden presence of Salieri when considering how to maximise the dramatic irony of the moment through the oblivious lovers playing out the scene with physical energy and exuberance across the stage.

Questions 6 – 8 *Devised Work*

Question 6

The best answers appreciated that the focus of the question was upon the creation of effective drama rather than identification of significant moments in the plot and thus were more able to evaluate what had made their choices successful. Some candidates misinterpreted the question and extended 'points' from being particular moments in time into scenes or complete sections of the drama. Some candidates described

staging or costume or lighting as “points where the drama worked really well” and proceeded to comment upon their usage throughout the piece. References to use of staging and other technical aspects of performance were only credited where they were relevant to a specific dramatic effect that was generated at that point.

Question 7

Generally this was a well-answered question across the ability range. Candidates were mostly able to identify clearly what the associated ‘problems’ were and whilst some then proceeded to give a narrative account of the unfolding drama for little reward, others gave lucid explanations of how style and selected drama techniques allowed their intention in performance to be realised.

Question 8

Most candidates were able to pick up marks on this question. The best answers were those where costume was fully described and also considered as an interpretive or symbolic feature of the drama. There were a few cases where no costume was used but candidates received credit for suggesting what might have been a suitable costume choice.

Section B

Questions 9 – 11 *Amadeus*

Question 9

Most who answered this question appreciated that there were at least four contrasting locations and that the transitions between these closed and open spaces would present problems if allowed to interrupt the flow of the drama. The majority of candidates were able to use some appropriate terminology but in other cases knowledge was patchy. Some solutions were simple and practical, such as using the apron in front of the proscenium arch for Salieri’s apartment/salon whilst set changes were being executed behind curtains. Imaginative use of different levels, split staging and representational stage furniture to create different locations, such as the library of the Baroness Waldstädten, featured in better answers. Other solutions were costly and whilst there was no issue with that, in some cases the complexity would render the design unworkable. A few candidates demonstrated a high level of technical understanding at the expense of discussion of textual needs. Some included diagrams and sketches of the stage area. As diagrams without supporting detail would score virtually no marks, candidates should be advised to include nothing more than a rudimentary sketch if they feel it absolutely necessary to illustrate a point in their answer. Certainly, time (and marks) should not be wasted on pictorial evidence.

Question 10

Candidates were largely aware which sections of the play to consider in respect of the question. The majority were able to describe with some success why these sections were comic and offer some practical suggestions as to how the comedy might be brought out. Very few discussed the implications for the director of the comedic devices as a means of establishing character, delineating the alienating effect of Mozart’s puerility and social ineptitude in contrast with Salieri’s rigid formal acceptability. No candidate offered any consideration of farce, either as a ludicrous situation or as a theatrical genre. Suggestions were thus generally focused on what might be done rather than how pitfalls, flagged up by the question, might be avoided.

Question 11

The vast majority of candidates selected this question and had clearly identified that analysis of Salieri’s psychological progression was key to understanding the text, but there was considerable variation in the practical understanding of how to bring this out through performance. Detailed discussion of Salieri’s traits, however accurately described, would gain little credit as the question demanded consideration of how to play the role. Candidates fared somewhat better by attempting to consider how the actor might communicate dramatic meaning but spoke in general terms of, for example, ‘facial expression’ and ‘body language’ without saying specifically what those might be and suggesting why a particular action would have the desired effect. There are a number of stage directions for Salieri in the text, but the expectation is that for maximum marks the candidate would go far beyond taking such advice verbatim; truly creative responses made detailed reference to the text as well as providing perceptively detailed suggestions on acting techniques.

Section C

Questions 12 – 14 *Devised work*

Question 12

There were some accomplished responses where the candidate offered comprehensive discussion of how the lighting design was used to achieve degrees of dramatic contrast together with an assured command of appropriate terminology e.g. use of 'gobos' and 'barndoors'. In these instances there were detailed references to the devised pieces to qualify that assertions of effective lighting contrasts were correctly judged. The majority of candidates provided variable descriptions of lighting effects together with details of the concurrent action, and whilst these ideas may have been workable in themselves, the structure of such answers did not readily lend itself to highlighting the contrast of different lighting states and in most cases the importance of that discussion was overlooked. It is appreciated that some Centres will have more sophisticated lighting equipment than others, but that should not preclude a candidate making an appropriate response as credit can be given for proposals where the devised piece did not actually make use of or have a lighting design.

Question 13

Candidates were asked to consider contrast in characterisation. The better answers identified the unique significance of the characters within the drama and the nature of the contrasts between them with detailed discussion of how the effect was dramatised. There were some very good discussions on how costume, make-up, lighting etc. were used to highlight the overall effect. There were also some very brief answers which typically provided a list of characters followed by brief description with little or no comment on differences.

