

Specimen Paper Answers
Component 1 – Written exam

Cambridge International AS & A Level
Drama 9482

For examination from 2021



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Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS & A Level Drama, and to show examples of very good answers.

We have selected questions from *9482 Drama 2021 Specimen Paper 01*, Section A and Section B for examination from 2021. There are 10 questions in Component 1, and candidates are asked to answer **two** questions, **one** from Section A and **one** from Section B.

In this booklet, we have provided two answers from each section:

- question 3(a) and question 5(a) from Section A, and
- question 9(a) and question 10(b) from Section B.

These questions require candidates to answer in extended prose. **Candidates may support their answers with sketches and diagrams where appropriate, but these will not substitute for written analysis.**

Each question is followed by an example of a good answer with an examiner comment on performance. Comments are given to indicate where and why marks were awarded, and how additional marks could have been obtained. In this way, it is possible to understand what candidates have done to gain their marks and how they could improve.

For each answer a likely mark band is indicated, relating to tables A and B for Section A, and tables C and D for Section B in the mark scheme. This is intended as a broad indication of the likely eventual mark and should not be taken as a definitive mark for the answer.

The specimen papers and mark schemes are available to download from the School Support Hub at www.cambridgeinternational.org/support

9482 Drama 2021 Specimen Paper 01

9482 Drama 2021 Specimen Paper Mark Scheme 01

Teacher and learning resources are available on the School Support Hub at www.cambridgeinternational.org/support

Assessment overview

Component 1

Written exam 2 hours

60 marks

Candidates answer two questions: one question from Section A and one question from Section B.

Open-book exam

Externally assessed

50% of the AS Level

25% of the A Level

Component 3

Theatre-making and performing Coursework

60 marks

There are two compulsory parts: devising and performing.

Candidates work in a group to devise and perform a play inspired by one of the theatre practitioners, traditions or styles prescribed in the syllabus.

There are two parts to the devising coursework:

- 15–20 minute group devised performance
- 800 word analysis and evaluation

Candidates individually create a programme of thematically linked materials and perform it.

There is one part to the performing coursework:

- 6–8 minute individual performance

Internally assessed and externally moderated

25% of the A Level

Component 2

Practical drama Coursework

60 marks

There are two compulsory parts: devising and performing.

Candidates work in a group to devise and perform a play based on the stimulus prescribed in the syllabus.

There are two parts to the devising coursework:

- 10–15 minute devised piece
- 3 minute self-evaluation

Candidates work in a group to prepare and perform an extract from a published play of their own choice.

There is one part to the performing coursework:

- 10–25 minute scripted performance

Internally assessed and externally moderated

50% of the AS Level

25% of the A Level

Component 4

Theatre in context Coursework

60 marks

Candidates explore performance texts, a theatre genre, a theatre practitioner's work or a performance style.

There is one part to the research coursework:

- 2500–3000 word research essay

Externally assessed

25% of the A Level

There are three routes for Cambridge International AS & A Level Drama:

Route	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4
1 AS Level only (Candidates take all AS components in the same exam series)	✓	✓		
2 A Level (staged over two years) Year 1 AS Level*	✓	✓		
Year 2 Complete the A Level			✓	✓
3 A Level (Candidates take all components in the same exam series)	✓	✓	✓	✓

* Candidates carry forward their AS Level result subject to the rules and time limits described in the *Cambridge Handbook*.

Candidates following an AS Level route will be eligible for grades a–e. Candidates following an A Level route are eligible for grades A*–E.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1 Knowledge and understanding

Candidates demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of drama text and its performance context, and of theatre-making traditions and theatre practice.

AO2 Devising

Candidates demonstrate skill and creativity in devising original pieces of theatre for group performance.

AO3 Performing

Candidates demonstrate acting skills in performing a range of text-based materials.

AO4 Analysing and evaluating

Candidates demonstrate the ability to analyse and reflect on their own performance practice and devising processes; candidates evaluate their own work and that of playwrights, performers or theatre-makers.

Section A

Question 3(a)

Death of a Salesman – Arthur Miller

Read the specified extract:

From: Act 1, bottom of page 34, entrance of UNCLE BEN

Up to and including: Act 1, page 38

WILLY: Sure, the flute, that's right!

[New music is heard, a high, rollicking tune.]

- (a) How would you perform the role of BEN, in the extract, in order to convey your interpretation of his character to the audience?

