

DRAMA

<p>Paper 0411/11 Written Examination</p>
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Key messages

- Candidates are required to answer all questions in **Section A**, one question in **Section B** and one in **Section C**.
- Candidates should read all the questions very carefully to ensure that they understand fully what is being asked, particularly where there is more than one element to the question.
- Questions in **Section B** are on the set text and questions in **Section C** are based on the devised piece.
- Candidates need to consider carefully which question to answer in **Sections B** and **C** and should not attempt a question if they do not fully understand it or have the technical knowledge required to answer it.
- Candidates are urged to use the number of marks available as a guide to how much detail is needed in the answer. Many candidates continue to waste valuable time by providing extended answers to questions that are worth only 2 or 3 marks. Candidates may use bullet points where appropriate to respond to questions in **Section A**.
- Centres should engage practically with the stimuli provided in the pre-release material to enable candidates to show greater understanding of the challenges presented to them. Where this is done this is shown to enhance responses considerably.
- Literary or narrative approaches to answering questions must be avoided. For example, where questions ask the candidate to provide advice on how a dramatic role should be performed, it is not enough to recount the story or to provide detail of the character's personality, attitudes and relationships without making clear how the character should be heard and seen on stage in order to convey those traits.

General comments

Candidates showed a good appreciation of the set extract from A CHRISTMAS CAROL and many communicated a good grasp of the various approaches to play. There is evidence of a growing awareness of how the elements of drama can be applied effectively to enhance performance and the understanding and use of appropriate technical language is encouraging. There is still however a negative tendency to neglect discussion of practical engagement with the text and to indulge in purely descriptive and narrative approaches.

There is evidence of some insecurity in understanding fundamental technical terms. Confusion over key terms such as the definition of a prop for example, is something that needs to be addressed. Centres are recommended to re-visit the technical Glossary linked to this syllabus.

The approach to devised material continues to improve now that the focus is on a single piece of work. Most candidates had engaged practically with the stimuli in the pre-release material and the results proved effective, presumably because candidates had more time to devote to a single project.

Evaluative comment, generally required in responses relating to the devised piece, was rather simplistic and superficial in some cases. Candidates need to consider carefully the reactions of their audience and any feedback that was received either during the rehearsal or performance process (although references to audience members 'gasping' or 'crying' need to be used with some caution). Where performances had the

intended impact on their audience, candidates should be able to communicate clearly the difference between what was expected and the actual outcome.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Questions 1–6 A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Question 1

Responses to this question were variable in their success. Though a large number of responses scored the maximum two marks, a significant number of candidates misunderstood the nature of a prop and often cited an item of costume such as a hat for example. Additionally there was a marked lack of understanding regarding the meaning of 'dramatic effect'. Candidates who chose to cite a symbolic meaning could not be awarded marks. 'Dramatic effect' implies that the holder of the prop uses it in some way to effect an impact upon the drama and hence upon the audience. Any reference to the simple presence of an object on stage which is not actually attached to an action cannot be awarded marks.

Question 2

Virtually all candidates scored both marks for this question by identifying a moment in the extract where stage technology might be used and provided suggestions of how the technology might be used to enhance the drama. Many of these suggestions were insightful. There were occasional examples of a misunderstanding of the meaning of technology however which focused more on direction of actors or staging. Those responses which discussed lighting, stage engineering or sound were likely to score well.

Question 3

Most responses were able to give three appropriate pieces of advice to the actor playing FRED. There were some examples where candidates focussed on the motivation of the character instead of opportunities for the actor to apply his skills and techniques.

A few candidates offered a long and detailed response with a variety of suggestions for physicality including facial expression with a range of comments to support their answers. Candidates should have been aware that the question was worth three marks and therefore one valid suggestion for each of the marks was all that was required. Further engagement with the question used up valuable time.

Question 4

There was a good number of effective responses although a significant number tended to rely on narrative. Ideal responses should identify two ways the actors could convey a sense of emotional energy and an explanation for each of these as to why they would be (dramatically) effective. Other, less effective answers looked at character motivation rather than the application of skills and techniques.

Question 5

As with **Question 4**, responses were often narrative, describing the emotions of characters and missing the point of 'coaching' or advising the actors. The question sought to invite expression of ways the actors might be advised to 'improve' their performance but in many cases candidates' interpretation of 'improvement' resulted in outcomes that were generalised and implied rather than specific. Additionally, there were some examples of misunderstanding of the question by candidates who focussed on a description of the role of 'coaching' as opposed to its outcome.

Question 6

Most candidates were able to consider some aspects of SCROOGE's state of mind and the way the changing aspects of the scene impacted upon it. Some strong responses were seen which gave a detailed account linked to the application of acting skills but there were also responses which were predominantly narrative and did not consider practical engagement with the text. Consequently, these could not achieve a mark any higher than two.

Questions 7–8 *Devised work*

Question 7

The focus of this question was the choice of language for the candidate's individual role in the devised piece. Many candidates chose to focus on a description of personality and struggled to explore language choices but there was a significant number of responses which did identify specific language types in the sense of spoken idioms, use of slang, choice of words, etc.

There were a very few candidates who did not identify the character(s) they played and in doing so failed to establish a context for the rest of their answer. As a consequence they could not achieve any marks for this question.

Question 8

Many candidates were able to access one mark in this question by identifying a moment of contrast. The majority of these also made a generalised comment about how effective this contrast was. Nevertheless, there were a number of weak, narrative answers that were confined to a description of plot and which struggled to identify a clearly defined contrast within their work.

Few responses to this question managed to score more than three marks.

Section B

Questions 9–11 *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*

Question 9

This Question prompted by the far the greatest number of responses. There were many fine examples of candidates responding with keen insight and imagination and which demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of how a single performer could play and differentiate between the three GHOSTS. There were several sophisticated responses which evidenced a mature and thorough appreciation of the potential for the actor playing the roles to impart the differences. Where references to costume and make-up formed part of a comprehensive discussion of acting skills, methods and techniques they were credited. Visual and design-related points alone could not achieve more than ten marks. There were a few less effective answers which tended to focus on narrative and which necessarily scored less than ten.