Question 14

This was by far the most popular question in this section. The most successful answers were those where candidates demonstrated comprehensive knowledge of the possibilities of alternative structures and were then able to qualify the effectiveness of their choices as a means of capturing the element of surprise. This is a question where understanding and application of the correct terminology allows candidates to communicate their ideas succinctly and effectively but overall, subject-specific language was used only by a minority of candidates e.g. 'reverse-chronological' or 'denouement'. The majority of candidates did appreciate that the notion of surprise in the theatre is closely associated with the creation and release of dramatic tension. 'Surprises' given by candidates ranged from the unexpected, where the intention was to deceive the audience with false expectations, to where the end result was anticipated by the audience as the plot developed with tension building to that point. Candidates who were able to evaluate the success of their intentions to structure their drama to maximise the possibilities of creating dramatic tension scored highly, particularly when able to gauge audience response. There were many candidates who concentrated on narrative accounts of the plot with some brief commentary on how 'surprise' was achieved at critical points, some of whom made superficially relevant comments related to structure. Such candidates needed to understand that the question was not concerned with the content of progressing scenes but why that form, that particular arrangement of scenes, was used.

DRAMA

Paper 0411/02
Coursework

Comments on administration

Sample of work

Centres are reminded that they are responsible for selecting the sample of six candidates, and that this sample should be drawn from across the entire range of marks awarded. In a few instances Moderators were sent the work of all the candidates and were then required to select the sample themselves which delayed the moderation process. In other cases, the sample chosen by the Centre did not include the work of the highest and/or lowest marks awarded. Centres are requested to read the syllabus carefully for instructions regarding what to send to CIE for moderation.

Completion of Individual Candidate Mark Sheets

Centres must use the mark sheets that are provided in the syllabus corresponding to the year of examination, and should not use old versions of forms or create their own versions. There were a number of mark sheets this session which had information missing from them because the Centre had filled in an out-of-date copy of the mark sheet. For Centres who wish to fill in the mark sheets electronically, Word versions are available from CIE on request.

Moderators reported a greater degree of accuracy in the calculation of marks this session and there were only a few instances where marks had been incorrectly totalled. In particular, most Centres were careful to follow the instructions to only round marks up or down once the total mark for each candidate was arrived at. This was an improvement in an area that had required a number of marks to be corrected in previous sessions. Centres are reminded that all calculations and the transcription of the total marks to the MS1 mark sheet should be checked carefully before sending the materials to CIE.

Application of assessment criteria

Most teachers produced excellent documentation with detailed and concise comments that fully supported the marks awarded.

Moderators reported that the marks awarded for Assessment Objectives A and B were generally well supported by the accompanying comments on the Individual Candidate Mark Sheet. Assessment Objective C was sometimes over-marked and in such cases there was often no correlation between the teacher's comments and the marks awarded.

Recordings of performances

Candidates should be identified prior to each piece and should state their name (and candidate number if known at the time of recording). It is also helpful if candidates state the role that they are playing. They should also be clearly identified in the order in which they appear on each video/DVD on the Video/DVD cover sheet (Form 0411/V).

There were very few poor-quality recordings this session and these were easily outnumbered by the professional presentation of most. There were a number of recordings with inappropriate levels of extraneous noise. While Moderators understand that it is sometimes difficult to get complete silence around the performance area in a school, some work was recorded in unsuitably noisy conditions. It was also noted that invited audiences occasionally distracted performers, which was inappropriate in an examination context.

There were a number of problems with DVDs being submitted in formats that would not play on a stand-alone DVD player, the result being that Moderators spent a lot of time trying them out on a variety of different

machines to no avail. This all lead to considerable delays in moderation. If recording onto DVD Centres are requested to record work in standard PAL or NTSC format, and to ensure that the disc(s) can be played on a stand-alone DVD player before sending the materials to Cambridge.

As mentioned in previous sessions Centres are reminded that this is not an assessment of acting on film. There should be potential for a live audience rather than performances set in locations that would not enable an audience to attend. Work presented in front of a live audience was often better in terms of performance energy, especially in comedic pieces, where positive audience reactions can enhance the performances.

Comments on the performance work

Text-based performance

As in previous sessions, the best work showed maturity and an ability that aspired to professional standards. Such candidates attempted challenging work that allowed them to create very strong characterisation. There was a discernable trend towards realising more 'gritty', contemporary texts although there was a good selection of repertoire drawn from a variety of periods. Weaker performances came from candidates who delivered their lines with poor diction and often with inappropriate physicality and uncoordinated gestures. Such performances appeared awkward and mechanistic, and revealed the candidates' lack of ownership of the words they were speaking. Where candidates identified with the theme, culture, narrative and characters of what they were performing, the quality of work was often much better. Centres are recommended to spend time working with candidates on skills such as interpretation of text, use of vocal delivery, timing, physicality, use of levels, focus, projection and connection with the audience through eye contact.

It was pleasing to see a number of different performance styles and techniques, such as physical theatre, being used in imaginative ways; this was in contrast to the static performances of some of the monologues presented this session. Effective physical engagement with the script was often a differentiator between those confident in the use of their performance space and those given to wandering up and down the stage, having given little thought to body language and movement. The use of the body as well as the voice is a challenging skill and some candidates had created cleverly-shaped material.

Some performances included the use of multimedia, costume and music, although the use of background music was often counter-productive. Continual background music may have been chosen in order to heighten the emotional intensity of the piece but in fact it had the opposite effect since it undermined vocal delivery and made an issue of under-projection and diction. Some candidates who presented extracts from musical theatre pieces could not sing in tune, which inevitably compromised the quality of the performance.

