

DRAMA

Paper 9482/11
Open-Book Written Examination

Key messages

Candidates who appear to have had 'hands -on' experience of directing extracts from their chosen set texts, of performing different characters - even in a workshop setting – or of generating their own designs for the plays, clearly benefited from having had practical experiences to draw upon in their responses to the various 'practical' demands of the examination questions.

Most questions attracted answers reflecting a range of candidate achievement. The majority of candidates approached the tasks set, in their chosen question option, in a practical way, but there were some answers that betrayed a more literary approach to the study of their selected text.

General comments

Candidates should be reminded that, in **Section A**, material that does not relate specifically to the prescribed lines will not be credited.

In **Section B**, most candidates selected appropriate sections of the play to support their ideas and to meet the brief of the question; but this was not always the case.

Candidates who chose to respond to the design-based questions frequently included appropriately sized and labelled sketches which were pertinent to their chosen question, illustrated their ideas very clearly and were fully credit-worthy.

Many candidates did not respond to the requirement to make pertinent reference to the style, genre and/or context of their chosen text; others incorporated 'blocks' of pre-prepared SGC information which had not be tailored to match the demands of the question or of the extract set, in **Section A**, so that this aspect of their answer was often largely irrelevant.

The greatest barrier to candidates' success was misreading the question, answering as a performer when the subject of the question asked for direction or of ignoring the precise question focus and so missing out on the opportunity to attract credit for relevant material.

Questions in **Section A** always demand that candidates illustrate their answers with reference to 'particular moments' from the extract, while question in **Section B** specify the number of sections required to support candidates' discussion of the question task. Most, but not all, candidates followed the relevant guidance in this regard and those who did not rarely achieved their potential for success.

Candidates who used short but entirely appropriate quotations to support their practical ideas always fared better than those who did not. In **Section B**, where editions of the plays are not prescribed, candidates should be reminded not to use page or line numbers to identify moments from the text. Use of ellipses, in place of quoted text, should also be avoided, as so frequently the sense of the quotation is lost.

Candidates generally responded well to a range of question in this June series, where *As You Like It*, *A View from the Bridge* and *Small Island* were the more popular texts in **Section A** and *Oedipus Rex*, *The Cherry Orchard* and *Blood Wedding*, were the most frequently chosen texts in **Section B**.

Whatever perspective candidates were writing from, they need to be reminded that only through the use of carefully chosen textual support can they access the higher mark levels where the descriptors refer to the selected detail 'strongly' supporting the practical interpretation, in Level 5, and 'effectively' supporting the practical interpretation for Level 4. In some answers, candidates had offered no textual support, thus inhibiting their potential to reach the higher levels.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

As You Like it

(a) It was clear that many candidates had a good understanding of the volatile character of Duke Frederick and how he might conduct himself in the given extract.

Some candidates introduced their responses with a succinct summary of the background to Duke Frederick's hostility towards Rosalind, having usurped her father's Dukedom.

Better candidates always kept the question focus at the forefront of their answers and concentrated on providing an interpretation of Duke Frederick's character. Many successful candidates chose to focus on the unreasonable and vindictive aspects of Duke Frederick's character, and they frequently made useful suggestions for how these qualities might be presented using his stern tone of voice, his glowering facial expressions and his unpredictable movements, to illustrate his anger with Rosalind.

Many candidates differentiated between Frederick's agitated and harsh treatment of Rosalind and his manner with his daughter, Celia, by commenting on his change of tone, softened facial expressions and gentler hand gestures. Others interpreted his attitude towards Celia as one of utter frustration.

Some candidates presented Frederick as something of a 'pantomime villain', and when this approach was justified by the candidate, this was also an acceptable reading of his character.

(b) Candidates revealed an awareness of the close, 'sisterly' bond which exists between the cousins, Rosalind and Celia.

Some candidates made it clear from the outset that they were offering a 'contemporary' transposition of the play, and they set the scene in Celia's bedroom where some kind of 'pyjama party/sleepover' event was in progress. The girls were depicted deep in 'girl-talk', as some candidates described it, while trying on outfits or make-up, while they discussed Orlando. As the girls sat closely together, holding hands in some answers, lying on the floor on their stomachs in others, their mutual affection and good humour were clearly depicted.

Some candidates attempted to illustrate the affinity between Celia and Rosalind through costume design: with both girls wearing similar costumes but in different colours or wearing different 'outfits', but in the same colour. While this was not an inappropriate choice, only those who used costume to amplify directorial strategies, rather than relying entirely on costume to show the relationship, made this interpretation work.

Many good answers were seen where Celia's protectiveness of Rosalind was clearly foregrounded. For example, by Celia stepping in front of Rosalind to protect her from Duke Frederick's wrath and by Celia comforting Rosalind after his exit. Nearly all candidates focused on the sacrifices which Celia was prepared to make for her cousin Rosalind and on Rosalind's evident gratitude for her love and support. After Frederick departs, the cousins' mutual love leading them to plan their escape together, confirmed their close bond and willingness to take risks to stay together.

Most candidates used the text well to illustrate their responses.

Style, Genre, Content

Those who referred to the comic action of the play or its pastoral genre were more successful than those who simply stated that it was written by William Shakespeare and performed at the Globe theatre.

Question 2

The Rivals

This play was a minority choice.

(a) This was the more popular of the questions. In general, there was an understanding of the comedy of the extract. However, several candidates misunderstood David's cautionary advice and were unable to draw out the comedy from the relationship between 'Master' and 'Servant'.

Most candidates focused on the irony of the fact that Acres did not know that Absolute was 'Beverley', but among these, few candidates knew how to create comedy from this in practical terms. Some candidates resorted to generalised 'comic' tropes such as David 'dropping things' – where the 'things' in question were not specified, or 'falling over' at random moments, which showed limited comic invention. Candidates appeared unfamiliar with the idea that the power of the comedy resides in the delivery of specific lines and the actors' reactions to what each is saying.

Successful candidates did see the comedy in David's apparent dominance over Acres; they had some good ideas for contrasting Acres' show of bravado with his true cowardly feelings which are manifested throughout the 'argument' about 'honour' and 'ancestors' in the first half of the extract.

In the second section, candidates exploited the comedy of Absolute's amusement about Acres' challenge of himself as 'Beverley'. Many extracted good comic 'mileage' from Bob's redefinition of himself as 'Fighting Bob' in the hope of discouraging his opponent who (unbeknownst to him) stands before him. Practical suggestions for Acres' posturing – puffing out his chest and generally adopting the poses and tones of a conquering hero – were often successful.

(b) This was not as popular as (a) but there were some, generally straightforward, answers seen, where candidates had familiarised themselves with the fashions of the late eighteenth century.

Many of the responses illustrated vaguely appropriate costume designs for the characters of Absolute and David.

Absolute was most frequently dressed in a military uniform – only more successful candidates described one appropriate to the period – and David was dressed in neutral coloured clothing (sometimes inappropriately patched/worn/mismatched) to illustrate his relative 'poverty', being a servant.

Many answers revealed a lack of understanding of Acres' desire to appear 'aristocratic' as well as a lack of understanding of the convention of the period of servants being 'liveried' as a mark of their employers' rank.

Several candidates chose to costume the Servant, who announces Absolute's arrival, as a second character. This was generally not well attempted.

One or two candidates designed costumes for characters who do not appear in the extract – for Mrs Malaprop and for Lydia. These answers attracted no credit.

Style, Genre, Content

Very few candidates commented on the genre, the style or the period of the play.

Question 3

A View from the Bridge

This was the most popular text. It should be noted that, in general, while many candidates demonstrated that they knew the text well, in some instances, they did not answer the precise focus of the question selected.

(a) This was one of the most attempted questions, and many good and some excellent responses were seen.

The most successful answers centred on the question's precise demand to explore the intense emotions experienced by the characters as the play reaches its climax.

Some candidates did not identify any emotion experienced by any character.

Most frequently selected moments/intense emotions included Catherine's anger and bitterness as she shouts at Eddie and calls him a 'rat' who belongs in the 'garbage' followed by Beatrice's tearful defence of Eddie and her sincere wishes for Catherine's happiness, despite not being able to attend the wedding.

Most candidates focused on Catherine's contrasting interaction with Eddie from what she showed in the early part of the play. Many candidates focused on her intense emotion of resentment towards Eddie, shown through a lack of eye contact with him, except when criticising him, and they commented of her keeping her physical distance from him – and this before his betrayal is uncovered.

Many candidates focused on the sudden appearance of Rodolpho with his desperate warning about Marco they 'directed' Rodolpho's emotional apology to Eddie, which Eddie rebuffs.

There were some excellent ideas for highlighting intense emotions during Beatrice's chilling accusation of Eddie and his stupefied horror at hearing his feelings for Catherine actually named out loud.

Some candidates acknowledged a production which they had seen (most frequently this was Ivo Von Hove's production for the National Theatre) and successfully integrated some of his staging idea for the final section of the extract into their responses. Many candidates dealt extensively with the death of Eddie.

(b) This costume designer's question was chosen by only a few candidates.

In general, candidates were able to describe the costumes of both Beatrice and Catherine. Some included detailed sketches and others offered minimal drawings. In the latter category, candidates often offered sketches for individual parts of a costume such as a veil for Catherine, or a posy, and a hat for Beatrice.

The most successful candidates had done some research into the fashion of the period setting and designed costumes that were entirely appropriate both for the period and for the circumstances under which Rodolpho and Catherine organise this hasty marriage.

In better answers, candidates noted the fact that the Carbone family do not have a great deal of money, that Eddie is opposed to the marriage, and that the wedding is arranged quickly and (some would say) expediently, and that there is little expectation that there will be wedding guests other than the immediate family.

In these answers, costume designs were modest, they were economical/practical, and they reflected Catherine's youth and Beatrice' maturity.

Other answers appeared to ignore the economic factors as well as the period that the play is set and the generally sombre tone of the event – with Marco about to be deported and Eddie refusing to attend. Putting all of these circumstances aside, a significant number of candidates went for the 'Big Wedding' effect with metres of white lace, satin bodices, veils and even a tiara for Catherine. Candidates devoted one or more full page(s) to drawings of full length bridal gowns – often very contemporary in appearance - and sketches of accessories/shoes/posies.

In more appropriate designs, if jewellery was mentioned, it was described as having been 'handed down' or made of 'paste' and Catherine, though almost always in white, was wearing an outfit that could be worn again in 'real life' – some suggested that Rodolpho might have made a modest dress for her.

In general, candidates were more successful in their designs for Beatrice. Most acknowledge that she would be in her best clothes rather than clothes bought for the occasion (as stated in the text) and the fabric and colours were more muted.

A number of candidates who attempted this question appeared to believe that Beatrice and Catherine are sisters. In one answer, Beatrice's handbag was covered in blood and concealed a 'bloody knife'.

Style, Genre, Content

Candidates were knowledgeable about America in the period of the play, the situation regarding illegal immigrants and the importance of family to the Italian community. However, in most cases, this information was not integrated into their responses but was included as a separate paragraph either at the beginning or end of their answers.

Question 4

The Beatification of Area Boy

No responses were seen.

Question 5

Small Island

(a) A number of candidates wrote about *Small Island*. **Question (a)** attracted more candidates than **Question (b)**.

Most candidates recognised that the meeting takes place following Hortense's unsuccessful and humiliating experience at her interview for a teaching post in post-war London.

Most candidates adopted a director's role, although some only offered a narrative of the scene's events.

Better candidates appreciated that their task was to convey an interpretation of the relationship between Hortense and Gilbert at this point and that this would require them to define that relationship at the outset.

There was often a clear focus on how Gilbert might display his nervousness as he waits for Hortense, showing his concern for her feelings. Some candidates suggested that he would be pacing and looking around for her to appear.

Candidates recognised that Hortense's humiliation fuelled her reluctance to encounter Gilbert by walking away from him and not wishing to engage with him at all. Both of which helped to illustrate her feelings of humiliation. Some candidates made use of 'the Passerby' to highlight the status of the pair as 'unwanted' outsiders in London, both humiliating for them, but also helping them to come together in their joint dismay at the actions and attitudes of their new 'hosts'.