Question 10

This question was attempted by relatively few candidates. The key feature of the question encourages the candidates to recognise that there are within the text numerous comedic passages, which the director has the opportunity to emphasise. An interesting group of responses considered the underlying themes of the text far too serious to entertain any form of comedic rendition and while this approach was not penalised it did, in a sense, effect a degree of self-penalisation in that there were many missed opportunities for discussion. A few responses did recognise isolated opportunities to inject humour into the performance and most of these were able to make useful and potentially viable suggestions. A few weak responses were essentially narrative and descriptive in nature and did not make a sound case either way.

Question 11

This question centred on design challenges for the extract from *A CHRISTMAS CAROL* with specific reference to the passing of time and did not specify a particular discipline. Instead, it provided opportunities for candidates to discuss a variety of issues across several design disciplines. A significant minority of candidates tended to focus heavily on one discipline (usually costume) almost to the exclusion of the others which meant that though the specialist design topic was well covered, the candidate could not score highly. Candidates for the most part however were able to discuss issues relating to at least three disciplines, (mostly costume, lighting and stage design). A significant number of candidates struggled to create a clear sense of time in transit however, or placed undue weight on specific details such as how styles of architecture would have changed between SCROOGE's youth and his present.

Section C

Questions 12–14 *Devised work*

Question 12

This was quite a popular question, the main focus of which was the use and evaluation of drama skills but it also embodies a requirement to be familiar with the underlying ideas of the piece. A large number of candidates covered the topic effectively and most were able to present a considerable range of techniques they had used to communicate the main issues whilst being clear about their intentions. There was also a significant number of narrative responses which could access only the lower mark bands.

Many candidates were aware of practitioners and styles and were able to incorporate these as influences in their discussion of the dramatic process. Artaudian and Brechtian method featured strongly in a number of responses as did an awareness of devices such as tableau, flashback and monologue.

Unfortunately there was some inappropriate focus on the effectiveness of the rehearsal process and of the learning of lines. This approach should not feature in an evaluative discussion about the effectiveness of performance method, skills and techniques.

Question 13

This was answered by a significant minority. It required candidates to partly consider how their piece could be adapted for performance in a different context (e.g. message, audience, language, etc.). Very few candidates envisioned an alternative setting however and most focussed simply on possibilities for 'change' describing how they might improve what they had already done. Weaker candidates described changes to plot only or envisioned the benefits of a bigger budget. Candidates could explore a wide range of theatrical devices and methods and how they could be used to good effect within an altered context.

Question 14

This question had performance space as its focus and hence any reference to costume and lighting (unless specifically linked to use of space) was unproductive in terms of marks. Again, narrative/descriptive content was very much in evidence and consequently marks were in general anchored in the lower mark bands. There were one or two very capable answers which considered use of space comprehensively with reference to stage format, entrances and exits, levels and trucks/movable platforms.

DRAMA

<p>Paper 0411/12 Written Examination</p>
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Key messages

- Centres appear to be using Examiner reports effectively and are ensuring that candidates are better prepared for the written examination. **Section A**, generally, elicited an improved response although the word 'emotion' in **Question 4** challenged many candidates.
- More candidates than in previous years chose not to answer the paper in numerical order. Where this is the case it is important that candidates number their responses carefully. At times it was not clear which question had been answered.
- Many candidates continue to ignore the guidance given by the total number of marks available for each question. Often extended pieces of writing are provided for **Questions 1, 2 and 3** which are worth only two or three marks whereas responses for **Questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8** are often quite brief even though they are worth five marks each. Candidates need to plan their time more effectively.
- Responses need to be focused on the relevant aspects of each question. Narrative responses, often lengthy, rarely access the range of marks available. Similarly, extended introductions which bear no relevance to the question are not helpful and waste valuable time for candidates. Many students do not respond directly to what is asked in the question. This can elicit some quite sophisticated answers but does not focus on the question and therefore cannot access the mark scheme.
- Whilst there has been a significant improvement in the quality of devised work produced in recent years, too many candidates appear to be quick to rush to the scripting stage and are not able to evidence a full understanding of the devising process. This often leads to work that is superficial.
- Too many candidates are not fulfilling the requirements of the syllabus by not taking their devised work through to final performance. This is disadvantaging candidates as they are not able to reflect and communicate the evaluation of their work that is needed in **Section A** and **Section C**.
- Many candidates are not able to demonstrate evaluative skills in their responses to **Section C** and are over reliant on comments from the audience. Candidates need to be able to demonstrate their intention, the techniques that were used to achieve this and then be able to reflect on its success.

General comments

The extract, based on Dickens and set in Victorian England, proved accessible for most candidates, though a sense of period was missing for those who thought that the torches must have beams and be battery powered. Nevertheless, many embraced the opportunities it provided and approached the text with understanding, imagination and a good grasp of the dramatic possibilities it offered. Although it is expected that candidates will not only study the text in detail but also work on it practically, it is not necessary for the candidates to take the piece to a final performance for an audience, as in some cases a lack of resources may restrict the ambition of the production. However, it is essential that careful and detailed consideration is given to how the piece could be taken from page to stage in a polished performance for a live audience, preferably in a well-equipped theatre.

Most candidates had been prepared well for the examination producing a range of responses that reflected a wide range of ability and learning experiences. However, there were a number of candidates who did not appear to be entirely familiar with the demands of this particular qualification. A small number of candidates continue to misread the instructions and waste time in answering all the questions in **Section B** and **Section C**. Such responses rarely contain the detail that is required to access the full range of marks available. More noticeable this year were candidates who did not number their answers accurately and, occasionally, it was not always clear from the response which question was being attempted.