[30]

Specimen answer

In this answer, I will offer a performer's perspective as to how I would approach playing the role of Ben. Ben, or Uncle Ben as he is referred to in the play, is Willy Loman's older brother, who died some time before the start of the play. Although he appears on stage, he exists primarily in Willy's memories but occupies an undefined space between the living and the dead. Willy holds Ben in considerable esteem, pointing him out as a role model to his sons, Biff and Happy, because of the immense financial success that Ben achieved without having to put in years of hard work. Ben struck lucky and found diamonds in Africa, and Willy is taken with the idea of instant riches. My approach to playing the role of Ben would therefore be to establish Ben as Willy's dream but also his delusion.

To do this, I would show the uneasy tension between Ben's appearance in the here-and-now and his actual location in the afterlife. My overall approach would be to achieve this through excellent physical alignment, stylised movement, very deliberate placement gesture, highly controlled energy, and a series of vocal, facial and physical expressions that emphasise the ghostly nature of Ben and therefore the unequal nature of his relationship with Willy. This relationship would manifest itself through the proximity of the interaction, controlled physical contact, steady pacing, and a heavy reliance on non-verbal communication.

My approach would be immediately obvious to the audience from the opening of this section through Ben's physical appearance and costume. This would convey a sense of him being from beyond, but at the same time very real to Willy in the present time, and I want to strike a careful balance between the two. In consultation with the costume designer, I would build on

Specimen answer, continued

elements of previous productions. The original stage production of 1949 formed the basis for the 1951 film version, where Ben is dressed smartly in a dark suit with a white shirt and tie, and wearing a dark fedora. The RSC production of 2015 took a similar approach to the style of costume but used a white suit and fedora to symbolise that Ben is dead. I would retain the dark suit of the original production but aim to show that Ben is dead, not so much by his costume, as by his physicality, his positioning on stage, delivery of lines, his vocal pitch and general sense of belonging to a bygone age.

At my entry on page 37, I would take my lead from Miller's stage directions, especially the references to Ben being 'certain of his destiny' and having 'an aura of far places' about him. At the opening of the play, Miller identifies the performance area where 'all of Willy's imaginings take place' as being the forward area consisting of the apron 'curving beyond the forestage into the orchestra'. The directions indicate that Ben's entrance is accompanied by music, and I would build on the approach from the very start of the play of a solo flute. I would ensure that the motif had a sense of mystery about it, perhaps basing it on the whole-tone scale, which is often used to create a sense of other-worldliness. Unlike in the film version, I would not use high-pitched strings as this would add an unintentional element of melodrama.

While the flute theme underscores the action, I would emphasise Ben's confidence by drawing myself up to my full height as I occupied the stage-space, and by directing my focus into the middle distance before any verbal interaction with Willy. I would also want to emphasise the brief time I had on stage and therefore the stage direction to 'look at his watch' would have significance in conveying his obsession with time, appointments, transport and riches. I would emphasise this by projecting at a fairly high pitch the line, 'I only have a few minutes'. I would also make Ben's pronunciation and delivery more formal than Willy's, almost as if he is delivering blank verse rather than dialogue. I would then introduce a beat before the ethereal, slightly chilling way that Ben should laugh when reflecting on what Brooklyn now looks like.

In delivering Ben's lines in this passage, I would try to achieve a balance between naturalistic and expressionistic performance conventions. Ben's lines are initially interspersed between the dialogue between Willy and Charley and this requires careful timing and vocal control as I speak without either of them directly looking at Ben or addressing him. I would seek to maximise the mental torment that this creates for Willy, gradually raising the volume of my lines to the proclamation that 'opportunity is tremendous in Alaska, William', and emphasising the use of Willy's full name. This is followed by a more confessional, passage of

Specimen answer, continued

naturalistic dialogue, where Ben asks Willy a series of questions about the family while Willy is still attempting a conversation with Charley. In delivering these lines, I will show that Ben may be from another world but he is not transcendent and therefore needs to elicit information from Willy about the here-and-now. For this, I would change my focus towards Willy, drawing closer to him and almost whispering in his ear while Willy is apparently still talking to Charley. However, I will take control of the dialogue so that I am leading it, with Charley following my pacing.