When Hortense finally admits to her degrading experience and her mistake with the cupboard, candidates seized on Gilbert's ability not only to find humour in the discussion of Hortense's mishap with the cupboard, but to encourage Hortense to laugh at herself, and to join with him in mocking the interviewers who allowed her to undergo this degradation.

More successful candidates offered ideas for Gilbert's teasing of Hortense to show his empathy for her; the way he looks at her and holds her eye-contact, his smiling face which finally earns a smile in return, and Hortense's gradual acceptance of his concern for her. Candidates often showed a subtlety in their understanding of how this event, and their reaction to it, marked a change in their relationship.

(b) Most candidates who attempted this option showed a clear understanding of Hortense's situation and her feelings at this point in the play.

However, only in better answers did candidates focus on the main thrust of the question which required them to identify the audience responses to Hortense that they wanted to achieve, through her performance.

In strong answers, candidates began by outlining their preferred audience responses to Hortense which included sympathy for her, due to the extreme 'culture-shock' that Hortense experiences and

because of her humiliation in the education office. Others focused on an audience's likely respect for Hortense's sense of her own identity and her determination to uphold her own high standards of living, even in the unpromising squalor and the discrimination that she finds in London.

Some candidates focused more on the comic aspects of her somewhat self-righteous character and suggested that an audience might be amused at Hortense's overly serious approach to life. Candidate also thought that an audience would begin to warm to Hortense as she begins to warm to Gilbert whom the audience have come to like.

In strong answers, these intended audience responses became the focus for careful attention to the performer's communication of Hortense's character and her situation, through detailed suggestions for her facial and physical expression as well as for the delivery of individual 'key' lines of text.

Style, Genre, Content

This question gave rise to many prepared answers which focused on the time period, the Windrush generation and the prejudice which existed. Only more successful candidates integrated these into their respective answers and so illustrated their relevance.

Some candidates also mentioned the generally comic tone of the extract and others wrote quite well about the play's unusual mix of theatrical styles.

Section B

Question 6

Oedipus Rex

(a) There were three specific requirements in this question: candidates had to refer to one or more design element(s), they had to state their intended effects, and they had to apply the chosen elements to achieve these effects in reference to two separate sections of the play.

Some candidates did not meet these specific demands. While one or more design element was generally discussed, candidates seldom identified their intended effects and did not always reference two separate sections of the play.

The most frequently chosen design elements were costume and lighting, but examiners also saw answers that involved set, sound and make-up.

Where candidates identified their intended effects, these were most frequently cited as, for example, creating tension, creating a sense of mystery, creating horror when Jocasta's suicide is discovered and when Oedipus appears with bloody eye-sockets. Some candidates mentioned an intention to highlight the power of the gods over mortals.

Many candidates did not identify a potential effect, the absence of which, rendered any design ideas that they did put forward ineffective.

Costume ideas often showed a lack of understanding of the Greek context. Many references to togas, for example, illustrated only a slight grasp of the play's setting.

With one or two exceptions, lighting suggestions were restricted to the use of spotlights and coloured gels, suggesting a limited technical vocabulary and possibly limited technical experience.

(b) The focus of this performer's question was on highlighting Creon's strength of character.

In several, less successful responses, candidates simply wrote a 'character study' type answer on Creon paying little regard to how his role would be performed.

In more successful answers, candidates integrated their knowledge of the character with their suggestions about how best to enact the role to emphasise Creon's strength of character.

Where candidates dealt with Creon's strength of character they normally referred to his confidence in the Oracle's message that Thebes may be 'cleansed', to Creon's resilience in rebutting Oedipus' accusations of treachery and in his fairness and kindness to Oedipus at the end of the play, when the balance of power has shifted in his favour.

Strong answers referred in detail to two clear sections of the play and they used references to the delivery of the text as well as to Creon's physical and facial expression, to support an interpretation of Creon's strength.

Style, Genre, Content

Many candidates made some comments about Thebes as a City State and about ancient Greece, generally. Grecian costume was occasionally accurately identified, and the polytheistic belief system was referenced in some answers. Only in stronger answers was this information integrated into their answers. More successful candidates commented on some technical aspects of Greek tragedy and how this might be displayed on stage.

Often, marks for the understanding of style were derived from sensitive performance detail that reflected the nature of the tragic form, and/or the delivery style most appropriate to the play.

Top level candidates were those who demonstrated a confident use of appropriate terminology associated with the classical Greek stage and always integrated their knowledge of SGC into the body of their answers, rather than offering it as a separate section of knowledge at the start or finish of the answer.

Question 7

The Government Inspector

This was a minority choice.

Candidates should be studying a translation of Gogol's play and not a 'free adaptation' of the play.

(a) This was answered by a minority of candidates who chose this text. While all candidates acknowledged that the Judge was corrupt, very few attempted to translate this knowledge into performance ideas. Some less successful answers were from candidates who produced responses which were essentially literary 'character studies' of the Judge and did little more than identify various points in the play which illustrated his corrupt nature.

(b) Although more candidates answered on this option, there were still a relatively few responses to the questions on this text.

While there were a very few memorable, highly inventive and comical responses to the question, these were outweighed by short responses that contained very limited ideas for comedy.

The comedy suggestions offered were most frequently not linked to the delivery of the text – which is where the majority of comedy is found in comic texts – but depended on fairly hackneyed physical comedy tropes such as Khlestakov 'falling over' or unsubtle actions such as Anna and Marya 'hitting each other'.

As with all answers on this paper, the best offer precise detail about what the 'audience' will see and hear, when watching a candidate's imagined 'rendition' of a section of text. The more detail that is included in the answer, the more successful that answer is likely to be.

Even 'falling over' and/or 'hitting each other' could be made comical by a candidate when the relevant lines that identify when these 'actions' occur is included, and its delivery explained. When Anna and Marya are described as 'hitting each', for example, some comedy was created by an inventive candidate who specified the 'weapon of choice' as velvet cushions, seized from the chaise longue, which, as the performers bashed away at one another, began to split, causing feathers from the cushions to fill the air and get lodged into the hair and on the costumes of the pair concerned, as they became increasingly violent with one another. The 'fray' ended with the delivery of Anna's final line, which was spat out, along with a mouthful of feathers.

Thus, a simple trope was transformed into a genuinely comical moment with a little practical detail.

Style, Genre, Content

There was some evidence of the social context of the play in candidates' answers and some reference to the political corruption which Gogol was intent on exposing within his contemporary society.

Most candidates made reference to the 'play' comic style and a few to the need for creating amusing caricatures.

Question 8

The Cherry Orchard

(a) This was not a very popular question. Where it was attempted, candidates sometimes misinterpreted the requirements of the question which are stated as highlighting 'the heartache experienced by different characters due to disappointment in love'.

A significant number of the small cohort who attempted this option wrote at length about Madame Ranyevskaya. Unfortunately, rather than highlighting her disappointment in love, caused by her mistreatment by her former husband and her current unsatisfactory 'lover' in Paris, candidates wrote about her heartache caused by the death of her son, in the first instance and by the loss of the 'Cherry Orchard' in the second. These are not 'disappointments in love' and could not be credited.

Where candidates made more appropriate choices they wrote about, for example, Yepikhodov's love for Dunyasha which is not returned, Dunyasha's heartache when Yasha rejects her advances in Act 2 and dismisses her completely in Act 4 or Varya's disappointment in Lopakhin's failure to propose to her in Act Four.

Even where candidates wrote about two or more of these characters, in some cases there was simply a summary of the experience of relationship.

(b) This question was the more popular option and was generally much more successfully handled. Candidates produced some developed, detailed and interesting responses.

Most candidates displayed an understanding of Lopakhin and his role in the play. The question asked for candidates' interpretation of Lopakhin, and this was often a discriminating factor between candidates where some actually did put forward a clear quite detailed interpretation of Lopakhin's character, while others merely relayed what he said and/or how he acted and left it up to the reader to infer an interpretation from this.

More successful candidates referred to Lopakhin's family history in terms of how it had shaped the person he became. In stronger answers, candidates made comparisons between how Lopakhin behaves at the beginning of the play and contrasted it with his behaviour after he has bought the Cherry Orchard, where nearly all candidates focused on how would show his joy and delight at eventually owning the Cherry Orchard.

Some evident misunderstandings were seen where Lopakhin was believed to be trying to sell the orchard or where he was presented as being 'stuck up'.

Style, Genre, Content

There were numerous comments about the feudal situation that existed in Russia prior to the events of the play. Many candidates referred to 'the winds of change' that were heralding in a new age and a shake-up of the class system.

More successful candidates integrated these details into their answers rather than presenting them as a free-standing paragraph.

Question 9

Blood Wedding

(a) Nearly all candidates were able to discuss the role of the Bride and most focused on the response of the audience to her words and actions at various points in the play.

Most candidates appeared to believe that the audience will feel some sympathy or pity for the Bride as she contemplates an unhappy future life with a man that she appears to respect but cannot love. However, they did not always offer practical performance ideas calculated to achieve that sympathy as their interpretation of the Bride was often an aggressive one.

Other candidates felt that, far from sympathising with the Bride's plight, an audience should feel anger or disappointment at her betrayal of the Bridegroom.

If candidates reached the end of the play in their responses, most believed that an audience would admire the Bride for the way she presents herself to Bridegroom's Mother at the end of the play.

Once audience responses had been identified, in better answers, candidates had the performance tools to create a character capable of inspiring the given, intended audience response(s).

(b) This question was often well answered. Most candidates focused on the Moon and the Beggar Woman as their surreal characters. A few nominated 'real' characters such as Mother or Bridegroom and made some valid comments about their appearance, their costumes and make-up, their interactions with one another and their delivery style but some candidates failed to discuss any specific 'real' characters at all.

In terms of design elements chosen, most candidates focused on lighting, costume and makeup. As always, the most successful candidates produced responses which were detailed and inventive.

There was some excellent work seen on the presentation of the Moon. In particular, there was a focus on the colours white, silver and blue in the Moon's costume and make up, and in the lighting which s/he seems to emit. The Beggar Woman also offered opportunities to inventive costume and make-up designers.

Here, there was a focus on dark colours and multilayered garments to convey the idea of death.

More than one candidate wrote about the 'Voices' as if they were surreal beings.

In the answers of some of the more successful candidates, there was some specific reference to the use of music which was appropriate to one or other of the sets of characters.

Style, Genre, Content

Many candidates wrote paragraphs about Lorca's personal life which were not helpful or relevant to the answers.

Others made more relevant comments on Spanish culture and religious beliefs.

Some candidates included rather too much material relating to the origin of the play – the newspaper report of the elopement of a bride with another man at her wedding. While it is valid to allude to this source, some candidates discussed it at length and at the expense of making other cultural links.

Question 10

Boom

This play is a minority choice and there were not very many responses seen to either question.

(a) Of the answers seen on this question, none offered more than a passing reference to the dramatic effects that were intended in a performance of the Corpse. Effects ranged from shock at his first appearance to a sense of closure at the end of the play, when Corpse remembers his wife and family.

A couple of candidates wanted the audience to find the Corpse amusing in his interactions with Jeremiah, while others thought that the audience should be unsettled by the Corpse, whose presence signifies the reality of the programme to disturb graves in order to make way for more buildings.

(b) This question attracted a slightly higher number of responses but still too few to draw general conclusions from. Young Mother and Young Father were presented as an attractive couple with genuine love for one another. Young Mother's resentment of Young Father's frequent business trips was noted.

Most candidates included evidence from the wider play to support their ideas for the couples' mutual feelings.

Mother's refusal to believe that her husband is now a corpse in Act 2, Scene 14 was offered as evidence of the strength of her feelings towards Young Father when she was 'Young Mother'.

Corpse's confession of his need to return 'To her' was similarly used as a useful reference point for revealing the tender feelings that the couple once had for one another.

Style, Genre, Content

The majority of references to SGC, in relation to this play, referred to the policy of 'En bloc sales' in Singapore. In the case of *Boom*, Tay explores the pressure put on individual flat owners to sell their homes 'en bloc' to agencies or to private property developers.

The introduction of a fifteen year rule for 'tenancy' of land used as a crematorium is the controversial issue at the heart of the play that most candidates alluded to.