Some candidates used screenplays, particularly for solos, and Centres are reminded that screenplays, films, poems or novels are not permitted. Only plays written for stage should be selected for text-based performances.

Material selected

A list of indicative repertoire from the session is included at the end of this report, and should be read in conjunction with similar lists produced in previous sessions.

There were some excellent performances of traditional plays which follow the conventions of the 'well-made play'. Contemporary pieces were also popular some of which were challenging but offered emotional intensity. In Centres where candidates had been given the opportunity to experience and gain knowledge of a range of styles and techniques these clearly informed the performances. Some Centres chose texts which were relevant to their own culture and these were often performed with a sense of ownership and understanding.

Candidates managed to tackle the demands of modern expression and structure in a variety of ways, although some of these were less successful than others. Candidates should remember that heightened emotion is not always best expressed through screaming and shouting but is better underplayed. Candidates are advised to find ways of building tension over time, for example, through the use of facial expression or pauses to show frustration and anger.

Some monologues were clearly taken from the Internet. This was often problematic since candidates knew very little about the play from which the monologue was taken and therefore struggled to make the scenario believable. If the monologues are less well known Centres are requested to include a brief explanation of

the source of monologues when they send the materials for moderation.

Moderators reported that the staging of monologues was often challenging for candidates since many chose to sit behind a table, often maintaining this state for the whole piece. Others attempted limited contrast but went to the opposite extreme, frantically pacing around to show differing emotional states but in an unfocused and unsophisticated manner. Similarly, the many performances which were set in a bedroom often suffered from a cluttered array of toys and other assorted props with no real thought about their relationship to the intended character or situation.

Devised performance

Centres are reminded that they must indicate on the Individual Candidate Mark Sheets which of the options listed in the syllabus had been used as the basis for each piece of devised work. Where this information was not included Moderators had to work this out from the content of the piece, which was sometimes difficult. The option chosen should, where appropriate, also be related to the mark awarded for Assessment Objective B, since the creative process should reflect a growing familiarity with the nature of a particular style, for example.

Some of the devised work was powerful and innovative and expressed a high level of sensitivity and understanding of stagecraft. Several of the strongest pieces were influenced by physical theatre, Greek theatre, comedy or tragedy and these reflected the influence of practitioners whose work had been studied elsewhere. Whatever style was chosen, the more physicality and movement, the better the performance tended to be, with static pieces (often monologues) lacking vitality, drive and contrast. Devised work was often weak because of trying to be too naturalistic and such work sometimes ended up looking like scenes from a soap opera.

Where candidates had chosen to focus on themes and issues that were obviously important to them, they were able to show a much stronger engagement with the work. Many pieces covered matters such as family breakdown, domestic violence, drugs, and teenage pregnancy. The better of these tackled such themes in an interesting way and were based on characters who were of a similar age to that of the candidates. Other pieces drifted into predictable and clichéd presentations of such issues. Some pieces explored young people's identity in society, with reference to IT developments, for example. Some of the devised monologues were stronger where the character underwent a catharsis during the piece as this meant that the candidates were able to shape and vary their pacing and energy levels.

Appendix: Examples of repertoire used for text-based performances

Edward Albee	<i>Three Tall Women</i>
John Augustine	<i>Siobhan</i>
Alan Ayckbourn	<i>Mother Figure</i>
Florence Bell	<i>Alan's Wife</i>
Victoria Brittain and Gillian Slovo	<i>Guantanamo – Honor Bound to Defend Freedom</i>
Justin Butcher	<i>Scaramouche Jones</i>
Cathy Celesia	<i>Anything For You</i>
Anton Chekhov	<i>The Proposal</i>
Anne Fine	<i>Flour Babies</i>
Jean Genet	<i>The Maids</i>
Alfred Hayes	<i>The Girl on the Via Flaminia</i>
Luigi Jannuzzi	<i>All the King's Women</i>
Jason Katims	<i>The Man Who Couldn't Dance</i>
James Lapine	<i>Table Settings</i>
David Mamet	<i>Sexual Perversity in Chicago</i>
Jason D Martin	<i>When it Rains Gasoline</i>
Kuo Pao Kun	<i>The Eagle & the Cat</i>
Tony Kushner	<i>Angels in America</i>
Arthur Miller	<i>A View from the Bridge</i>
Dennis Potter	<i>Blue Remembered Hills</i>
Heather Raffo	<i>9 Parts of Desire</i>
Neil Simon	<i>Brighton Beach Memoirs; The Star-Spangled Girl</i>
Tom Stoppard	<i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead</i>
Elisa Thompson	<i>Cold Blooded Murderer</i>
Josh Weckesser	<i>Absence of Gray Matter</i>
Timberlake Wertenbaker	<i>Three Birds Alighting on a Field</i>
Mark Wheeler	<i>Missing Dan Nolan</i>
Oscar Wilde	<i>An Ideal Husband</i>
Lanford Wilson	<i>Burn This</i>
Walter Wykes	<i>The Serpent's Tale</i>