I will create a dramatic moment when Ben appears to walk through the kitchen wall and directly addresses Willy. I would emphasise the physicality of Ben's handshake with Willy as the world of the present collides with the hereafter. I would use this as a signifier for Ben to return to the former over-worldly approach to delivering his lines, making declamatory statements rather than engaging in genuine conversation. I would play Ben in this section as someone without any doubts or sense of irony especially in his speech: 'At that age I had a very faulty view of geography, William. I discovered after a few days that I was heading due south, so instead of Alaska I ended up in Africa.' I would deliver this almost as a little performance expecting to provoke admiration for my exploits, with a full emphasis on the word 'Africa' to show my ability to cope with anything.

Through this exalted style, I would seek to emphasise Ben's dismissiveness of Willy, and his sense of condescension in his exchanges with Linda and the boys as well as with Willy. I would work towards placing great emphasis on the line, 'when I was seventeen, I walked into the jungle, and when I was twenty-one I walked out'. This is a line that comes a few pages earlier in the play and is part of Willy's envy and fantasy about Ben. Now I would say it slowly and with authority, taking time for the laugh and placing the final phrase: 'And by God I was rich.' to rub in Willy's failure. The line triggers Willy's excitement, but I would immediately quash this by my insistence that my time is coming to an end. 'I have an appointment in Ketchikan Tuesday week.' would cut through Willy's admiration and be delivered with a sense of urgency and self-importance.

At the end of this passage, there is a slightly more reflective moment, as Ben recalls their father played the flute. At this point Ben and Willy are in fact sharing a memory, and the reference to the flute brings in a new tune. I would say the line more softly than the rest of the passage, as if just for a moment I am letting go of the self-importance and energy that I have shown up to now.

Examiner comment

The candidate is very clear about the approach that would be taken and explains well how the performance would balance the ghost-like and the natural.

There is a very clear knowledge of the purpose of the role and a good overview of how the role would be shaped in a stylised manner within a naturalistic play. The candidate's approach is informed by an understanding of performance history, which is a strength, although there could be more exploration of the specific American context of the play and how that might affect the performance, or be adapted to a different cultural environment.

Although there is useful discussion of detail, there is scope to offer further examples of how specific lines would be delivered, considering, for example, inflection, tone, pitch, accent, timing, and how these would establish Ben's character for the audience. It would also be helpful for the candidate to discuss the possible reactions of Willy and Charley to the way that Ben's lines are delivered.

The mark awarded would be likely to be in the range

17–20 marks for **Performance interpretation of drama text and use of detail**

7–8 marks for **Knowledge and understanding of style, genre and context.**

Question 5(a)*Enron* – Lucy Prebble

Read the specified extract

From: Act 1, Scene 9, towards the bottom of page 54*Split Scene.**Beneath:***Fastow's** lair is revealed.**Up to and including:** Act 1, Scene 9, page 58 (end of scene)**Fastow** Clever girls.*Blackout.*

(a) As a director, how would your staging of the non-verbal sequences of the extract achieve a dramatic impact for the audience? Choose **two** of the following sequences:

- CLAUDIA ROE's 'grand entrance'
- Fireworks and 'party' at its 'peak of excitement'
- The emergence of the RAPTORS.

[30]

Specimen answer

This extract is taken from Act 1, Scene 9, which forms the ending of the first Act of Enron. The scene presents challenges for the director as it calls for a split scene and I will discuss this first as it has implications for the way in which I would direct the non-verbal sequences of the extract. The pacing of the scene and the physicality of the actors would need to be energetic and well-paced. There would be a major climax at Claudia's entrance, followed by a moment of stillness before the fireworks begin. I will focus of these two sequences in my answer.

The playwright has already used a split scene in Act One, Scene 5. In that case, the split was between a location 'beneath' (the Enron gym) and a location 'above' (Ken Lay's office). The principle of splitting the setting would therefore be established in the minds of the audience so it would be no surprise when I use the same principle again in this extract in Act One, Scene 9. In directing Scene 9, I would split the stage horizontally, working with the designer to create a contrasting sense of height/depth above or below street level. This would mean that the media event appears to the audience at the top of the Enron skyscraper, indicated by the view through window reveals, implying that Jeffrey Skilling has conquered the world, with Andy Fastow's lair being at the bottom of the building, with no outside light or view, near where the gym would have been situated. The stage-space would not be equally split, however, and I would allocate a much larger space for the party as it requires a greater number of actors to be on stage, and there needs to be a balcony outside the windows for the

Specimen answer, continued

actors to move onto as the fireworks start to go off later. By contrast, the lair requires space for a maximum of two actors and I would situate this stage left. This more confined space would reflect the description of 'lair' and would also give intensity to Fastow's newfound sense of confidence now that his idea has been accepted by Skilling. The greater part of the stage would be allocated to the celebratory party. I would work closely with the sound designer to differentiate the party atmosphere with drinks, party poppers and excited chatter from the cold surroundings of the gym.