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Many candidates did not respond to the requirement to make pertinent reference to the style, genre and/or context of their chosen text; others incorporated 'blocks' of pre-prepared SGC information which had not be tailored to match the demands of the question or of the extract set, in **Section A**, so that this aspect of their answer was often largely irrelevant.

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Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

As You Like it

(a) This question was chosen by a few candidates and produced some good responses. Unfortunately, some of the candidates who attempted this question did not notice that the given perspective is that of a designer. These candidates assumed a directorial perspective. Consequently, their answers contained inadequate focus on design.

Some other candidates had also read the question incorrectly and they wrote about Duke Frederick's character rather than 'the court of Duke Frederick' which is the question focus.

In the well-focused answers, intended audience impressions included design ideas that reflected the nature of Duke Frederick's malevolent character. Some suggested that, in contrast to Duke Senior's pastoral idyll of a 'court', based in the heart of the Forest of Arden, Frederick's court would likely offer a sterile or regimented environment.

In a few answers, candidates had adopted a transposed historical design concept, setting the action within a court festooned with banners and emblems that suggested the Third Reich. Within this concept, Frederick and his henchmen were costumed in military uniforms reminiscent of those of leaders of Fascist states.

Although not many in number, candidates who chose this option wrote mainly about set and costumes.

(b) This was a popular question.

In general, candidates were aware of the background to the extract, although, in less focused answers, candidates introduced it at unnecessary length.

Most candidates adopted the role of the director in their answers and did not simply narrate the events – an approach taken in weaker responses.

Many candidates commented on the attractive, youthful and amiable physical appearance of both Rosalind and Orlando, with some suggested physical similarities between them. For example, some imagined each of them to have fair curly hair, rosy cheeks and 'twinkling' eyes – in stark contrast to the brooding Saturnine looks of Duke Frederick and his attendants.

Many commented on Rosalind's immediate reaction to Orlando's entrance; her sympathy for his youth and her admiration of his bravery in facing the more intimidating Charles.

Others wrote about the ease in which the pair engage in conversation and compared Orlando's respectful address to Rosalind with her more 'gushing' responses. Most recognised the gentleness of their exchanges with one another.

Some focused on Rosalind's encouragement of Orlando as he wrestles with Charles, her cheering and her need for emotional support from Celia.

Some candidates, perhaps thinking of the Restoration period rather than the Renaissance, introduced the idea of Rosalind holding a fan and using 'the language of the fan' to signal her interest in this well-formed youth. Or they adopted a Japanese approach with Rosalind peeking over the top of the fan in order to keep herself 'mysterious'.

Some successful responses were focused on subtle exchanges of eye contact and stolen glances between the pair with Rosalind frequently looking down when Orlando caught her eye. This was reinforced in some candidates' answers by referencing the stage direction 'they gaze upon each other'.

These candidates also focused on the initial conversation between Orlando and Rosalind and how they demonstrated an 'instant connection'. Some mentioned how Rosalind spoke reverently of her father's love of Sir Roland and how this affirmation was received by Orlando.

There was some sensitive handling of the moment where Rosalind bestows her own 'chain' necklace upon Orlando. Some presented this action as being quite impulsive and bold in Rosalind, others as a tentative, coy moment. Some spoke of the symbolic meaning of the chain and the fact that it 'yoked' together these two gentle souls. In fact, Rosalind's action of giving Orlando the chain and the manner in which he received it, was often the discriminator between the more sensitive candidates and those who adopted rather too 'modern' an approach to this 'sweet' moment where the two 'noble' characters exchanged, 'first looks and then hearts' – as one candidate put it.

Some candidates appeared unable to appreciate that 'courting conventions' are ever changeable and that – unless they had specified a contemporary setting – some of their suggestions for a 'laddish' Orlando and rather too 'flirtatious' Rosalind, somewhat grated with the formality of the Duke's court.

Although it was rare to see, some candidates picked up on the way in which Orlando and Rosalind both use the language of combat, 'overthrown' to express their sudden feelings of love, signalling their mutual attraction.

Whether or not they made mention of this, many candidates used the text well to illustrate their responses.

Style, Genre, Content

Those who referred to the comic action of the play or its pastoral genre were more successful than those who simply stated that it was written by William Shakespeare and performed at the Globe theatre.

Very few candidates commented on the etiquette of the period. Many noted that in Shakespeare's time, Rosalind would be played by a young boy and there were some candidates who developed this idea in relation to the comedy of the scene.

Question 2

The Rivals

This play attracted too few responses to allow for meaningful comment.

Question 3

A View from the Bridge

This was the most popular text. It should be noted, however, that while many candidates demonstrated that they knew the text well, there many instances where they did not answer the precise focus of the question selected.

(a) Most, but not all, candidates revealed awareness of the context of the extract. However, many did not focus on the wording of 'breakdown in the relationship between Eddie and his family' and they simply focused on Eddie.

It was in answer to this question that many candidates produced drawings of their chosen stage, for example, 'a thrust stage' or a 'proscenium arch' set-up, but it should be noted that less successful candidates spent excessive time describing the advantages of their chosen stage configuration and not enough time/space in considering how its use served their intentions in relation to the breakdown of Eddie's relationship with his family.

It was also in response to this question that many candidates quoted the stage directions, as a strategy for 'getting through' the extract, but only the more successful ones linked these directions purposefully to the demands of the question.

The prescribed extract starts with Beatrice's entrance, and nearly all candidates used this as their starting point. In more successful answers, candidates used the ensuing conversation between

Beatrice and Eddie to comment on how their marriage had broken down and that Beatrice was no longer accepting of her role as the dutiful and submissive wife.

Although these candidates were aware that, because of stage directions such as 'she goes to him, holds his face', Beatrice still wants Eddie to change his mind about attending the wedding, she knew that he would not.

In more successful answers, candidates produced some effective commentaries on how Eddie would react at this moment, recognising the shift in the relationship.

Although Catherine makes a brief yet very significant contribution to the sense of family breakdown in this extract, many candidates chose not to consider Catherine's performance here, and they moved quickly on to the end of the extract.

In more successful answers, candidates focused on the intensity of the conversation between Eddie and Catherine at this moment and then how they both reacted when there was 'A knock on the door'.

Some candidates linked this moment to the question and to Eddie's realisation of what he had done and the consequences which would ensue, in terms of his relationship with Beatrice as well as with Catherine.

Many focused on Catherine's 'shell-shocked' delivery of her line 'My God, what did you do?' and the way that Eddie received the implications of this question. At the end of the extract, candidates often focused purposefully on Marco and his reaction to what Eddie had done using the stage direction 'Marco spits in Eddie's face' as a hook for some inventive staging strategies to show the polarisation of this once close family, which linked their answers to the thrust of question in an effective way.

(b) Although this was a popular question many candidates did not focus on the 'mixed emotions' that Eddie experiences in the extract, nor on his feelings about the consequences of his actions. These candidates missed the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to follow the question brief.

Where candidates offered answers which, although focused on Eddie, simply traced his actions throughout the extract, they were unable to demonstrate that they understood how a performer actively seeks to communicate with an audience.

In the case of this question, many candidates did not address and therefore did not demonstrate Eddie's 'mixed emotions'; indeed, some candidates appeared only to understand a single emotion of Eddie's – his jealousy. This did not make for 'rounded' performance strategies.

In the best answers, candidates demonstrated an understanding of the consequences of Eddie's mixed emotions, including his initial horror at the news that Catherine will marry Rodolpho and his sense of helplessness as he realises that he is unable to change her mind. Many commented on Eddie's use of numerous rhetorical questions and how these were indicative of the various emotions which Eddie was experiencing.

In good answers, candidates noted Eddie's alarm when he hears about Lipari's relatives boarding upstairs. Some used the comment 'How do you know what enemies Lipari's got' to begin to trace Eddie's mixed emotions of guilt, panic and fear about what he has done; quickly followed by 'pious outrage' at Beatrice's well-founded suspicion that he has called 'Immigration'.

Some candidates discussed Eddie's guilt about his betrayal of the family and his sudden burst of desperation to save Marco and Rodolpho.

Eddie's final emotion was identified as shame, as he is insulted in front of his neighbours and family.

Although by no means restricted to answers to this question, Examiners reported seeing many candidates who, writing from the perspective of a performer or of a director – appeared to believe that an actor can 'blush' or 'redden with anger', at will. This is not an accepted theatrical fact. Very few actors are able to 'blush' on demand. And while 'method' actors may be able to weep

effectively on stage, few can manage the 'single teardrop' that falls in the answers of many an optimistic would-be actor/director.

Style, Genre, Content

With regard to both questions, most candidates revealed secure awareness of the context of the play. There were frequently detailed paragraphs about the influx of Italian Immigrants to the USA and especially in relation to Brooklyn. Others focused on how the Italian immigrant population valued family and how they continued to honour their own culture and traditions, when living in the USA. In most cases, this information was not integrated into candidates' responses but was included as a separate paragraph either at the beginning or end of their answers.

Question 4

The Beatification of Area Boy

This play attracted too few responses to allow for meaningful comment.

Question 5

Small Island

(a) Most candidates were aware of the context of the extract, and they generally selected a naturalistic style of setting for Gilbert's room in Queenie's house in London, after the 'blitz'.

Few candidates considered the possibility of this setting for Gilbert's room as being part of a composite, less realistic, style of theatre design.

In successful answers, candidates focused initially on the fact that Gilbert's 'room' was one of several others in a house, not especially converted for 'communal living', and located in post-war London.

Almost all candidates who attempted this question recognised that Gilbert's living 'quarters' would be fairly shabby in nature.

The detailed stage directions at the beginning of the extract provided a good indication of what the room was like, and nearly all candidates incorporated elements of these into their set designs.

In more successful answers, candidates had developed the outline provided by the playwright and offered some details of their own.

Only in more successful answers were the designs accompanied by clear justification of the designs offered.

Most candidates offered suggestions for the staging form chosen and the positioning of Gilbert's room on stage. Those who had watched the streamed production, from the National Theatre, invariably replicated that as far as they could remember it. Some candidates acknowledged this production as a source of their inspiration while others did not.

The best answers referenced the period and the location of the setting. These answers also found a way to suggest 'the grey, starkly realistic world' that Edmunson refers to as a heading to Act Two, Scene One.

Most candidates suggested an appropriate design to suggest cramped/compact living quarters, that were just about adequate for Gilbert as a single man.

In good answers there were some details offered about the fairly shabby, ill-matched pieces of furniture that were likely to have been moved into the room for the 'convenience' of the tenant.

Some described various pieces of set dressing, for example worn rugs, tatty bedspread, cupboards with poorly attached doors or drawers.

Better answers contained clear descriptions of how a designer might use texture and colour to suggest Gilbert's cramped way of living.

Some candidates went rather too far in their ideas for what a 'shabby' room might look like, and they indicated more 'squalor' than shabbiness. Rats, mice and fleas roamed freely about the room with few practical ideas put forward of how these pests might be represented in the theatre.

Given Queenie's nature, it seemed unlikely that she would provide her paying guests accommodation 'unfit for human habitation' as appeared in the imaginations of some candidates.

(b) This was the more popular of the questions.

Although nearly all candidates were able to comment on Hortense's arrival and her shocked reactions to what she encountered in this scene, many candidates focused on her reaction to Gilbert himself, and, by extension to both Kenneth and Queenie – rather than considering Gilbert's 'way of life'.

This led many candidates to focus on parts of the extract that dealt with Gilbert's excuses for why he did not meet her when he said that he would, for example, and to spend rather too long on her discomfiture during her encounter with Queenie whom she found patronising and with Kenneth whom she found – as indeed he is – both rude and presumptuous.

In more focused responses, nearly all candidates focused on Hortense's arrival and her comments such as 'Show me the rest', 'I beg your pardon?' and 'Just this?' which facilitated many effective responses in terms of tone of voice, movement on the stage and facial expressions to indicate Hortense's disapproval.

Often, candidates linked Hortense's appraisal of Gilbert's living conditions with their 'SGC' comments and/or they demonstrated their understanding of the context by exploring the way in which Hortense presented herself – in white coat/dress and accessories – that matched her illusions about the 'Motherland' but not its reality.