Candidates need to be precise and concise in order to write successful answers. Those who talked around the subject and gave long introductions to the extract or wrote narrative accounts of their devised work, including descriptions of their plot and characters, did not usually score in the higher bands as they did not offer detailed examples to illustrate their points. Some did not make relevant points and skirted around the question. Indeed, far too many candidates failed to answer the questions as set. The best answers kept their focus and made sure that they addressed the key parts of the questions. Some candidates chose to answer in bullet points, particularly in **Section A**. This is perfectly acceptable although the mark schemes for **Question 6, Question 7** and **Question 8** require detailed discussion and, sometimes, evaluation for the higher bands, but this should be supplied without undue repetition and the inclusion of irrelevant detail.

Although it was encouraging that many candidates referenced Brecht, Stanislavski, Artaud, Boal and British theatre companies like Frantic Assembly, there were occasional responses where a disproportionate amount of time was spent name-dropping practitioners without really focusing on the questions. The best answers focused on the text or the devised piece and the question, giving a personal response that demonstrated their practical knowledge and understanding of the process of preparing a piece for performance for an audience, rather than attempting to showcase their theatre studies knowledge.

Candidates who had not taken their devised piece through to final performance were disadvantaged as they were not able to provide an evaluation of their piece which is required in **Section C**. Many responses to questions in **Section C** did not show an awareness of the devising process which requires candidates to demonstrate their initial response to the chosen stimulus through the research, decision-making and rehearsal process, reviewing, evaluating and improving it as they go along, and finally performing it for their target audience. Too often candidates seem to want to write a script as early in the process as possible, which frequently served to restrict their ambition and stifle their creativity. Nevertheless, there was evidence that a growing number of candidates had taken their devising work very seriously and they were the ones who were able to make relevant responses in answer to the questions on the examination paper and support their points and their evaluative comments with specific references to their work on devising or the piece they had created.

Evaluation is a critical skill in the paper, but many candidates did not demonstrate a confident grasp of either the skill or the ability to frame the skill in their writing. All too often, simple, unsupported assertions of effectiveness were offered and, this year, there was a growing tendency to cite audience feedback in lieu of proper evaluation. The most common approach was to make a statement about what the group wanted to achieve by using a particular approach and then to provide a quote from a member of the audience to confirm that they had achieved their intention. This is no substitute for a detailed explanation of intention, with a description of the techniques employed and a clear evaluation of the impact achieved.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Many candidates were able to demonstrate a good awareness of the pre-release material and identified handcuffs or the brandy glass that were mentioned in the script. Other reasonable suggestions were accepted, such as a staff, a sword, a pocket watch, a scroll and a gun. A machine gun, as suggested by a small number of candidates, was not accepted given the period of the text. There was some confusion between the army sergeant of the script and a police sergeant. Nevertheless, a truncheon or baton was deemed acceptable. There were some candidates who were unable to distinguish between a personal prop and an item of costume. A prop needs to be used and the question specified 'used by the sergeant'. The examiners were really looking for some physical action to achieve a dramatic effect. There was a tendency for candidates to over-complicate this question by offering elaborate symbolic suggestions for significance, which would be more the responsibility of the director than the actor.

Question 2

There were plenty of points in the extract where a lighting change 'would be required' and most candidates succeeded in picking out one of these. Some insisted on picking a less obvious point and then attempted to justify it by explaining why it would 'enhance the drama'. Benefit of the doubt was often given here. In many cases the use of symbolism brought about by the lighting change would not immediately be obvious to the audience. Conversely there were a few examples of a serious lack of understanding with references to 'dark

light' and 'black light' and the ubiquitous use of red to signify anything from danger and violence, through the fires of hell, to love and romance.

Question 3

Three pieces of advice were within the range of most candidates although there was an expectation that the candidates were able to demonstrate an understanding of character and context. There were many who gave far more than three, but there were a few where the suggestions were so vague or so similar to a point already given that credit could not be given. The best answers were concise and tied closely to the speech or parts of it. References to specific aspects of both voice and physicality were credited.

Question 4

Although this question seemed quite straightforward to some, it caused problems for many as the 'sense of emotion' was something of a mystery to them. Several gave a brief account of the character's backstory, with little reference to their emotions. Some candidates commented on a character's emotions without saying how they were portrayed by the actor or they gave acting advice without commenting on the character's emotions. Others discussed the emotions of the audience, rather than focusing on the emotions the actors intended to convey to the audience. In a similar manner to the many contradictory claims about the significance of red when lighting a scene, it may be worth noting here that 'the furrowed brow' must be of inestimable value to an actor, as candidates repeatedly suggested it for conveying a full range of emotions here.

Question 5

This question evoked a wide range of responses. Most candidates were able to select specific aspects from the scene for the actors to work on, although a few offered very general suggestions, while others rambled through a description of the context, sometimes quoting a large amount of text and/or mentioning several aspects of performance, without pinpointing what could be done to improve the performance. Only the better responses were able to show how coaching in each of two specific aspects would improve the performance.

Question 6

Most interpreted the question as an opportunity to explain aspects of Pip's character as revealed in the section and to provide some detail about approaches the actor could use in portraying the character. Candidates were not penalised if they discussed character without reference to performance. However, they were expected to focus on the section specified, although wider contextual references were acceptable. A few wrote in detail about other parts of the extract, for which credit was not given. Many were able to score in the two to four marks range, but very few reached five, as they did not explore a sufficiently wide range of aspects of this complex character.

Question 7

Dramatic tension is a widely interpreted concept; some candidates were able to discuss the concept in some detail, but most found it difficult to cite more than one or two examples from their piece. Many relied on sometimes extremely lengthy descriptions of their piece, with occasional assertions that elements of their work created dramatic tension. Only a minority were able to demonstrate sufficient knowledge and explanation of drama techniques and devices to access the upper levels of the mark scheme and even they sometimes found it difficult to evaluate how well they managed the creation of points of tension. Sadly, a significant minority of candidates wrote in the conditional tense; they spoke of what they 'would have' done, as if the piece was never performed and remained a theoretical possibility.