Claudia Roe enters at the climax of the party celebrations, and I would create a scene of dancing as the employees talk excitedly and flirt with each other. I would increase the volume of screams and laughter to climax at the point where Skilling is being treated as a messianic figure with his announcement that Enron will increase bandwidth to supply video-on-demand. This will be accompanied by exaggerated physicality from all of the Enron employees, all clamouring to shake hands with Skilling, patting him on the back, straining to ruffle his hair, and with facial expressions that radiate the intensity of the moment. Pairs of employees would look wildly at each other's eyes, and there would be an immediate disregard for personal space as screams and laughter rise to a crescendo. The lighting would be balanced between influencing the mood of the celebration and ensuring that there is an appropriate level of visibility, especially for Skilling and subsequently for Claudia. There would be a glitter ball to distribute the light in order to add to the party atmosphere and the intensity of the lighting would contrast with the other portion of the stage, where Fastow's den would be subdued and the actors in a virtual freeze-frame.

The volume would be enhanced and expanded by recorded voices on the soundscape, and this would give way to the roar of the motorbike on which Claudia enters. Her entry on the bike and dressed entirely in leathers would offer a public proclamation of her sexual domination of Skilling that was introduced in Scene 2. The bike would be in the central area of the performance space showing that Claudia has taken complete control of the performance space and the attention of the Enron staff, and has upstaged Skilling and Lay without a word being spoken. As she stops, the motor-bike engine would rise to a deafening volume and then stop as each of the actors except Skilling, Lay and Claudia lets off a party popper.

As director, I would ensure that there is a moment of stillness, which would create suspense before the fireworks start to go off. This would trigger the physical movement of the actors spilling out onto the balcony and would also expand the performance area of the 'party', allowing it to give the impression that the celebration has taken over the entire stage.

Specimen answer, continued

However, while the fireworks are going off, the split stage would come to life with Fastow preparing to receive the Raptors. In this answer I am focusing on the fireworks rather than the Raptors but it is difficult to separate them completely as the director is required to represent silence and stealth alongside exaltation and celebration. In directing the fireworks, I would ensure that the sound level could be controlled subtly so that there would be a sense of ambient moments while the exuberance continues. I would ensure that there was a point where most actors were on the balcony looking out of the scene and away from the audience. They would transition to a much lower level of physical movement, almost a tableau, which would enable the audience to focus on the action in Fastow's den. This shift of focus would also be achieved by the soundtrack reducing the sound of the party to a distant blur, while subtly enhancing the ambient sound of the den. To ensure that the audience's attention moved back to the fireworks I would reverse the effect on the soundtrack and bring the party scene to life with movement and enhanced lighting.

Examiner comment

This is a clear answer that sets out a directorial overview of the passage and demonstrates a secure understanding of the dramatic significance of the extract within the play as a whole.

The candidate is clear about the way in which the stage-space would be designed and this is important and needs to be established before any reference is made to how the specific passages would be staged. The candidate has opted to write about the entrance of Claudia and the staging of the fireworks outside and how these would be set in the larger part of the split stage.

There is a clear understanding of how the balcony would form a stage expansion area, which would be essential during the fireworks as a means of taking the physical energy off the stage in preparation for the emergence of the Raptors in the other part of the stage.

The approach is entirely workable, but there is scope for the candidate to offer more detail as to how the director would approach the physicality and blocking or movement of the non-verbal sequences. There could also be more engagement with the distinctive style and genre of the play.

The mark awarded would be likely to be in the range

13–16 marks for **Performance interpretation of drama text and use of detail**

5–6 marks for **Knowledge and understanding of style, genre and context.**

Section B

Question 9(a)

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time – Simon Stephens

- (a) As a director, how would you direct your ensemble in **two or three** linked or separate sections of the play in order to achieve your intended effects for the audience?

[30]

Specimen answer

I will discuss two separate passages from The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time. This will enable me to show a variety of intended effects for the audience that will help create contrast in the performance. The first passage is taken from the opening of the play, as far as page 6, on Siobhan's line, 'I think that what you just said was very stupid'.