Most candidates mentioned how Hortense was ready to judge and disapprove of Gilbert's living conditions when Hortense in the stage directions 'runs a finger of her white glove along the windowpane and it turns black'.

Unfortunately, a significant number of candidates ignored the rubric of the question which determines which part of the nominated scene should be discussed. This resulted in many candidates writing about the section beyond the 'endpoint' of the extract, after Hortense has taken off her coat and the stage direction reads: '*HORTENSE is still taking in the room*'.

Many candidates discussed the section where Hortense comments on the single bed, where Gilbert produces a full 'potty' and where Hortense accuses Gilbert of living 'like an animal'. While these moments do indeed contribute to showing an audience Hortense's disapproval of Gilbert's way of life, they are outside of the prescribed section and could not be credited.

There was also evidence of some misunderstanding of Hortense's precise status when she lived in Jamaica with Mr Philip and Miss Ma.

Style, Genre, Content

For both of the questions, most candidates commented on the Windrush generation, the prejudice which many faced when they came to London and how England did not live up to their expectations. Only more successful candidates integrated these into their respective answers and so illustrated their relevance to the answers they were giving.

Some candidates also mentioned the comic possibilities of the extract.

Section B

Question 6

Oedipus Rex

(a) This was the more popular of the two questions but was only attempted by relatively few candidates.

Some candidates offered insufficient textual support where selected detail is needed to 'strongly' or 'effectively' support the answers to the question set.

It is also worth noting that, although some candidates had included references from the play, these were not always appropriate to revealing different aspects of Oedipus' character.

In the middle range of responses, candidates tended to focus on Oedipus's character in a very general manner. Although they, perhaps, selected two or more moments from the play to explore, there was little focus on the different aspects of Oedipus' character being analysed or communicated.

Only more successful candidates focused on Oedipus' initial pride, his determination to root out the truth, his arrogance and personal animus towards Creon, his stubborn refusal to heed the advice of Tiresias and his humility, in the closing sections, as he accepts his guilt.

In several, less successful responses, candidates simply wrote a 'character study' type answer on Oedipus, paying little regard to how his role would be performed.

In more successful answers, however, candidates integrated their knowledge of the character with their suggestions about how best to enact the role, to demonstrate the variety of aspects of Oedipus' character which makes the role so engaging for an audience, as well as challenging, but rewarding, for an actor to perform.

(b) The focus of this director's question was to highlight the changing attitudes of the Chorus towards Oedipus.

In some ways, the question was dependent upon candidates recognising that the Chorus changes their attitudes when Oedipus displayed different aspects of his character, and although answers to this question were few in number, they often revealed an understanding of Oedipus as answers to **Question 6a**.

Strong answers referred in detail to two or to more than two clear sections of the play and they used references to the delivery of the text as well as to the movements of the Chorus to highlight their changing attitudes.

In very good answers, candidates considered the concern of the Chorus that Oedipus honours the gods and their wishes, as well as their gratitude towards him for 'saving' their city.

Some candidates focused more on the ways in which Oedipus's words and actions turned the Chorus against him, as when he violently curses the murderer of Laius, and treats Tiresias disrespectfully.

The sympathy of the Chorus for Oedipus was often considered as being won back, latterly, in the wake of Jocasta's suicide, and Oedipus' reaction to loss of his wife/mother, in particular.

Candidates who offered clear practical performance ideas for the Chorus to communicate these attitudes to the audience fared better than those who recognised their changing attitudes but had few directorial strategies for communicating these to an audience, using vocal, facial and physical expression,

Style, Genre, Content

Many candidates made some comments about Thebes as a City State and about ancient Greece, generally. Grecian costume was occasionally accurately identified, and the polytheistic belief system was referenced in some answers. Only in stronger answers was this information integrated into their answers. More successful

candidates commented on some technical aspects of Greek tragedy – especially in relation to the Chorus in the case of **Question 6b** – and how this might be displayed on stage.

Often, marks for the understanding of style were derived from sensitive performance detail that reflected the nature of the tragic form, and/or the delivery style most appropriate to the play.

Top level candidates were those who demonstrated a confident use of appropriate terminology associated with the classical Greek stage and always integrated their knowledge of SGC into the body of their answers, rather than offering it as a ‘separate slice’ of knowledge at the start or finish of the answer.

Question 7

The Government Inspector

This was a minority choice.

Candidates should be studying a translation of Gogol's play and not a 'free adaptation' of the play.

- (a) This question attracted too few responses to allow for meaningful comment.
- (b) Although more candidates answered on this option, there were still a relatively few responses to this text.

While there were a couple of fairly inventive and comical responses to the question, these were outweighed by short responses that contained very limited ideas for comedy, and fairly unimaginative interpretations of Anna.

The comedy suggestions offered were most frequently not linked to the delivery of the text – which is where the majority of comedy is found in comic texts – but depended on fairly hackneyed physical comedy tropes such as Anna, rushing on stage and immediately ‘falling over’. Or candidates suggested unsubtle generalised ‘comic’ actions, such as Anna and Marya ‘hitting each other’.

As with all answers on this paper, the best offer precise detail about what the ‘audience’ will see and hear, when watching a candidate’s imagined ‘rendition’ of a section of text. The more detail that is included in the answer, the more successful that answer is likely to be.

Even ‘falling over’ and/or ‘hitting each other’ could be made comical by an inventive candidate when the relevant lines that identify when precisely these ‘actions’ occur is included, and its delivery explained. When Anna and Marya were described as ‘hitting each’, for example, some comedy was created where the candidate quoted the lines that accompanied the comic ‘spat’ and gave precise suggestions for where they hit each other (arms, legs, tummy, bottom) and also identified a comical ‘weapon of choice’ whether that was hands thumping or legs/feet kicking or grabbed items such as cushions, or dusters or fans with which to inflict (comical) suffering on each other.

Style, Genre, Content

There was some evidence of knowledge of the social context of the play in candidate’s answers and some reference to the political corruption which Gogol was intent on exposing within his contemporary society.

Most candidates made reference to the play’ comic style and a few to the need for creating amusing caricatures for the purpose of highlighting Gogol’s critical intentions.

Question 8

The Cherry Orchard

This play attracted few responses this series.

- (a) No candidate responses were seen to this design question.

(b) This question was answered by a handful of candidates. Among them, few went further than offering a character sketch of the role of Gayev, and in the answers of these few, there was limited attention to nominating intended audience responses to Gayev, although some reference to Gayev's comic function was seen in a couple of answers.

Gayev's sentimentality was noted, as demonstrated in his speech addressed to the bookcase, as was his obsession with billiards. One or two candidates mentioned Gayev's intolerance of the lower classes, especially of Lopakhin; while another found his dependence upon the largely decrepit, Firs, to be amusing.

Most candidates mentioned Gayev's affection for his sister and his nieces, as a redeeming feature of a man who was otherwise self-engrossed and something of a fantasist, when it came to the sale of the orchard,

Question 9

Blood Wedding

(a) Most candidates revealed sound understanding of the context of the relationship between the Bride and Leonardo and there was generally a secure focus on their feelings for one another, in the majority of answers.

Leonardo's 'visit' to the Bride, in Act Two, Scene One, was selected by all candidates who attempted this question, as it reveals their passionate past and the Bride's possibly enforced rejection of Leonardo because of his poverty.

In less successful answers, candidates sometimes focused initially on the conversation between the Bride and Servant but made inadequate connection between their conversation and the arrival of Leonardo to make it a meaningful contribution to the focus of the question.

Some candidates did refer to the Bride's threatening utterance of 'Leave me alone' and to the reference to the 'Dark clouds' just before Leonardo arrived, to illustrate her feelings of fear and apprehension which are inextricably entwined with her thoughts about Leonardo.

In the most successful answers, candidates were able to focus on the tone of voice and the body language of the Bride, in particular, to her tension, its intensity and its decrease in the presence of the man she truly loves. This led to some effective answers on this section of the play.

Some candidates were distracted into narrating the 'history' of the two characters – as far as Lorca makes it clear – and why Leonardo had initially been rejected.

There was evidence of some sensitivity where candidates focused on how Leonardo would be directed to perform lines such as 'Something smaller would suit her better' and 'That's the thorn', revealing his deep knowledge and understanding of this woman that the bridegroom is fated never to acquire.

Most candidates moved on to exploring the section in Act Three, Scene One where Leonardo and the Bride declare their undying love for one another in the relative freedom offered by the forest. In better answers, candidates demonstrated their understanding of the lovers' feelings at this point in the play where their mutual fascination and obsession with each other is presented as a complicated blend of love, resentment and despair.

In their treatment of this scene, few candidates focused solely on the conversation between Bride and Leonardo, most candidates paid as careful attention to their body language, facial expressions and movements on the stage as they did to the delivery of text. Most made some reference to this sequence as being 'dance-like' with references both to Flamenco and to Lorca's interest in 'Duende'.

Some candidates included directorial suggestions for lighting and sound to underscore the shifting emotions that Bride and Leonardo portray through their bodies and their speech.

(b) This was also a popular question which allowed candidates to produce some effective answers in terms of the performance of the Bridegroom.

Nearly all candidates began by commenting on Act One, Scene One and the half serious and half playful exchanges between Bridegroom and his mother.

In more successful answers, candidates focused on Bridegroom's slightly strained relationship with his mother as expressed through his frequently changing tones of voice and facial expressions. These candidates were able to convey both Bridegroom's frustration with his mother, whose constant reference the death of her husband and son and to the feud with the Felix family he finds wearing, and his tender feelings for her and understanding of her suffering.

A significant number of candidates interpreted Bridegroom's actions, generally, as being respectful and they linked this to the social conditions of the time and setting of the play.

Other interpretations of the Bridegroom' character included his development in the course of the play. They mentioned his awkwardness when he talks to the Bride at the betrothal, and explored ways of communicating his sincerity and his reserve. They discussed his behaviour after the wedding ceremony, where he reveals not only kindness and affection for the Bride, but also a sense of longing for her, and slight petulance when she rejects his amorous advances.

Once the Bride has abandoned him and eloped with Leonardo, Bridegroom surprised many candidates by becoming an embodiment of the impulse for revenge, showing both determination and a lust for blood.

Style, Genre, Content

Many candidates wrote paragraphs about Lorca's personal life which were not relevant to their answers.

Others made more relevant comments on Spanish culture and religious beliefs.

Some candidates included too much material relating to the origin of the play – the newspaper report of the elopement of a bride with another man at her wedding. While it is valid to allude to this source, some candidates discussed it at length and at the expense of making other cultural links.

Question 10

Boon

- (a) This play is a minority choice and there were only a very few responses, and none seen in relation to **Question (a)**.
- (b) Of the few responses, there was some consensus over Boon's character, which was often defined in the first part of the answer, in relation to Boon's relationship with his mother. Despite Boon's evident frustration with his mother, candidates saw Boon's character as being a 'good son', with filial concern for his mother's well-being and future happiness.

Candidates recognised Boon's twin obsession with his own lifestyle and with (financial) self-improvement. Boon's role as an Estate agent, and the cynicism required for such a role, was also noted.

Some mentioned how Boon's resentment of his missing father dominates Boon's thinking in the latter half of the play where the abuse that he suffered at his father's hands is revealed.

In a couple of answers, candidates mentioned Boon's vulnerability, as shown during the 'visitation' of Young Father, which lead to a form of inner reconciliation for Boon, who they interpreted 'growing up' over the course of the play.

Style, Genre, Content

The majority of references to SGC, in relation to this play, referred to the policy of 'En bloc sales' in Singapore. In the case of *Boon*, Tay explores the pressure put on individual flat owners to sell their homes 'en bloc' to agencies or to private property developers.

The introduction of a fifteen-year rule for 'tenancy' of land used as a crematorium is the controversial issue at the heart of the play that most candidates alluded to. Some mentioned the irony of Boon's role in this as an Estate Agent.

DRAMA

Paper 9482/13
Open-Book Written Examination

Key messages

Candidates who appear to have had 'hands -on' experience of directing extracts from their chosen set texts, of performing different characters – even in a workshop setting – or of generating their own designs for the plays, clearly benefited from having had practical experiences to draw upon in their responses to the various 'practical' demands of the examination questions.