Question 8

Almost all candidates were able to state the role or roles they played, with very few undertaking a production role, and most made a general comment about effectiveness. Many settled for a description of the character, with some attempting to make a judgement about effectiveness by citing audience reaction or peer evaluation. Only the better answers analysed the role by showing how it linked with other characters and assessing its impact on the piece as a whole.

Section B

Question 9

This question was quite popular. The candidates' interpretation of the reference to 'a small company' varied, although the vast majority focused on the 'COMPANY' as specified in the script. However, many explored the possibilities of a small group of actors playing multiple roles, with most giving the obvious example of Mrs Joe becoming Biddy in Scene 16, while a few were far more inventive. Candidates variously saw the 'COMPANY' as a group, an ensemble chorus, a representation of Pip's conscience, a means of providing physical theatre, narration, commentary and sharp observation or a combination of these. Some candidates suggested that they should operate puppets to assist their comments, particularly in Satis House. Those who discussed physical theatre or Greek chorus generally had plenty to say, with many citing the influence of Frantic Assembly. As always with **Section B** questions, the best responses combined a deep understanding of the extract, including a range of specific references, with detailed practical suggestions about how it could be effectively performed for a live audience.

Question 10

This question was by far the most popular choice. Candidates found the focus on one important scene an advantage, although some were hampered by insecurity about the meaning of dramatic tension. However, since the scene itself was full of tension, most responses achieved some validity. There were some excellent responses, showing a nuanced understanding of the text and some detailed, appropriate and highly imaginative solutions. The directorial eye was often missing at the lower end, replaced by a blow by blow description of what happened throughout Scene 6, but with no sense of focusing on the tensions.

Question 11

Although there were many locations in the extract, it was not necessary to cover them all to achieve high marks. There were some detailed responses covering three or four locations but, also, some well written answers covering only two. There were several good explanations about different stage types and how they might be used, but lighting was by far the most frequently covered design element, although the candidates' knowledge and understanding varied tremendously. The best responses looked at staging the piece as a whole and focused not only on using a range of design elements to serve the text and the directorial intention, but also emphasised the practicalities of differentiating locations and managing transitions. There were some very ambitious almost filmic suggestions which would require huge budgets and some that were so fantastical that they could not possibly be realised in even the best-equipped of theatres. Although almost all candidates were able to correctly identify design elements, there were one or two who confused design with direction.

Section C

Question 12

This was the most popular question in **Section C**, but many candidates found it extremely difficult to respond to the concept of their piece 'taking shape' in the devising and rehearsal process. Some appeared to be uncomfortable with the freedoms of devising and pure improvisation. Weaker candidates often assumed the purpose of devising was purely to produce a script as early as possible and many resorted to describing what they did during the preparatory period or giving a narrative account of the performance itself. Many found it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of their group's decision-making and rehearsal process. Generally speaking, candidates who have devoted time and effort to creating thoughtful, ambitious and imaginative work, through a collaborative process involving discussion, experimentation, review and improvement had far more to offer in terms of effective discussion and practical evaluation than those whose devising work was superficial, lacking in ambition or, in some cases, incomplete.

Question 13

Candidates generally found this question quite difficult. Many interpreted 'your personal drama skills' as the attributes of the group rather than those of themselves as individuals. Many did not identify what their personal drama skills actually were, using the phrase as a blanket description without focusing on specifics such as voice, physicality, facial expression or gestures, for instance. Some interpreted the question loosely to include any ideas or suggestions they had contributed to the process of devising the group piece, which might include decisions about the dramatic intentions and the storyline of the piece, aspects of direction and

design, as well as acting. A few candidates saw shaping chiefly in terms of structure. Many found evaluation a challenge, with narrative accounts and descriptions being offered instead of the specific, supporting examples necessary to demonstrate the contribution of particular skills to the success of the devised piece.

Question 14

A few candidates failed to identify design elements, such as set, lighting, sound, costume, props, etc. in response to this question. Instead they wrote about the design of their piece in terms of its content. However, most tackled it in a similar manner to **Question 11**, but often with less success because their devised pieces did not offer as many stimulating opportunities as 'Great Expectations' and because this question also required them to exercise the challenging skill of evaluation. Nevertheless, there were some very good answers, almost always those that were based on exciting, creative and well-executed devising work, the best of which gave the examiner a clear visual and auditory sense of the piece in performance.

DRAMA

Paper 0411/13
Written Examination

Key messages

- Candidates should read the questions carefully and ensure that they provide all that is required of a particular question. Wherever possible they should reference the text and be specific, linking answers directly to the text via a line reference and/or a quote. Many candidates wrote about the text in very general terms.
- In **Section A**, many candidates spent disproportionate amounts of time on questions that were worth only a few marks. There were several essay-style responses to **Questions 1 and 2**, both worth 2 marks, and this had a detrimental effect as candidates were unable to spend as much time as necessary on the final questions. Bullet points are effective for short answers and centres should encourage candidates to be as concise as possible.
- Candidates who have engaged practically with their devised pieces to performance standard tend to show greater confidence with the questions in **Section C**.
- Centres should make sure candidates are clear on the difference between process/exploration and rehearsal through to performance. It is clearly sound policy for centres to advise candidates to make notes on the entire process.
- Candidates should be familiar with the key terminology, and subject language. An extensive (but not exhaustive) glossary is provided in the syllabus to assist in the identification of key terms.
- Candidates should be given information on how to answer **Section B** and **C** as there were a number of candidates this year who answered all questions in both sections. Information on how these responses are marked is given below.
- Candidates need to consider carefully their choice of question in **Sections B** and **C**. For example, centres which have not taught technical or design skills, as required to answer **Questions 11** (design) and **14** (technical) in this year's paper, should advise their candidates to steer clear of questions which require extensive understanding of these areas.
- In **Sections B** and **C** candidates should support their knowledge and understanding of dramatic concepts with practical examples of how these ideas can be applied in performance or detailed evaluation of the success and effectiveness of the drama. Invariably, questions in **Sections B** and **C** will require candidates to offer such analytical comment – **how** something can be achieved and **why** it was effective.
- Candidates are increasingly making reference to the work of drama/theatre practitioners – Brecht was often cited, and given the structure and form of the text of *OLIVER TWIST*, entirely appropriately. Others referred to Stanislavski, Berkoff, Laban and others. Where there is clear understanding of how to apply theoretical constructs, that knowledge can certainly enhance the response when closely tied to performance elements. Candidates should be wary, though, of 'peppering' their response with unconnected or inappropriate references such as 'Brecht wanted to alienate his audience'.