As a director, I would create an immediate sense of expectation at the opening of the play through the positioning of the ensemble all focused on the central stage image of the dead dog with the fork sticking out of its side. The lighting would come up abruptly on this tableau, and each member of the ensemble would have an individualised way of looking and waiting for something to happen. Although the stage directions indicate that the actors playing Christopher and Mrs Shears do not speak, I would create dramatic intensity by the chorus, positioned in a semi-circle, standing erect and speaking in unison, sotto voce, the line that Mrs Shears will pick up: 'what in fuck's name'. This would steadily rise in volume until the point at which the actor playing Mrs Shears would shout the line herself to Christopher. Until that moment, Mrs Shears and Christopher would be frozen, with the dog dividing them, but each avoiding eye contact. At this moment the pacing of the drama would accelerate, and there would be a new sense of expectation on the part of the audience as the chorus moves further outwards.

I would control this through the way I directed Siobhan in her role as Christopher's teacher. Her delivery would be utterly matter-of-fact and calm as she describes the scene of the dead dog. I would direct Siobhan to adopt a detached story-telling approach as she fulfils her function as a heterodiegetic narrator – in the story through her relationship with Christopher, but outside out it by means of her detached delivery. This would contrast with the frantic, interjecting lines from Mrs Shears with her hysterical screams to Christopher to 'get away from my dog'.

The contrasting use of space would be essential for my approach. At the foot of page 3, I would direct Christopher to step away, and for Siobhan to assume Christopher's role by

Specimen answer, continued

delivering his direct speech. I would have the actor playing Siobhan move closer to the dog, and the actor playing Christopher back off, making his first vocal contribution through groaning sounds that are almost animalistic to contrast with Siobhan's calm narrative voice. I would have this rise in volume and with greater physical intensity as the actor playing Siobhan moves back to the role of narrator.

In this passage, the interaction between characters is slightly stylised. For the entrance of Policeman 1, I would choose this actor from one of the company at right-angles to where Christopher is standing, in order to create an interrogative, and slightly combative entrance. I would ensure that there was something slightly absurd about the entry of the policeman. This would create an effect that is at odds with Society's view that it is Christopher that is unusual and not the police force. I would direct the policeman to exacerbate his walk, giving him a slightly comical air, perhaps emphasising that the leaf on the bottom of his shoe makes him walk in an unusual manner. I would want the audience to be unsettled by this apparently comic entrance, in the middle of such a moment of drama. This stereotyped portrayal of the policeman would contrast with the highly fluid, physical approach that I would direct Christopher to take.

In the extended passage of one-line exchanges that follows, I would direct the actors to continue this mismatch between the physical, fluid, visceral reactions of Christopher and the one-dimensional, awkward questions of the policeman. Christopher is on the floor and the policeman is standing, so I would want to emphasise the contrast between them. I would focus on the climax in tension at the foot of page 5 where the policeman tries to lift Christopher up by the arm, which is the first point at which there is a meeting of levels between them. Here the ensemble would have an important function in showing the danger of Christopher hitting the policeman, by reacting with a mixture of shock, surprise and excitement. Their reaction should trigger a similar sense in the audience of unease and concern for how the policeman will react and whether Christopher will be arrested.

I would direct the scene so that there was a freeze at the point immediately after the Policeman's very aggressive speech ending 'Is that understood?' with the ensemble looking at Christopher to see if he does understand. I would then direct the final contribution from Siobhan, 'I find people confusing' in a different manner as a means of introducing Christopher's first verbal contribution to the dialogue. Even though Siobhan is representing Christopher in the drama up to this point, I would now move them closer to each other and allow direct address and eye contact, with Siobhan's voice assuming a more accusatory tone on 'I never said that!' and her attempting to maintain eye contact with Christopher. He is

Specimen answer, continued

much more confident in interacting with Siobhan, and contradicts her fluently ('Yes you did'), unlike the more stilted and nervous way he engages with authority figures like the Policeman. Again, I will direct the ensemble to show amusement at Siobhan's momentary embarrassment when she reads out the line 'I want to do sex with you', which would enable the audience to share the humour for a brief moment. This opening section would therefore be a strong means of setting up the tensions in the drama and establishing the key function of the ensemble in allowing the drama to move fluidly between locations and help create focus for the audience.

For my second passage, I would focus on the scene just after the opening of Part Two of the play, the trip to London, which is between pages 53 and 59. This is a much more fluid passage than the first one and I would want the audience to respond with a sense of anticipation that Christopher's journey to London has begun. This is signalled by a complete change in the pacing and energy levels of the drama in a strongly ensemble scene.