Most questions attracted answers reflecting a range of candidate achievement. The majority of candidates approached the tasks set, in their chosen question option, in a practical way, but there were some answers that betrayed a more literary approach to the study of their selected text.

General comments

Candidates should be reminded that, in **Section A**, material that does not relate specifically to the prescribed lines will not be credited.

In **Section B**, most candidates selected appropriate sections of the play to support their ideas and to meet the brief of the question; but this was not always the case.

Candidates who chose to respond to the design-based questions frequently included appropriately sized and labelled sketches which were pertinent to their chosen question, illustrated their ideas very clearly and were fully credit-worthy.

Many candidates did not respond to the requirement to make pertinent reference to the style, genre and/or context of their chosen text; others incorporated 'blocks' of pre-prepared SGC information which had not be tailored to match the demands of the question or of the extract set, in **Section A**, so that this aspect of their answer was often largely irrelevant.

The greatest barrier to candidates' success was misreading the question, answering as a performer when the subject of the question asked for direction or of ignoring the precise question focus and so missing out on the opportunity to attract credit for relevant material.

Questions in **Section A** always demand that candidates illustrate their answers with reference to 'particular moments' from the extract, while question in **Section B** specify the number of sections required to support candidates' discussion of the question task. Most, but not all, candidates followed the relevant guidance in this regard and those who did not rarely achieved their potential for success.

Candidates who used short but entirely appropriate quotations to support their practical ideas always fared better than those who did not. In **Section B**, where editions of the plays are not prescribed, candidates should be reminded not to use page or line numbers to identify moments from the text. Use of ellipses, in place of quoted text, should also be avoided, as so frequently the sense of the quotation is lost.

Candidates generally responded well to a range of question in this June series, where *As You Like It*, *A View from the Bridge* and *Small Island* were the more popular texts in **Section A** and *Oedipus Rex* and *Blood Wedding*, were the most frequently chosen texts in **Section B**.

Whatever perspective candidates were writing from, they need to be reminded that only through the use of carefully chosen textual support can they access the higher mark levels where the descriptors refer to the selected detail 'strongly' supporting the practical interpretation, in Level 5, and 'effectively' supporting the practical interpretation for Level 4. In some answers, candidates had offered no textual support whatsoever, thus inhibiting their potential to reach the higher levels.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

As You Like it

(a) This question was chosen by a few candidates and produced some good responses. Unfortunately, some of the candidates who attempted this question did not notice that the given perspective is that of a designer. These candidates assumed a directorial perspective. Consequently, their answers contained inadequate focus on design.

Some other candidates had also read the question incorrectly and they wrote about Duke Frederick's character rather than 'the court of Duke Frederick' which is the question focus.

In the well-focused answers, intended audience impressions included design ideas that reflected the nature of Duke Frederick's malevolent character. Some suggested that, in contrast to Duke Senior's pastoral idyll of a 'court', based in the heart of the Forest of Arden, Frederick's court would likely offer a sterile or regimented environment.

In a few answers, candidates had adopted a transposed historical design concept, setting the action within a court festooned with banners and emblems that suggested the Third Reich. Within this concept, Frederick and his henchmen were costumed in military uniforms reminiscent of those of leaders of Fascist states.

Although not many in number, candidates who chose this option wrote mainly about set and costumes.

(b) This was a popular question.

In general, candidates were aware of the background to the extract, although, in less focused answers, candidates introduced it at unnecessary length.

Most candidates adopted the role of the director in their answers and did not simply narrate the events – an approach taken in weaker responses.

Many candidates commented on the attractive, youthful and amiable physical appearance of both Rosalind and Orlando, with some suggested physical similarities between them. For example, some imagined each of them to have fair curly hair, rosy cheeks and 'twinkling' eyes – in stark contrast to the brooding Saturnine looks of Duke Frederick and his attendants.

Many commented on Rosalind's immediate reaction to Orlando's entrance; her sympathy for his youth and her admiration of his bravery in facing the more intimidating Charles.

Others wrote about the ease in which the pair engage in conversation and compared Orlando's respectful address to Rosalind with her more 'gushing' responses. Most recognised the gentleness of their exchanges with one another.

Some focused on Rosalind's encouragement of Orlando as he wrestles with Charles, her cheering and her need for emotional support from Celia.

Some candidates, perhaps thinking of the Restoration period rather than the Renaissance, introduced the idea of Rosalind holding a fan and using 'the language of the fan' to signal her interest in this well-formed youth. Or they adopted a Japanese approach with Rosalind peeking over the top of the fan in order to keep herself 'mysterious'.

Some successful responses were focused on subtle exchanges of eye contact and stolen glances between the pair with Rosalind frequently looking down when Orlando caught her eye. This was reinforced in some candidates' answers by referencing the stage direction 'they gaze upon each other'.

These candidates also focused on the initial conversation between Orlando and Rosalind and how they demonstrated an 'instant connection'. Some mentioned how Rosalind spoke reverently of her father's love of Sir Roland and how this affirmation was received by Orlando.

There was some sensitive handling of the moment where Rosalind bestows her own 'chain' necklace upon Orlando. Some presented this action as being quite impulsive and bold in Rosalind, others as a tentative, coy moment. Some spoke of the symbolic meaning of the chain and the fact that it 'yoked' together these two gentle souls. In fact, Rosalind's action of giving Orlando the chain and the manner in which he received it, was often the discriminator between the more sensitive candidates and those who adopted rather too 'modern' an approach to this 'sweet' moment where the two 'noble' characters exchanged, 'first looks and then hearts' – as one candidate put it.

Some candidates appeared unable to appreciate that 'courting conventions' are ever changeable and that – unless they had specified a contemporary setting – some of their suggestions for a 'laddish' Orlando and rather too 'flirtatious' Rosalind, somewhat grated with the formality of the Duke's court.

Although it was rare to see, some candidates picked up on the way in which Orlando and Rosalind both use the language of combat, 'overthrown' to express their sudden feelings of love, signalling their mutual attraction.

Whether or not they made mention of this, many candidates used the text well to illustrate their responses.

Style, Genre, Content

Those who referred to the comic action of the play or its pastoral genre were more successful than those who simply stated that it was written by William Shakespeare and performed at the Globe theatre.

Very few candidates commented on the etiquette of the period. Many noted that in Shakespeare's time, Rosalind would be played by a young boy and there were some candidates who developed this idea in relation to the comedy of the scene.

Question 2

The Rivals

This play attracted too few responses to allow for meaningful comment.

Question 3

A View from the Bridge

This was the most popular text. It should be noted, however, that while many candidates demonstrated that they knew the text well, there many instances where they did not answer the precise focus of the question selected.

(a) Most, but not all, candidates revealed awareness of the context of the extract. However, many did not focus on the wording of 'breakdown in the relationship between Eddie and his family' and they simply focused on Eddie.

It was in answer to this question that many candidates produced drawings of their chosen stage, for example, 'a thrust stage' or a 'proscenium arch' set-up, but it should be noted that less successful candidates spent excessive time describing the advantages of their chosen stage configuration and not enough time/space in considering how its use served their intentions in relation to the breakdown of Eddie's relationship with his family.

It was also in response to this question that many candidates quoted the stage directions, as a strategy for 'getting through' the extract, but only the more successful ones linked these directions purposefully to the demands of the question.

The prescribed extract starts with Beatrice's entrance, and nearly all candidates used this as their starting point. In more successful answers, candidates used the ensuing conversation between

Beatrice and Eddie to comment on how their marriage had broken down and that Beatrice was no longer accepting of her role as the dutiful and submissive wife.

Although these candidates were aware that, because of stage directions such as 'she goes to him, holds his face', Beatrice still wants Eddie to change his mind about attending the wedding, she knew that he would not.

In more successful answers, candidates produced some effective commentaries on how Eddie would react at this moment, recognising the shift in the relationship.

Although Catherine makes a brief yet very significant contribution to the sense of family breakdown in this extract, many candidates chose not to consider Catherine's performance here, and they moved quickly on to the end of the extract.

In more successful answers, candidates focused on the intensity of the conversation between Eddie and Catherine at this moment and then how they both reacted when there was 'A knock on the door'.

Some candidates linked this moment to the question and to Eddie's realisation of what he had done and the consequences which would ensue, in terms of his relationship with Beatrice as well as with Catherine.

Many focused on Catherine's 'shell-shocked' delivery of her line 'My God, what did you do?' and the way that Eddie received the implications of this question. At the end of the extract, candidates often focused purposefully on Marco and his reaction to what Eddie had done using the stage direction 'Marco spits in Eddie's face' as a hook for some inventive staging strategies to show the polarisation of this once close family, which linked their answers to the thrust of question in an effective way.

(b) Although this was a popular question many candidates did not focus on the 'mixed emotions' that Eddie experiences in the extract, nor on his feelings about the consequences of his actions. These candidates missed the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to follow the question brief.

Where candidates offered answers which, although focused on Eddie, simply traced his actions throughout the extract, they were unable to demonstrate that they understood how a performer actively seeks to communicate with an audience.

In the case of this question, many candidates did not address and therefore did not demonstrate Eddie's 'mixed emotions'; indeed, some candidates appeared only to understand a single emotion of Eddie's – his jealousy. This did not make for 'rounded' performance strategies.

In the best answers, candidates demonstrated an understanding of the consequences of Eddie's mixed emotions, including his initial horror at the news that Catherine will marry Rodolpho and his sense of helplessness as he realises that he is unable to change her mind. Many commented on Eddie's use of numerous rhetorical questions and how these were indicative of the various emotions which Eddie was experiencing.

In good answers, candidates noted Eddie's alarm when he hears about Lipari's relatives boarding upstairs. Some used the comment 'How do you know what enemies Lipari's got' to begin to trace Eddie's mixed emotions of guilt, panic and fear about what he has done; quickly followed by 'pious outrage' at Beatrice's well-founded suspicion that he has called 'Immigration'.

Some candidates discussed Eddie's guilt about his betrayal of the family and his sudden burst of desperation to save Marco and Rodolpho.

Eddie's final emotion was identified as shame, as he is insulted in front of his neighbours and family.

Although by no means restricted to answers to this question, Examiners reported seeing many candidates who, writing from the perspective of a performer or of a director – appeared to believe that an actor can 'blush' or 'redden with anger', at will. This is not an accepted theatrical fact. Very few actors are able to 'blush' on demand. And while 'method' actors may be able to weep

effectively on stage, few can manage the 'single teardrop' that falls in the answers of many an optimistic would-be actor/director.

Style, Genre, Content

With regard to both questions, most candidates revealed secure awareness of the context of the play. There were frequently detailed paragraphs about the influx of Italian Immigrants to the USA and especially in relation to Brooklyn. Others focused on how the Italian immigrant population valued family and how they continued to honour their own culture and traditions, when living in the USA. In most cases, this information was not integrated into candidates' responses but was included as a separate paragraph either at the beginning or end of their answers.

Question 4

The Beatification of Area Boy

This play attracted too few responses to allow for meaningful comment.

Question 5

Small Island

(a) Most candidates were aware of the context of the extract, and they generally selected a naturalistic style of setting for Gilbert's room in Queenie's house in London, after the 'blitz'.

Few candidates considered the possibility of this setting for Gilbert's room as being part of a composite, less realistic, style of theatre design.

In successful answers, candidates focused initially on the fact that Gilbert's 'room' was one of several others in a house, not especially converted for 'communal living', and located in post-war London.

Almost all candidates who attempted this question recognised that Gilbert's living 'quarters' would be fairly shabby in nature.

The detailed stage directions at the beginning of the extract provided a good indication of what the room was like, and nearly all candidates incorporated elements of these into their set designs.

In more successful answers, candidates had developed the outline provided by the playwright and offered some details of their own.

Only in more successful answers were the designs accompanied by clear justification of the designs offered.

Most candidates offered suggestions for the staging form chosen and the positioning of Gilbert's room on stage. Those who had watched the streamed production, from the National Theatre, invariably replicated that as far as they could remember it. Some candidates acknowledged this production as a source of their inspiration while others did not.

The best answers referenced the period and the location of the setting. These answers also found a way to suggest 'the grey, starkly realistic world' that Edmunson refers to as a heading to Act Two, Scene One.