General comments

There were very few examples of rubric infringement and/or incomplete papers with the vast majority of candidates able to access the demands of the paper and complete within the given time.

Centres, by and large, and year by year, are demonstrating a greater understanding of the syllabus requirements, and candidates are showing greater knowledge of the technical aspects of performance with appropriate use of performing arts vocabulary. Fewer candidates are hampered by a lack of subject-specific knowledge. The appropriate and knowledgeable use of performing arts vocabulary is essential if candidates are to score highly, although it is not enough to reference these without giving precise explanation. For example, candidates may refer to 'body language', 'tone of voice' etc. as a means of showing how a character/role might be (or was) played but with no further description of what the actor might do in order to

achieve the desired effect. Candidates should refer to particular points of action in the text or devised piece rather than making generalised comment.

The responses to the questions about the play extract displayed a wide range of ability although there were fewer candidates achieving marks in the lower mark bands than in previous years. It was clear in many instances that the recommendation that the text be performed, at least informally, had been heeded. As all the questions on the play extract were concerned with eliciting responses that demonstrated an understanding of how to transfer 'from page to stage', candidates who had practical experience of OLIVER TWIST were likely to be at a distinct advantage.

With the questions relating to devised work, while many candidates demonstrated the ability to link theory to practice, there was still a tendency to offer too much narrative content. There was a sense that, in some cases, practical work was insufficiently realised or inadequately developed. Candidates should be given support and guidance in making informed notes on the devising process. There were a number of candidates who could not explain what they had learnt/discussed or evaluate aspects of characterisation in response to questions set this year. There should be a well rounded approach which consolidates the learning from this component and applies it to the written examination. A few candidates appeared not to have completed all of the practical aspects of the syllabus – there were many who did not refer to the actual text/script/moments in the devised piece, possibly suggesting that the devised work had been seen as a theoretical exercise. In some cases, there was evidence that candidates lacked an understanding of key dramatic ideas. As always in the written paper, candidates who planned their time and strategy carefully produced confident responses, with the strongest coming from those candidates who had explored ideas fully in performance. They were able to reflect critically on their own experience of creating drama, write about the application of creative ideas and evaluate their effectiveness in performance.

There was a marked improvement in the way candidates approached the discussion of technical issues and less evidence of inadequate understanding of costume, lighting, sound and set design in the theatre – all playing their part in the communication of dramatic meaning through sign and symbol. Yet there are still some areas where confusions lie with the most telling being in relation to properties (props) and set. A chair is not a prop, it is part of the set, unless a character picks it up and uses it for a particular purpose – to jam a door shut, for example.

A few candidates attempted to answer all the questions in **Sections B** and **C** and in such cases all are marked with the final mark awarded to the answer which addressed the greatest number of assessment criteria. Naturally, because of the time required to produce a strong answer for a 25–mark question, such candidates were unlikely to score above single figures for each section. Centres are encouraged to advise candidates in this respect before they sit the examination.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Most candidates understood the requirements of this question and were pleasingly able to identify a prop and its relevance to the extract. There were only a few instances of confusing props with set or set dressing. The most popular prop was the 'gavel', followed by a 'book'. There were a few that mentioned an 'alcohol bottle' which is not stated, but had used their artistic interpretation from the stage directions about the judge being a drunk. Some candidates struggled to choose props that were appropriate to the time period e.g. a 'plastic bottle'.

Question 2

There were many responses that used MR FANG's 'gavel' as a means of creating a sound effect – which was acceptable, as was the sound of OLIVER fighting to get out of the coffin, however these sound effects would be live and not recorded. The more successful answers were able to identify key sound effects that were required within the stage directions of the text. Non-diegetic sounds such as 'slow piano music' were less effective, especially when vaguely referenced to the text.

Question 3

This was a straightforward question and most candidates were able to pick up 3 marks here – usually responding with a vocal, a physical and a facial suggestion. There was a tendency to write too much in this response. The most successful responses concisely bullet-pointed three pieces of advice.

Question 4

This was quite a difficult question for most candidates. Many were able to identify ways of increasing the emotional intensity and the advice they would give to their actors to achieve it, but many were unable to comment on the effect this would have on the audience. The more successful responses used quotes to support their ideas.

Question 5

Many candidates were able to pick out two key areas for their actors to improve, discuss how they would do it and also discuss how this would improve the overall effect of this sequence for the audience. Other candidates struggled to address the question, providing analysis but insufficient focus on how the performance would be improved.

Question 6

Most candidates were able to identify that DODGER and THE DODGER were two different characters, one the narrator, played by the same actor and many were able to comment on how the actor could effectively transition from one to the other. Some candidates understood how costume could help in differentiating character with some links made to Brecht's epic theatre. There were a number of responses, however, that seemed to think that a narrator must remain still, monotone and flat and in some instances, there was more character analysis than specifically how the roles in the given extract might be played.

Question 7

This was a very successful question – many candidates were able to identify the most dramatically powerful section of their devised work and many seemed to enjoy writing about it. The higher order answers were very perceptive in their evaluation of the effect on their target audience. Candidates sometimes focused on more than one point of emotional intensity, and some struggled to understand where the emotional intensity occurred and effectively analyse how it was created, concentrating more on plot than the planning and skills involved.

