



SDD315110 DRAMA

PRACTICAL COMPONENT

It was noted by all panels that a wide range of new material both for solos and ensemble pieces was explored and presented by candidates.

Programs and material were well selected in the main, enabling candidates to demonstrate a range of skills within their capability. The selections were often challenging without being insurmountable, allowing candidates to showcase their skills. The different genres presented in the program demonstrated contrast in selections, mood and tone.

It was pleasing to see candidates attempt accent appropriate for the context of the monologue, where chosen to perform, and this was generally well executed. The appropriate physicalisation of the monologue should be explored if this genre is chosen. In the selection of monologues please be mindful of the length. In some centres the monologues were very long and students delivered them in a rushed manner in order to meet the time requirements. It was also noted that general lighting for the performance of monologues is preferred to enable candidates to use appropriate blocking. A single spotlight does not encourage blocking and movement.

There seemed to be a great deal of paraphrasing of solo work in many centres this year. It is important that candidates are accurate in the delivery of their work. It certainly influences their final award.

It was noted that in some centres there was still some characterising of poetry and prose selections, sometimes including extremes of emotion such as tears and large gestures. The solo work is not assessed in Criterion 6. Teachers and candidates are to be reminded that when presenting poetry and prose the focus is on vocal skills and performance of the form.

Weaker candidates generally displayed difficulty in committing pieces to memory or lacked the vocal dexterity and strength to sustain their role in the dramatic extract. In extreme cases there was little evidence of ensemble playing as the character did not react or respond to the dialogue of others in the group extract. At times it was unclear as to the distinction between character and self. Stronger more skilled candidates on the other hand presented some excellent work.

On the whole, theatre protocols were well observed with a keen sense of occasion. Audience behaviour was most supportive. The spirit of generosity and teamwork was a credit to teachers and drama students alike, with many candidates assisting with staging matters and reading in, in the event of a candidate being unable to perform.

Teachers are to be commended on the use of minimal representational production elements, enabling the focus to be on the candidate, their voice and performance in the program.

It is advisable for candidates to check that they are not wearing jewellery which is inappropriate for their role, e.g. leather wrist-bands on a conservative, middle-aged character or heavy make-up and diamond ring on a nun.

WRITTEN COMPONENT

I think we would all agree that the paper was extremely well-received by our candidates. Thank you to the chief setting examiner and critics. As a result of this year's paper, the candidates presented very solid essays in both sections and the markers commented that they felt the overall standard was higher this year. The markers however did note that the spelling of technical terms and general spelling were perhaps a little weaker this year, e.g. comidy, techniquial, tablos.

The use of pencil in the writing of essays was more common this year, which made the reading of the scripts sometimes quite difficult. Please encourage your candidates to take a pen to the exam.

Section A

The most often addressed productions were Art, Twelfth Night, Dracula and The Pillowman. Candidates often did not underline the titles, and in many cases the actors' names were not known and were misspelt. Considering there are few facts the candidates need to know before they enter the examination room, it is expected they will know the names of the two productions they are writing about, the director, the names of two actors and the characters they play.

Many of the essays were well-structured, however there needed to be more emphasis on the 'how' and the 'why' in the details of the answers. Candidates who used these elements in their response generally did very well.

It was noted by the markers that candidates who only referred to musicals in their responses did not allow themselves the range of productions to write about. This is perhaps something to consider in the future for discussion with students.

Section B

Many of the responses were detailed and a good length, showing evidence of study and good time management.. The essays were well-structured, however in some cases there was a need for further explanation. For example, it is not enough to say their research was watching a You-Tube production, they must say what elements of that research they brought to their own characterisation and performance.

There was generally an effective use of terminology. Candidates spoke positively of their own productions and the experiences they had from being involved in them. The stronger responses did not only describe what production elements were used, they then went on to justify the choice within the context of their production.

In the ‘challenges’ question some candidates suggested that the challenges were overcome by ‘just practising more’ rather than provide more detail. In Question 7, some candidates did not complete all aspects of the question. They referred to the dot points, but did not relate that information to the ‘development of your skills’. Similarly in Question 4 the ‘message, theme or issue’ were identified, not always, and then the chosen dot points did not relate back to the ‘message, theme or issue’.

SDP315110 THEATRE PERFORMANCE

Teachers are to be commended on the selection of material and the content of their programs which generally allowed appropriate stage time and opportunities for candidates to be involved in the ensemble. The production elements and attention to detail ensured many slick and sophisticated performances. Scene changes were purposeful and music used to underscore performances and to provide atmosphere and energy was excellent.

Very strong candidates ensured there was a contrast between their role(s) in the play and their monologue. It is in the interest of the candidates to select a contrasting monologue to ensure a range of skills is evident. If this is not evident in the choices and performance the overall assessment could be affected. Candidates and teachers are to be reminded that as per the TQA Guidelines for Assessment that the ‘performance time [of the monologue] should be in the range of three to five minutes’. In one centre one candidate presented a monologue which was ten minutes in length.

The IRS’ were, on the whole, relevant and provided evidence of decisions regarding character development and portrayal within the ensemble. Generally candidates were well versed in aspects of the genre and were able to clearly explain context. On occasions candidates wrote in detail about genre and context or the use of production elements without relating these aspects to the character development. Please refer to the Assessment Guidelines on the TQA website.

Frequently candidates indicated that they overcame challenges such as use of accent or blocking by ‘just doing it over and over again until I got it right’ or by ‘talking with friends or classmates who helped’. This does not communicate the process of character development or rehearsal.

Candidates are reminded that it is best to avoid using slang or colloquial language such as ‘I was rapt when I got the part’. In some centres it was evident that the IRS was very formulaic and there was more attention paid to the context, plot, and technical elements with less focus on the development of their character and role in the ensemble. It is really refreshing to read an IRS that reflects the individual rather than being prescriptive.

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