Most candidates suggested an appropriate design to suggest cramped/compact living quarters, that were just about adequate for Gilbert as a single man.

In good answers there were some details offered about the fairly shabby, ill-matched pieces of furniture that were likely to have been moved into the room for the 'convenience' of the tenant.

Some described various pieces of set dressing, for example worn rugs, tatty bedspread, cupboards with poorly attached doors or drawers.

Better answers contained clear descriptions of how a designer might use texture and colour to suggest Gilbert's cramped way of living.

Some candidates went rather too far in their ideas for what a 'shabby' room might look like, and they indicated more 'squalor' than shabbiness. Rats, mice and fleas roamed freely about the room with few practical ideas put forward of how these pests might be represented in the theatre.

Given Queenie's nature, it seemed unlikely that she would provide her paying guests accommodation 'unfit for human habitation' as appeared in the imaginations of some candidates.

(b) This was the more popular of the questions.

Although nearly all candidates were able to comment on Hortense's arrival and her shocked reactions to what she encountered in this scene, many candidates focused on her reaction to Gilbert himself, and, by extension to both Kenneth and Queenie – rather than considering Gilbert's 'way of life'.

This led many candidates to focus on parts of the extract that dealt with Gilbert's excuses for why he did not meet her when he said that he would, for example, and to spend rather too long on her discomfiture during her encounter with Queenie whom she found patronising and with Kenneth whom she found – as indeed he is – both rude and presumptuous.

In more focused responses, nearly all candidates focused on Hortense's arrival and her comments such as 'Show me the rest', 'I beg your pardon?' and 'Just this?' which facilitated many effective responses in terms of tone of voice, movement on the stage and facial expressions to indicate Hortense's disapproval.

Often, candidates linked Hortense's appraisal of Gilbert's living conditions with their 'SGC' comments and/or they demonstrated their understanding of the context by exploring the way in which Hortense presented herself – in white coat/dress and accessories – that matched her illusions about the 'Motherland' but not its reality.

Most candidates mentioned how Hortense was ready to judge and disapprove of Gilbert's living conditions when Hortense in the stage directions 'runs a finger of her white glove along the windowpane and it turns black'.

Unfortunately, a significant number of candidates ignored the rubric of the question which determines which part of the nominated scene should be discussed. This resulted in many candidates writing about the section beyond the 'endpoint' of the extract, after Hortense has taken off her coat and the stage direction reads: '*HORTENSE is still taking in the room*'.

Many candidates discussed the section where Hortense comments on the single bed, where Gilbert produces a full 'potty' and where Hortense accuses Gilbert of living 'like an animal'. While these moments do indeed contribute to showing an audience Hortense's disapproval of Gilbert's way of life, they are outside of the prescribed section and could not be credited.

There was also evidence of some misunderstanding of Hortense's precise status when she lived in Jamaica with Mr Philip and Miss Ma.

Style, Genre, Content

For both of the questions, most candidates commented on the Windrush generation, the prejudice which many faced when they came to London and how England did not live up to their expectations. Only more successful candidates integrated these into their respective answers and so illustrated their relevance to the answers they were giving.

Some candidates also mentioned the comic possibilities of the extract.

Section B

Question 6

Oedipus Rex

(a) This was the more popular of the two questions but was only attempted by relatively few candidates.

Some candidates offered insufficient textual support where selected detail is needed to 'strongly' or 'effectively' support the answers to the question set.

It is also worth noting that, although some candidates had included references from the play, these were not always appropriate to revealing different aspects of Oedipus' character.

In the middle range of responses, candidates tended to focus on Oedipus's character in a very general manner. Although they, perhaps, selected two or more moments from the play to explore, there was little focus on the different aspects of Oedipus' character being analysed or communicated.

Only more successful candidates focused on Oedipus' initial pride, his determination to root out the truth, his arrogance and personal animus towards Creon, his stubborn refusal to heed the advice of Tiresias and his humility, in the closing sections, as he accepts his guilt.

In several, less successful responses, candidates simply wrote a 'character study' type answer on Oedipus, paying little regard to how his role would be performed.

In more successful answers, however, candidates integrated their knowledge of the character with their suggestions about how best to enact the role, to demonstrate the variety of aspects of Oedipus' character which makes the role so engaging for an audience, as well as challenging, but rewarding, for an actor to perform.

(b) The focus of this director's question was to highlight the changing attitudes of the Chorus towards Oedipus.

In some ways, the question was dependent upon candidates recognising that the Chorus changes their attitudes when Oedipus displayed different aspects of his character, and although answers to this question were few in number, they often revealed an understanding of Oedipus as answers to **Question 6a**.

Strong answers referred in detail to two or to more than two clear sections of the play and they used references to the delivery of the text as well as to the movements of the Chorus to highlight their changing attitudes.

In very good answers, candidates considered the concern of the Chorus that Oedipus honours the gods and their wishes, as well as their gratitude towards him for 'saving' their city.

Some candidates focused more on the ways in which Oedipus's words and actions turned the Chorus against him, as when he violently curses the murderer of Laius, and treats Tiresias disrespectfully.

The sympathy of the Chorus for Oedipus was often considered as being won back, latterly, in the wake of Jocasta's suicide, and Oedipus' reaction to loss of his wife/mother, in particular.

Candidates who offered clear practical performance ideas for the Chorus to communicate these attitudes to the audience fared better than those who recognised their changing attitudes but had few directorial strategies for communicating these to an audience, using vocal, facial and physical expression,

Style, Genre, Content

Many candidates made some comments about Thebes as a City State and about ancient Greece, generally. Grecian costume was occasionally accurately identified, and the polytheistic belief system was referenced in some answers. Only in stronger answers was this information integrated into their answers. More successful

candidates commented on some technical aspects of Greek tragedy – especially in relation to the Chorus in the case of **Question 6b** – and how this might be displayed on stage.

Often, marks for the understanding of style were derived from sensitive performance detail that reflected the nature of the tragic form, and/or the delivery style most appropriate to the play.

Top level candidates were those who demonstrated a confident use of appropriate terminology associated with the classical Greek stage and always integrated their knowledge of SGC into the body of their answers, rather than offering it as a ‘separate slice’ of knowledge at the start or finish of the answer.

Question 7

The Government Inspector

This was a minority choice.

Candidates should be studying a translation of Gogol's play and not a 'free adaptation' of the play.

- (a) This question attracted too few responses to allow for meaningful comment.
- (b) Although more candidates answered on this option, there were still a relatively few responses to this text.

While there were a couple of fairly inventive and comical responses to the question, these were outweighed by short responses that contained very limited ideas for comedy, and fairly unimaginative interpretations of Anna.

The comedy suggestions offered were most frequently not linked to the delivery of the text – which is where the majority of comedy is found in comic texts – but depended on fairly hackneyed physical comedy tropes such as Anna, rushing on stage and immediately ‘falling over’. Or candidates suggested unsubtle generalised ‘comic’ actions, such as Anna and Marya ‘hitting each other’.

As with all answers on this paper, the best offer precise detail about what the ‘audience’ will see and hear, when watching a candidate’s imagined ‘rendition’ of a section of text. The more detail that is included in the answer, the more successful that answer is likely to be.

Even ‘falling over’ and/or ‘hitting each other’ could be made comical by an inventive candidate when the relevant lines that identify when precisely these ‘actions’ occur is included, and its delivery explained. When Anna and Marya were described as ‘hitting each’, for example, some comedy was created where the candidate quoted the lines that accompanied the comic ‘spat’ and gave precise suggestions for where they hit each other (arms, legs, tummy, bottom) and also identified a comical ‘weapon of choice’ whether that was hands thumping or legs/feet kicking or grabbed items such as cushions, or dusters or fans with which to inflict (comical) suffering on each other.

Style, Genre, Content

There was some evidence of knowledge of the social context of the play in candidate’s answers and some reference to the political corruption which Gogol was intent on exposing within his contemporary society.

Most candidates made reference to the play’ comic style and a few to the need for creating amusing caricatures for the purpose of highlighting Gogol’s critical intentions.

Question 8

The Cherry Orchard

This play attracted few responses this series.

- (a) No candidate responses were seen to this design question.

(b) This question was answered by a handful of candidates. Among them, few went further than offering a character sketch of the role of Gayev, and in the answers of these few, there was limited attention to nominating intended audience responses to Gayev, although some reference to Gayev's comic function was seen in a couple of answers.

Gayev's sentimentality was noted, as demonstrated in his speech addressed to the bookcase, as was his obsession with billiards. One or two candidates mentioned Gayev's intolerance of the lower classes, especially of Lopakhin; while another found his dependence upon the largely decrepit, Firs, to be amusing.

Most candidates mentioned Gayev's affection for his sister and his nieces, as a redeeming feature of a man who was otherwise self-engrossed and something of a fantasist, when it came to the sale of the orchard,

Question 9

Blood Wedding

(a) Most candidates revealed sound understanding of the context of the relationship between the Bride and Leonardo and there was generally a secure focus on their feelings for one another, in the majority of answers.

Leonardo's 'visit' to the Bride, in Act Two, Scene One, was selected by all candidates who attempted this question, as it reveals their passionate past and the Bride's possibly enforced rejection of Leonardo because of his poverty.

In less successful answers, candidates sometimes focused initially on the conversation between the Bride and Servant but made inadequate connection between their conversation and the arrival of Leonardo to make it a meaningful contribution to the focus of the question.

Some candidates did refer to the Bride's threatening utterance of 'Leave me alone' and to the reference to the 'Dark clouds' just before Leonardo arrived, to illustrate her feelings of fear and apprehension which are inextricably entwined with her thoughts about Leonardo.

In the most successful answers, candidates were able to focus on the tone of voice and the body language of the Bride, in particular, to her tension, its intensity and its decrease in the presence of the man she truly loves. This led to some effective answers on this section of the play.

Some candidates were distracted into narrating the 'history' of the two characters – as far as Lorca makes it clear – and why Leonardo had initially been rejected.

There was evidence of some sensitivity where candidates focused on how Leonardo would be directed to perform lines such as 'Something smaller would suit her better' and 'That's the thorn', revealing his deep knowledge and understanding of this woman that the bridegroom is fated never to acquire.

Most candidates moved on to exploring the section in Act Three, Scene One where Leonardo and the Bride declare their undying love for one another in the relative freedom offered by the forest. In better answers, candidates demonstrated their understanding of the lovers' feelings at this point in the play where their mutual fascination and obsession with each other is presented as a complicated blend of love, resentment and despair.

In their treatment of this scene, few candidates focused solely on the conversation between Bride and Leonardo, most candidates paid as careful attention to their body language, facial expressions and movements on the stage as they did to the delivery of text. Most made some reference to this sequence as being 'dance-like' with references both to Flamenco and to Lorca's interest in 'Duende'.

Some candidates included directorial suggestions for lighting and sound to underscore the shifting emotions that Bride and Leonardo portray through their bodies and their speech.

(b) This was also a popular question which allowed candidates to produce some effective answers in terms of the performance of the Bridegroom.

Nearly all candidates began by commenting on Act One, Scene One and the half serious and half playful exchanges between Bridegroom and his mother.

In more successful answers, candidates focused on Bridegroom's slightly strained relationship with his mother as expressed through his frequently changing tones of voice and facial expressions. These candidates were able to convey both Bridegroom's frustration with his mother, whose constant reference the death of her husband and son and to the feud with the Felix family he finds wearing, and his tender feelings for her and understanding of her suffering.

A significant number of candidates interpreted Bridegroom's actions, generally, as being respectful and they linked this to the social conditions of the time and setting of the play.

Other interpretations of the Bridegroom' character included his development in the course of the play. They mentioned his awkwardness when he talks to the Bride at the betrothal, and explored ways of communicating his sincerity and his reserve. They discussed his behaviour after the wedding ceremony, where he reveals not only kindness and affection for the Bride, but also a sense of longing for her, and slight petulance when she rejects his amorous advances.

Once the Bride has abandoned him and eloped with Leonardo, Bridegroom surprised many candidates by becoming an embodiment of the impulse for revenge, showing both determination and a lust for blood.