Question 8

Candidates were, for the most part, able to identify a satisfying ending, with some evaluation/discussion of effectiveness but again struggled with analysing the components that made it so, other than character and/or plot analysis and in some cases an overly narrative response with much description.

Section B

Question 9

This was a relatively popular question. Many candidates were able to identify the convention of multi-role and the opportunities this affords the actors/director. The best answers looked at the key skills in multi-roling, physical theatre, ensemble work, transitions and vocal aspects in creating atmosphere and ambience. There were some excellent responses to this question with some very detailed and creative directorial concepts. Some candidates made limited reference to the text, giving instead an overview of Brechtian theatre and techniques that the company could utilise. In some cases, there was a lack of understanding about what this question was asking with a number of candidates writing their own planned essays on individual characters rather than the company as a whole.

Question 10

This question was, by far, the most popular in this section. Many candidates were able to discuss the technical/production aspects that would help to create FAGIN's hideout, but the higher achieving answers

were able to discuss these elements and then go on to explore how the actors could work with these elements to help fully realise the sequence. Most candidates did concentrate on conveying the 'atmosphere' through whichever of the elements they chose to write about with some references to Victorian industrialisation and poverty in England. Some candidates focused on the narrative, with some otherwise good responses let down by lack of examples.

Question 11

This was generally a very successful question for those that attempted it. The question offered the candidates the possibility to be creative and show their understanding of the stagecraft required to realise the extract. There were some excellent responses showing a great degree of theatrical insight with a wide range of technical knowledge demonstrated. Some candidates focused on the ensemble to create location or employed Brechtian techniques but others were unsure of how to use design aspects to show location and offered impractical and unviable solutions. Less successful responses focused only on just one or two elements of design often with lack of reference to the text.

Section C

Question 12

This question was, by far, the most popular choice in this section. Many candidates tended to write lengthy character studies without actually commenting on how the characterisation techniques they used helped to realise these characters. Several approached the question through the use of costume, voice and movement with reference to such starting points as 'hot-seating' or Stanislavski's 'emotion memory'. Candidates understood for the most part that they needed to evaluate and discuss characterisation and how they had made the characters credible, but there was a sense in some responses of an inability to break down the skills needed in order for meaningful evaluation to be achieved. A number of candidates discussed research but then failed to link this to specific examples in the piece and there were some overly narrative responses where the plot was re-told.

Question 13

The least popular choice of this section and one that many candidates found difficult and not many very successful responses were seen. There was the opportunity to reflect on all aspects of the drama process – the shaping of the material, the performance elements and the management of group dynamics. There were very few responses that effectively discussed what dramatic skills they had learned, or what they had learned about the devising process. There were many candidates who could explain to some degree what they had learned in the process with some good examples of what they did in the drama but rarely with adequate reflection. For some it was an opportunity to give a plot analysis of their devised piece without tangible learning. Many candidates used this question as a means to discuss what they had actually learned about the stimulus itself or about the other cultures they had researched to create the piece.

Question 14

This question saw some excellent creative responses. It would seem that the candidates had a fantastic time devising and realising these pieces and the resources they used were creative and well chosen. The most successful responses were able to identify the technical resource used and then evaluate the effect this resource had on the piece and the audience. Several candidates, as part of the evaluation, considered what could have been done with additional resources and how that could have enhanced the performance. There were, however, a number of candidates who meandered into a general discussion of the devised piece.

DRAMA

Paper 0411/02
Coursework

Administration

Paperwork

For most centres, the administration of the assessment proved straightforward with the relevant paperwork being completed accurately, legibly and in a timely fashion. Though few in number, there were some notable exceptions to this, however.

Some centres did not submit any Internal Candidate Mark Sheets (ICMS); others submitted them only for the sample of six candidates rather than for the cohort as a whole; and some MS1 forms were illegible, thus making it impossible to verify whether the marks awarded on the ICMS forms matched what had been submitted to Cambridge. There were also a number of transcription errors.

Comments provided on the ICMS forms were, for the most part, detailed and helpful, setting out clear reasons in support of the marks that had been awarded and avoiding the temptation to restate words and phrases from the assessment criteria. Some ICMS forms were over personalised, however, and included unnecessary information about such things as a candidate's level of commitment, disposition, personality or popularity with other candidates. In other cases, marks appeared to have been awarded on the basis of a candidate's confidence on the stage – sometimes misplaced confidence – rather than because of demonstrable acting skills. A small minority of centres wrote little or nothing to support the marks awarded, which was unhelpful to the moderation process.

Almost all centres selected an appropriate sample of six candidates, which included the highest- and lowest-marked candidate and provided good coverage of the mark ranges in-between. However, several centres chose the sample poorly, selecting candidates at mark points in close proximity to each other, which made it difficult to tailor scaling adjustments as the sample provided insufficient coverage of the mark range. A number of centres did not choose a sample at all, wrongly leaving the Moderator to perform this task.

Recordings

Some centres sent the sample of candidates' work on six individualised DVDs. This meant that several performances were unnecessarily replicated on each disc, adding to the complexity of the moderation process for no discernible gain. There were also some incomplete submissions where centres did not send the recordings of all three performances for each candidate in the sample.

For most performances, candidates introduced themselves to camera, dressed as they would be seen in the subsequent performance, stating their candidate number and the role they would be playing. Moderators were grateful where teachers provided additional comments on the ICMS to identify candidates. A few centres did not identify any of the candidates in the group pieces, which made the moderation process complex.

Most recordings were of high quality in terms of both picture and sound although some recordings were dogged by poor sound quality. This was most common in cases when centres had made the recordings during a break or lunchtime when there were high levels of extraneous noise. Sometimes, music from nearby practice rooms drowned out the candidates' spoken lines. There were also problems where powerful stage lighting interfered with the quality of the picture, the brightness making it difficult to discern the facial expressions of performers.