Style, Genre, Content

Many candidates wrote paragraphs about Lorca's personal life which were not relevant to their answers.

Others made more relevant comments on Spanish culture and religious beliefs.

Some candidates included too much material relating to the origin of the play – the newspaper report of the elopement of a bride with another man at her wedding. While it is valid to allude to this source, some candidates discussed it at length and at the expense of making other cultural links.

Question 10

Boon

- (a) This play is a minority choice and there were only a very few responses, and none seen in relation to **Question (a)**.
- (b) Of the few responses, there was some consensus over Boon's character, which was often defined in the first part of the answer, in relation to Boon's relationship with his mother. Despite Boon's evident frustration with his mother, candidates saw Boon's character as being a 'good son', with filial concern for his mother's well-being and future happiness.

Candidates recognised Boon's twin obsession with his own lifestyle and with (financial) self-improvement. Boon's role as an Estate agent, and the cynicism required for such a role, was also noted.

Some mentioned how Boon's resentment of his missing father dominates Boon's thinking in the latter half of the play where the abuse that he suffered at his father's hands is revealed.

In a couple of answers, candidates mentioned Boon's vulnerability, as shown during the 'visitation' of Young Father, which lead to a form of inner reconciliation for Boon, who they interpreted 'growing up' over the course of the play.

Style, Genre, Content

The majority of references to SGC, in relation to this play, referred to the policy of 'En bloc sales' in Singapore. In the case of *Boon*, Tay explores the pressure put on individual flat owners to sell their homes 'en bloc' to agencies or to private property developers.

The introduction of a fifteen-year rule for 'tenancy' of land used as a crematorium is the controversial issue at the heart of the play that most candidates alluded to. Some mentioned the irony of Boon's role in this as an Estate Agent.

DRAMA

Paper 9482/02
Practical Drama

Key messages

- There is a very clear distinction between the performance standards expected for A Level and that of IGCSE. The ability to act is central to the assessment and candidates are expected to have developed advanced performance skills, appropriate to the standard of the assessment. This requires rigorous rehearsal and a commitment to working for the good of the performance group.
- Devised performance is expected to be of a similar performance standard to that in the scripted pieces. This means that the dramatic ideas need to be shaped and refined to produce rounded characters and credible situations that work well in performance.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of a piece of devised drama requires much more than sitting and talking to camera about how it went. Evaluation needs to be practised, rehearsed and refined in advance of being delivered, thus developing the same skills required to deliver a business presentation to a professional audience.

Administration

Most centres followed the required procedures and there were few administrative errors. The most significant errors were to do with the ICMS forms, and attention is drawn to the following points:

- Centres should check that the marks awarded on the ICMS forms are the same marks that are submitted onto Submit for Assessment.
- The teachers' comments on the ICMS forms are a vital part of the moderation process. Some comments were of little help in understanding the rationale for awarding credit.

Recordings

Most of the recordings were of good quality, and the best recordings were those which positioned their camera at a good distance to capture all the candidates throughout the performance, including their facial expressions. Sound quality was generally good, although a number were spoiled by distracting background noise. In some instances the camera was set too far away from the action to capture it adequately, or the stage lighting had the unintended effect of preventing the camera from picking up the candidates' use of facial expression.

Correct identification of candidates is a crucial factor in moderation. Most centres provided a line-up of candidates at the start of each performance and supplemented this with a description of their clothing/hair colour on the ICMS forms, which was generally sufficient for moderation purposes. Good practice was when a candidate said their name and candidate number and had this written on a large card in front of them. Some centres also very kindly put names and/or numbers above each candidate for group pieces in a still at the start of the piece.

Devised Piece

There was a good range of devised work, which demonstrated considerable range and creativity across the cohort. This ranged from performance work of virtually professional standard through to pieces that made very little dramatic impact.

The strongest submissions exhibited exceptional dramatic flair and sophisticated understanding of performance craft. These included a rich variety of performance skills and techniques effectively integrated. The most significant factors were that the piece was well structured, with a clear message, and contained well-rounded characters. Some styles stood out as being especially effective and there was some very well-crafted physical theatre work, which demonstrated spatial awareness and fluid transitions between sections.

Pieces that made use of strong physicality were almost always more effective than where the characters were faintly drawn and lacked physical interaction with each other.

The weakest performances also had structural weaknesses and, hence, repetitive content. There was also an over-reliance on monologues without dramatic development, sometimes simplistic dialogue lacking depth and nuance and an excessive dependence on blackouts for transitions rather than creative staging solutions.

Spoken Self-Evaluation

The self-evaluation component varied and, although many candidates achieved well in this section, some evaluations were little more than a quick 'chat' to camera about how the candidate felt it had gone. Some candidates failed to adhere to the specified time limit of three minutes, (both over and under).

The strongest candidates demonstrated clear understanding of the artistic intention and creative process. These were discussed fluently, with a clear articulation of the individual's contributions to the collaborative process and an effective balance between overview of the complete work and personal reflection.

The weakest candidates tended to focus on plot summary rather than creative process analysis. Sometimes candidates rushed their delivery, attempting to include excessive content within time constraints. There were occasionally good ideas, but lack of structured planning meant that the candidate was unable to get their ideas across in delivery.

Scripted Performance

This session saw more diversity in scripted material, ranging from contemporary plays to reworkings of Classical texts, with a wide range of international texts chosen. Groups opting for contemporary drama had excellent opportunities for modern character exploration; those who chose Classical texts were able to engage with established dramatic traditions.

The selection of a strong performance text was central, and most groups made perceptive choices, with material appropriate to their candidates' abilities and demonstrating understanding of the complete works. The strongest ensemble work sustained audience engagement throughout, with clear character differentiation and a strong sense of social, cultural and historical setting. There were nuanced interpretations reflecting deep textual understanding and effective realisation of complex dramatic material. Most significantly, the group worked well together to maximise their effectiveness as an ensemble and to ensure that each member had a role that allowed them to show their individual strengths.

The weakest performances had undifferentiated pacing and delivery patterns. Insufficient character development meant that the work failed to explore textual subtleties, and some had limited exploration of dramatic potential within selected extracts. Character interaction lacked credibility and the pacing of delivery meant that there were few, if any, moments of engagement for the audience.

There were a few instances where the centre had entered candidates who were performing in the school show. In extreme cases, this meant upwards of twenty performers on the stage at any one time, with candidates interspersed with other non-assessed performers. This is not allowed by the syllabus.

Indicative repertoire list

The following list provides example of performance texts seen by moderators this session. They are provided for information and there is no requirement for Centres to use any of them for their own work, although they may consider doing so if they wish.

David Lindsay Abaré	<i>The Rabbit Hole</i>
Edward Albee	<i>The Zoo Story</i>
David Auburn	<i>Proof</i>
Tom Basden	<i>Joseph K</i>
Jack J. Berry	<i>Art of Duel</i>
Deborah Brevoort	<i>The Women of Lockerbie</i>
Amelia Bullmore	<i>Di and Viv and Rose</i>
John Cariani	<i>Almost Maine</i>
Jim Cartwright	<i>Two</i>
Philip Dawkins	<i>The Burn</i>
Athol Fugard	<i>No-Good Friday</i>
Alice Gerstenberg	<i>Overtones</i>
David Ives	<i>Sure Thing</i>
Dom Jory	<i>Love, Death and Prom</i>
Charlotte Keatley	<i>My Mother Said I Never Should</i>
David Kosh	<i>Temptation</i>
Henry Lewis	<i>The Play That Goes Wrong</i>
Dominique Morriseau	<i>Pipeline</i>
William Mastrosimone	<i>Extremities</i>
Arthur Miller	<i>The Crucible</i>
Nick Payne	<i>Constellations</i>
Yasmina Reza	<i>Art</i>
Karen Ruch	<i>As She Likes It</i>
John Patrick Shanley	<i>Doubt: A Parable</i>
William Shakespeare	<i>Hamlet</i> <i>King Lear</i>
Neil Simon	<i>Bright Beach Memoirs</i>
Shelagh Stephenson	<i>The Memory of Water</i>
Timberlake Wertenbaker	<i>The Love of The Nightingale</i>
Oscar Wilde	<i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Tennessee Williams	<i>The Glass Menagerie</i>

DRAMA

Paper 9482/03
Theatre-Making and Performing

Key messages

- Centres should ensure that all necessary material for moderation has been submitted.
- For Group Devised Performance it is essential to select a suitable practitioner/tradition/style and investigate one appropriate professional production that represents the distinctive traits of the practitioner, tradition or style.
- For Group Devised Performance candidates should carefully identify and apply the distinctive traits of the practitioner, tradition or style.
- Evaluations must be focused on the process of devising and the individual's contribution to the artistic outcome.
- Individual Performance must have clear linking material between each text presented.

General comments

The single camera recording the assessed performances should be positioned as close to the stage as may take in the entire performance clearly, and without the recorded image being washed out by strong lighting. Most centres provided good recordings and had evidently undertaken test recordings to ensure good quality video. Very few were impeded by extraneous sound. Most camera equipment has good microphone quality and candidates should be able to show they are capable of voice projection as a performer. Accordingly, stage microphones are generally undesirable in assessed performance and there were very few instances seen where candidates were wearing performance microphones.

There should be no post-recording electronic enhancement of the assessment video recordings. It is important that the Moderator is able to view and hear the performance as seen by the audience at the time and therefore careful selecting of equipment and test recordings should be made prior to the assessed performance.

It is not a specified requirement that candidates should identify themselves in a lineup at the start of performance but it is most helpful to include this at the opening of the video record.

There is an expectation that both Group Devised and Individual Performance must be to a live audience. Centres which ensured that candidates performed with an audience present were able to benefit from an effective performance atmosphere.

It is not a requirement or an expectation that centres should have very developed technical staging facilities. Most practitioners and styles on the syllabus list do not require elaborate lighting and sound. For some of these it would be contrary to the distinctive traits of the practitioner, tradition or style to involve very dramatic lighting devices.

The investigation into the professional production and theoretical research should establish whether very varied lighting and sound devices are appropriate or not. It is usually very straightforward to establish which are the few practitioners which would require much technical involvement in the performance, and it was clear in the majority of work submitted this session that this research had been undertaken. Centre staff may advise candidates prior to investigation of the practitioners on the given list which do include significant technical elements as a distinctive trait of their works.

Candidates should not be viewing written material, phones or other electronic devices/screens when delivering lines in Group Devised or Individual Performance. Where a candidate is reading or taking prompt for character lines in role in a Group Devised Performance or as presented material in Individual Presentation from written or from an electronic device this may not be considered a competent performance.

It is advisable not to use a lectern stand in individual presentation where it is not evident in the performance recording that there are no prompt notes present.

Comments on specific tasks

Devised Performance and Evaluation

Devising

Some excellent Group Devised Performance was seen which closely applied the hallmarks of one practitioner or style from having investigated a carefully chosen professional production. This was effective in groups of two as well as in larger groups of four or five. Some very good work was seen particularly in the areas of Brecht, Berkoff, Frantic Assembly, Commedia Dell'Arte, and Jerzy Grotowski.

Most submissions seen showed competent or broad understanding in devising in a chosen practice or style.

Selection of a professional production for investigation is a significant element of the preparation for devising. An appropriate production is one that closely presents the identifiable qualities of the practitioner, tradition or style the candidates will need to apply in their own devising.

Centres may find it advisable to offer some supervision to candidates to ensure they are able to identify the hallmarks of the style/tradition they intend to apply. These key elements may need to be distinguished from what may have been presented for performance in the researched production where a contemporary company aims to achieve a distinctive style to attract audiences in performing a work of a practitioner such as Brecht, or a play which is generally considered to have some relevance to the selected tradition or style. Only the defined and distinctive traits of the chosen genre should be applied in devising. An example is Goldoni's *A Servant to Two Masters* adapted to the present day commercially recorded production as *One Man, Two Guvnors*. This has very evident traits of Commedia but is not entirely in keeping with the tradition. The modernisation in this performance does not include the use of masks and of some other significant character elements of the tradition. It should also be noted that where masks have been designed in the centre for performance, they must be viable for practical acting on stage.