The quality of filming was generally good, however, and appeared to be a fair representation of what took place on stage. Some recordings were not helped by inadequate camera work: pieces were filmed from waist up, which restricted the assessment of physicality; some camera operators were over enthusiastic in

zooming in and out of the action in a way that in extreme cases induced nausea; in other instances, the camera appeared to have been positioned on the floor such that the actors gave the impression of towering over the stage.

Performance work

Extracts from plays

Moderators reported that the standard of acting was generally high. The majority of candidates were well prepared and delivered assured pieces of drama that communicated well to their audience. The majority of pieces were performed to a live audience, which allowed the candidates to feed off the energy this generated. Extracts were mainly of the correct length and were appropriately selected.

The standard of acting skills was often commendable, with a clear sense of purpose and direction, both in the monologues and the group pieces, and convincing delivery of lines. There were very few candidates who suffered memory lapses, and even when these did occur, it was more a case of slight stumbles than completely forgetting or corpsing. The standard of articulation, enunciation and projection was mostly good, although in their efforts to project well some candidates tended either to shout or demonstrate limited differentiation of volume. It should be borne in mind by candidates that shouting is not the only possible expression of anger and that much tension on stage can be created through the silences between words as well as through the passion with which words might be delivered.

That said, pacing – or perhaps lack of pace – was a problem even with some good candidates, and many performances tended to proceed at whatever pace they started, which led to some uniform renditions that did not sustain the audience's attention. The same was true of volume: once a piece began, there was seldom very much by way of differentiation, although such qualities were clearly evident in the strongest performances. Fast-paced pieces sometimes acquired an almost comical air through the unremitting speed at which they were delivered; slow-paced performances, which were more numerous, often gave the impression of being a struggle to keep going. Some weaker performances were static and allowed limited movement, which meant that pace and variation became a real problem.

The selection of repertoire was a key determinant of success, and most pieces were well chosen and appropriate to the candidates' skills and interests. Centres are reminded that plays selected must have been published with an ISBN number. Internet downloads and rediscovered, unpublished classroom dramas are unlikely to be appropriate. Centres are advised to consult the lists of repertoire included each year in this report as a guide to the type of plays that have been used in previous sessions. Some centres inappropriately allowed candidates to use the same text for both the monologue and the group text piece, which – although not proscribed by the syllabus – inevitably served to limit the range of acting skills that candidates were able to demonstrate.

The strongest performances were a reflection of thorough research and a clear understanding of the character's function in the chosen play. A number of centres produced cinematic 'talking heads' monologues that were performed directly to camera, which offered little insight into how the extract fitted into the journey of the play, how it might be staged, what other characters were on stage or how they related to the chosen character.

Some candidates chose extracts that were too advanced for their ability or which were beyond their maturity to address. Centres should consider carefully the appropriateness of material and match this carefully with the experience and technical ability of their candidates. Where this was not the case, the result was a sense of struggle with the social, historical or cultural context of the play's original settings, or with language and values that meant little to a 16-year old. Candidates with limited skills in spoken English were inevitably challenged, but this was occasionally exacerbated through poor choice of repertoire that was too wordy or over complicated. The strongest performances were where the candidate(s) had fully researched the context of the extract and could reveal understanding of what has preceded the action. Weaker performances revealed a lack of understanding of style and communicated little sense of truth.

Moderators noted some improvement in the overall approach to staging, with less reliance than in previous sessions on 'desk, chair and phone' scenes. Some groups were nevertheless limited by their performance space itself and, although this did not directly affect the marks awarded, candidates who performed in corridors or cluttered classrooms struggled to achieve the same sense of performance as those who performed on stage or in a more clearly defined performance area. A number of performances were given in

spaces that needed to be tidied of furniture, props and costumes since these provided unnecessary distraction and inhibited the sense of performance.

Candidates were not required to perform in elaborate costume, and most chose to wear clothing that was sympathetic to the role being performed, or theatre blacks so as not to distract from it. However, a number of candidates presented themselves in school uniform, which was inappropriate. Similar problems arose with props and set, where some performances were spoilt by clumsy use of props such as flowers and daggers that interfered with truthful communication. Likewise, too much set was evident in some more naturalistic pieces with many scene changes, resulting in props dropping, and banging and dragging of furniture across the stage.

Devised Pieces

Moderators reported that devised pieces were often weaker than the performances of extracts from plays, and that for these pieces the marks awarded for Assessment Objective 3 (Acting Skills) were often generous. Often the material was too weak to allow candidates to evidence their full development of acting skills, which should have meant that marks for A03 were lower than repertoire work. Often, however, the marks awarded were higher, which was a frequent cause of a centre's marks being adjusted. Assessment Objective 2 (Devising) was also often over-marked as teachers tended to reward effort and commitment rather than dramatic insight and skill. There was little reference to refinement of ideas and function of characters within the pieces. Moderators also reported a few cases of malpractice, where centres had wrongly allowed candidates to use one of the stimuli from the written paper as the basis for their devised coursework piece.

The success of each devised piece was often related to the potential of the stimulus chosen. The strongest performances were well shaped, taking a simple idea and using several dramatic techniques in a sophisticated manner to deliver a clear message. There was much creative work that engaged with contemporary global issues such as climate change or terrorism, and which generated some very strong ensemble pieces. In fact, many of the most successful pieces were based on challenging stimuli from current affairs. Some centres chose to explore events in their country's political history and topical issues, which meant that the work was extremely relevant and there was a strong sense that the candidates were totally engaged.

Soap-opera style pieces, of which there were several, were rarely entertaining or thought-provoking. Much of the work produced was naturalistic and often predictable or clichéd, which did not allow candidates the opportunity to give of their best as such pieces were often very slow and lacked pace or variation. There were occasional attempts at comedy but those candidates who attempted it found it a difficult style to handle on stage and only a few managed the challenging art of effectively balancing verbal and physical, situational and observational humour.

The strongest work reflected a good level of understanding of the intended performance style and how to work within it to create effective theatre. Such groups were very conscious of the performance imagery they were constructing and used a variety of dramatic techniques such as unison, choral speech and ensemble work, as well as effective use of space, in a powerful way to communicate to their audience. The strongest pieces were cohesive, often integrating physical theatre work, abstract work and narrative work to convey meaning. There were several examples of some excellent physical and abstract work that created a purposeful piece of drama with a clear and well-shaped message.

Frequently-used plays for repertoire performances

The list below is indicative of the range of plays from which extracts were drawn in June 2018 and is not exhaustive. Taken in conjunction with the Principal Moderator's reports from previous sessions, it may be helpful in providing centres with guidance as to repertoire that may be appropriate. However, it should be noted that the list is not prescriptive and, the nature of drama being what it is, what works well with one group of candidates may not work with another.

Edward Albee	<i>The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?</i> <i>Three Tall Women</i> <i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i> <i>Zoo Story</i>
Jean Anouilh	<i>Antigone</i>
Aristophanes	<i>The Birds</i>
Alan Ayckbourn	<i>Absurd Person Singular</i> <i>Between Mouthfuls</i> <i>Confusions</i> <i>Invisible Friends</i> <i>Mother Figure</i>
Richard Bean	<i>One Man, Two Guvnors</i>
Steven Berkoff	<i>Dog</i> <i>Messiah</i> <i>Metamorphosis</i> <i>The Trial</i>
Edward Bond	<i>Eleven Vests</i>
Bertolt Brecht	<i>Fear and Misery of the Third Reich</i> <i>Happy End</i> <i>The Life of Galileo</i>
Howard Brenton	<i>Berlin Bertie</i>
Richard Cameron	<i>Can't Stand Up For Falling Down</i>
David Campton	<i>Smile</i>
Jim Cartwright	<i>The Mobile Phone Show</i> <i>Road</i> <i>Two</i>
Anton Chekhov	<i>The Boor</i> <i>The Cherry Orchard</i> <i>Uncle Vanya</i>
Caryl Churchill	<i>Love and Information</i> <i>Seven Jewish Children</i> <i>Top Girls</i>
Noel Coward	<i>Blithe Spirit</i> <i>Easy Virtue</i>
Sarah Daniels	<i>Dust</i> <i>Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You</i> <i>Taking Breath</i>
Shelagh Delaney	<i>A Taste of Honey</i>

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Christopher Durang	<i>Laughing Wild</i>
Euripides	<i>The Bacchae</i> <i>Medea</i>
Dario Fo	<i>Accidental Death of an Anarchist</i> <i>The Virtuous Burglar</i>
Athol Fugard	<i>My Children, My Africa</i>
John Godber	<i>Bouncers</i> <i>Shakers</i> <i>Teechers</i>
Nicolai Gogal	<i>The Government Inspector</i> <i>The Marriage</i>
Tanika Gupta	<i>Inside Out</i>
David Hare	<i>Skylight</i> <i>Stuff Happens</i>
Barry Hines	<i>Kes</i>
Henrick Ibsen	<i>A Doll's House</i>
Eugene Ionesco	<i>Rhinoceros</i>
Charlotte Keatley	<i>My Mother Said I Never Should</i>
Dennis Kelly	<i>DNA</i> <i>Orphans</i>
Bryony Lavery	<i>More Light</i> <i>Stockholm</i> <i>The Believers</i>
David Mamet	<i>Oleanna</i>
Arthur Miller	<i>A View From The Bridge</i> <i>Death of a Salesman</i> <i>The Crucible</i>
Michael Morpurgo	<i>War Horse</i>
Edith Nesbit adapted by Mike Kenny	<i>The Railway Children</i>
Peter Nichols	<i>A Day in the Death of Joe Egg</i>
John Osborne	<i>Look Back in Anger</i>
John Pielmeler	<i>Agnes of God</i>
Harold Pinter	<i>The Caretaker</i> <i>The Dwarfs</i> <i>The Lover</i>
Steven Poliakoff	<i>City Sugar</i>
J B Priestley	<i>An Inspector Calls</i>
Mark Ravenhill	<i>Some Explicit Polaroids</i>

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Yasmina Reza	<i>Art</i>
Willy Russell	<i>Blood Brothers</i> <i>Educating Rita</i> <i>Our Day Out</i>
Diane Samuels	<i>Kindertransport</i>
Peter Shaffer	<i>Amadeus</i> <i>Equus</i> <i>The Royal Hunt of the Sun</i>
William Shakespeare	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> <i>Hamlet</i> <i>Julius Caesar</i> <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> <i>Othello</i> <i>Richard III</i> <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> <i>The Taming of the Shrew</i> <i>The Tempest</i>
Richard Brinsley Sheridan	<i>School for Scandal</i>
Neil Simon	<i>Barefoot in the Park</i> <i>Plaza Suite</i> <i>Rumours</i> <i>The Dinner Party</i> <i>The Gingerbread Lady</i> <i>The Odd Couple</i>
Sophocles	<i>Electra</i>
Wole Soyinka	<i>The Lion and the Jewel</i> <i>Trials of Brother Jero</i>
Simon Stephens	<i>Punk Rock</i> <i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time</i>
Shelagh Stephenson	<i>Five Kinds of Silence</i> <i>The Memory of Water</i>
Don Taylor	<i>The Roses of Eyam</i>
Enda Walsh	<i>Chat Room</i>
Keith Waterhouse	<i>Billy Liar</i>
H G Wells	<i>The Invisible Man</i>
Timberlake Wertenbaker	<i>For the Love of a Nightingale</i>
Oscar Wilde	<i>An Ideal Husband</i> <i>The Importance of Being Earnest</i>
Tennessee Williams	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> <i>The Glass Menagerie</i> <i>The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore</i>
Thornton Wilder	<i>Our Town</i>
August Wilson	<i>Fences</i>

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