It is advisable therefore that candidates should undertake some separate theoretical research to identify the distinctive traits of the chosen tradition or style in advance of the investigation of a professional production. It is not a requirement that a performance should be seen live; there are many appropriate productions that may be viewed as recordings. It is also possible to successfully investigate a historical production of which a filmed recording does not exist, in conjunction with good theoretical research, candidates can be well prepared for their own devising. The primary aim of the investigation is to research the professional production for practitioner/style qualities that can be applied to their own devising; not seeking to emulate/recreate aspects of the staging of the production itself that may not be identifiable fingerprints of the practitioner or style and which may detract from the primary aim. Amateur productions should not be the subject of the investigation.

Some Group Devised Performance showed a mixing of styles for alternative effect. Combining one of the required practitioners/styles specified in the list with another named genre or practitioner does not meet the requirement of the syllabus. This will limit the extent to which the devised work can clearly represent the style of the distinctive traits of the tradition or practitioner for the purposes of assessment.

Sometimes centres named two or more works as investigated within one tradition/style. This was most often seen where Theatre of The Absurd was offered as devised performance. Different practitioners in the Absurdist tradition, and others also, are unlikely to adhere to a single set of rules when creating their works. Accordingly, candidates investigating works by more than one practitioner they considered to be within the same tradition or style tended to be less than fully clear regarding the distinctive traits they were seeking to apply.

Written evaluations

Some evaluations identified a practitioner or style but did not clearly identify a work investigated and how the qualities it represented had been identified and applied. This tended to limit the depth of analysis.

Some candidates focused more on an evaluation of performance, sometimes citing audience responses as evidence of successful achievement, rather than considering to what extent they had fulfilled the aim to devise in the chosen style.

The assessment criteria for the written evaluation for the Group Devised Performance are clear that the 800-word evaluation must comprise two elements:

an account of the process of devising the piece and identifying its artistic outcomes

and

an evaluation of their personal contribution to the success of the devised performance in achieving its intentions.

The assessment criteria do not credit post-performance discussion of the event. Many of the accounts were a narrative of intentions regarding the style written mostly as 'we' with some brief mention of their personal involvement in creating the piece usually included towards the end of the writing more than an account of the devising itself. Writing was more successful which took a more objective and evaluative approach, tracking the stages of devising from outset to completion and the individual's contribution to those stages.

AI generated material may not be presented as written content in this work. Any AI generated research should be declared and included as an appendix to the 800 word evaluation.

In Group Devised Performance there was usually appropriate costuming for the roles to be performed. This was usually the case also for Individual Performance also where different costume was also sometimes varied for the range of extracts. Sometimes a simple costume change of a jacket or coat during the changeover between pieces was very effective. In instances where candidates appeared in very casual everyday clothes there was sometimes a sense that the candidates lacked a sense of the formality of the presentation to an audience, particularly where it appeared there was no audience other than the camera. The tone was more of an informal audition rehearsal accordingly.

Designers

There was a small number of submissions seen. These were usually effective in the outcome intended. It is essential that centres should apply the assessment criteria for designers in marking submissions from design candidates. For marks to be awarded, all stage design must be supported by a full design proposal by the candidate. There is no specified presentational format for the design proposal, which should be provided in hard copy on A4 pages. It is for the candidate to fully and clearly account for their intentions and their creative processes as they relate to the chosen style for Group performance. This must be submitted with all other moderation materials. A video presentation may be included.

Individual performance

The Individual Presentation should be a coherent and connected, integrated performance. Most candidates achieved this. In a small number of instances blackouts and long breaks between extracts limited the coherence of the presentation and made the communication uneven between extracts.

Most centres showed appropriate introductions to the Individual presentation, identifying theme and the first piece to be presented as it related to the theme. Introductions were usually briefly and concisely made at the start and between extracts.

Where a candidate had a personal commitment to a theme, this was always best communicated in the quality of the delivery of the extracts and well-made links. Personal statements regarding the theme are not required and detract from the links, which should be focused on the texts. In a small number of instances some candidates identified all extracts prior to performance with no further linking material or in one break between pieces. The syllabus is clear that links should be made between each piece. For marking to be considered at least competent for Links, both theme and the first extract should be introduced at the start of the solo presentation, and all subsequent texts must be introduced in turn before delivery. There is not an expectation that linking material should be unique and extraordinary.

Extracts were usually well rehearsed and appropriately delivered. Marking should take account of work which is evidently shorter or longer than the specified time requirement of 6 – 8 minutes.

Recorded voices are not acceptable as part of an Individual presentation for any purpose. The candidate's own voice spoken live must be the only one in the Individual Programme. There is no limit to the number of

roles the candidate may play when undertaking the presentation; their own voice speaking live must provide all verbal material in the presentation.

A candidate may choose to perform the programme to a silent on-stage partner. This was sometimes successfully presented. Any second presence on stage in Individual Performance must not respond to or engage with the assessed performer in any way.

Interactive performances between candidate(s) and an audience is not permitted in Group Devised or in Individual Performance.

Some commentary was seen on ICMS forms regarding credit or demerit for the variety of texts and how the programme might offer complexity in the difference between texts. Centres should not require nor reward the variety of styles presented, nor penalise candidates where performance qualities may be similar across texts performed. There is no specific requirement that the Individual Performance should present a contrast between pieces, or as a contrast to the Group Devised performance.

There is no specified nor preferred way to introduce a text. The candidate should devise links to ensure the progression is clear, engaging and informative to the audience.

Texts chosen for performance

A range of texts and themes was chosen for performance. Themes of isolation, love, infidelity, emotional and conflict trauma, injustice and human rights, racial concerns, family, relationships and gender equality issues were popular. The great majority of candidates showed commendable commitment to and enthusiasm for the chosen texts and to their chosen theme.

Candidates are to be reminded that they must not use extracts of any texts set for Component 1 written examination for Component 3 performance.

Theatre Traditions and Styles	
Commedia Dell'Arte	<i>A Servant to Two Masters/One Man, Two Guvnors</i>
Revenge Tragedy	<i>Hamlet, The Spanish Tragedy, The Duchess of Malfi</i>
Absurdism	<i>Waiting for Godot, Rhinoceros, Endgame, No Exit</i>
Farce	<i>Noises Off, Boeing Boeing, Charlie's Aunt</i>

Practitioners	
Berkoff	<i>East, Metamorphosis, The Trial, Kvetch</i>
Bertolt Brecht	<i>The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Drums in the Night, Mother Courage, The Threepenny Opera, The Good Person of Sechuan, Baal, The Just Price of Flowers</i>
Theatre de Complicite	<i>Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead</i>
Frantic Assembly	<i>Love Song, Things I Know To Be True, Pool No Water</i>
Grotowski	<i>Institute, Missing</i>
Katie Mitchell	<i>Ophelias Zimmer, The Maids of Genet, Manifesto</i>
Robert Wilson	<i>Shakespeare's Sonnets, Einstein On The Beach, Woyzeck</i>

DRAMA

Paper 9482/04
Theatre in Context

Key messages

The best work usually resulted from a well-chosen research question/title, combining highly relevant sources which are well referenced/cited, a thorough exploratory argument, clear examples of wider reading/viewing (noted in a comprehensive bibliography) and a clear conclusion.

The importance of teacher/centre guidance in the selection of the title/question cannot be over-emphasised. Time devoted to getting the parameters of the essay right (i.e. in accordance with the syllabus specification and good academic practice) is time well spent. One or two submissions lacked a research question entirely.

Work significantly short of the maximum limit was unlikely to score well. Some candidates wrote in too informal a style for an academic essay. The use of the first person should be avoided.

Some candidates offered extensive narrative re-telling of texts/plays and/or very substantial quotations from them. Such approaches cannot score highly.

A number of candidates used images to support their research, which, where appropriate, is to be encouraged. However, images should be carefully selected to ensure that they reinforce the argument. They should be labelled as fig. numbers and therefore referred to as such. They should also be attributed appropriately.

All material referenced in the body of the essay should appear in the bibliography which should be correctly formatted.

General comments

Examiners saw a range of work with some excellent essays that proposed a clear question, with suitable scope for the parameters of the task, and a clear response that appropriately used a range of properly cited sources. The strongest work consistently engaged with the question set and regularly returned to explicitly answer it. The best examples took care to analyse the material presented and evaluate the work of others.

Weaker essays usually struggled from having either no research question or one that was too broad in scope to meaningfully explore within the word count given. It is advisable for centres to read carefully the instructions for the task as provided in the syllabus. Several candidates approached the task from a literary perspective and did not show that *'the focus of the research should be on the practicalities of theatre-making and performance.'* Similarly, others approached the task from socio-historical perspective with a few providing too much non-productive detail on financial aspects of commercial theatre for example.

A significant minority of responses demonstrated too much focus on extolling the virtues (awards, praise etc.) of a particular practitioner and neglecting to focus on their actual works. Unsubstantiated, sweeping statements along the lines of: *'It is clear practitioner X changed the world of theatre as we know it today and single-handedly provided answers ...'* cannot score highly.

Examiners have seen a lot of responses addressing musicals. Whilst these have the potential to provide a rich source of research material, essays have often been more of a glorification of the musicals themselves than any in-depth exploration of key theatrical concepts arising out of them.

Similarly, a handful of essays were seen to have placed too much focus on the historical timeline rather than the performance aspects of a given text or practitioner.

Examiners also noted that some candidates have succumbed to 'quick' methods of research typified by an increase in and over-reliance on, YouTube videos and online sources of information without providing sufficient use of supportive texts to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the key concepts being explored. As a result, such work manifests a degree of shallowness and weakened academic integrity.

Some introductions were well-written and concise and drew the reader in. These provided a sound foundation for further development of an answer to the research question.

In the same vein, some conclusions drew the essay together very well and demonstrated understanding of the need to consolidate analytical and evaluative comment whereas others seemed to just peter out.

A word count should appear at the head of the essay. It should be accurate and exclude the bibliography and any footnotes.

Both the bibliography and any citations or footnotes should be accurate, appropriately formatted, according to a recognised style guide and be part of main essay, not included as a separate document.

Comments on specific criteria

Criteria A

For a great many candidates, these criteria remained the strongest with plenty demonstrating very good knowledge and understanding. As mentioned previously, centres should pay particular attention to the fact that there were several examples of essays that omitted bibliographies and/or in-text citations. Some essays were missing both elements. Candidates should be reminded of the necessity to cite carefully all sources (including visuals which also need to be titled as figures). This is not just necessary for academic convention but is a useful way for them to demonstrate their use of a 'good' or 'wide' range of supporting evidence.

Many candidates showed assured knowledge and understanding. However, candidates should vigilantly bear in mind the syllabus which expects a 'range of appropriate and relevant supporting evidence' as this was lacking in a significant number of examples. All quotations and any paraphrasing should be referenced carefully both in-text and in the bibliography. In a number of cases evidence could have been used better to support claims made.

Criteria B

This was the second strongest criteria with many essays showing a good level of understanding of the practicalities of theatre-making. Strongest work had carefully selected illustrative details that very effectively communicated and supported points made. However, work that strayed from the parameters of the task into other areas often struggled to score well here. There are still some candidates approaching the task as they would for the IGCSE Drama qualification, giving a blow-by-blow account of their directorial choices.

Candidates need to be reminded that this is primarily a research task and not a director's notebook. More than one essay gave creative suggestions of how work 'could' be staged rather than offer researched staged examples.

Criteria C

A range of marks were seen with some candidates analysing a given practitioner's artistic intentions together with the approach(s) they have adopted. Sometimes the selected research question provided a clear focus on artistic approaches and where this occurred it was seen to help structure the response in a way that opened access to higher marks. Weaker work typically offered rather inconsistent analysis.

Criteria D

As with Criteria C, there tended to be a range of responses here with some sustained and well-developed evaluation in contrast to some responses containing superficial and occasional comments. Again, it seemed much easier for candidates to think evaluatively if they had created a research question that clearly prompted an evaluative response (e.g. 'to what extent has Ancient Greek theatre influenced...?'). Weaker essays tended to offer occasional evaluative points, and these tended to remain rather general and superficial. As has been noted above, there were examples of where candidates who were clearly fans of a given practitioner passionately extolled their virtues and expressed their admiration for their work to the detriment of the evaluative process.