At the start of the passage on page 53, members of the ensemble are positioned to reflect the stage directions to 'make Swindon town centre'. As a director, I would interpret this as meaning that the ensemble should represent both the spatial and physical layout of Swindon. In the first part of the passage, in his home town of Swindon, Christopher does not know how to find the railway station and the dialogue is entirely between him and a member of the company, who functions as the 'lady in the street'. I would direct the company to create a human maze around them, as Christopher and the lady bump along in an ever-changing formation. I would rehearse the section so that the maze would move from stage right to stage left, creating an uncertain and confusing surrounding for Christopher, who craves certainty. The use of different levels in the ensemble as they represent the maze would also represent moments when Christopher can see where he is going, only to then have his sense of direction blocked as the levels change. However, at the point where he reaches the station, I would direct the ensemble to pull apart completely and then create a moment of stillness for Christopher to deliver the line with a deadpan, 'and that was how I found the station'.

The second part of this passage calls for a higher energy level. I would shape this part of the passage around three approaches: projections of words onto the stage floor and walls (for example 'CAUTION WET FLOOR'), a powerful soundscape of the recorded voices continually overlapping and distorted like a railway station PA system, and a well-choreographed series of movement sequences by the company to create the feel of a busy railway station. This would include groups of people arriving or leaving, people struggling with luggage, people meeting and hugging, individuals pushing their way past and so on. Each group and movement would be carefully choreographed and critically Christopher would move in

Specimen answer, continued

increasing confusion between these groups. I would direct members of the company to put on simple costume items located around the sides of the acting area to create individualised characters, including the Station Policeman and the Man Behind Counter.

When the Station Policeman encounters Christopher towards the bottom of page 55 with the line ‘Are you all right, young man?’ the ensemble action would continue around them but the soundscape would reduce slightly in volume to enable the dialogue to be heard. The dialogue here is more comic in tone and faster paced than the earlier encounter with a Policeman in Part One, and although the Station Policeman is more concerned about Christopher, he still expresses frustration: ‘Christ alive. Yep. It’s twenty pounds.’ From the point of the ‘beat’ on page 58, I would direct the ensemble to be increasingly energised and busy in their specific movements, criss-crossing the stage as passengers or railway staff and occasionally getting between Christopher and the audience. Christopher would respond with increasing anxiety as he attempts to buy his ticket and the audience would sense this anxiety, knowing from previous scenes that physical contact could trigger a breakdown. I would therefore direct the ensemble to approach and move away from him, building up the anticipation of a physical encounter. The Man Behind Counter would also speak with increasing frustration and annoyance as he answers Christopher’s questions, and the soundscape would be increasing subtly in volume during this sequence to heighten the tension until somebody bumps into Christopher. I would make this a casual, accidental incident with somebody hurrying past, barely pausing to acknowledge it. Christopher’s response (barking like a dog) is immediate and shocking, but possibly also comic. The audience will sense that this could turn nasty, but the situation is rescued by Siobhan. She will be positioned in a different part of the space, highlighted in a spotlight, speaking in Christopher’s mind.

I would direct Siobhan to convey a strong sense of guidance to Christopher as he attempts to cope with the demands of buying his ticket and finding his train. On her line ‘Imagine a big red line across the floor’ I would direct the company to become more still and quiet, calmly creating the idea through physical positioning of a tunnel and a route to the platform which Christopher can follow. The end of the passage is more uplifting for the audience because after the pressures and tensions of the scene Christopher is seen to be making progress and starting to find his way.

Examiner comment

This is a strong answer that demonstrates a good understanding of the directorial standpoint and maintains a clear focus throughout on the requirement to direct the ensemble to achieve effects for the audience. The two contrasting passages from the play are well chosen.

At many points in the answer the candidate shows the ability to take an overview of how to direct the action to shape the drama for an audience. There is an effective contrast between the dramatic shaping at the opening of the play, and the approach taken in Part Two.

The length of the chosen sections and the focus on the ensemble mean that there is relatively little close exploration of how to direct the dialogue, but there is enough detail for the answer to be clear. The candidate could potentially consider more lines, exploring pace, tone, physicality, attitude, and also engage more explicitly with the characteristic style of the play, but overall this is an inventive explanation of directorial approach supported by a clear practical sense of theatre.

The mark awarded would be likely to be in the range

17–20 marks for **Performance interpretation of drama text and use of detail**

7–8 marks for **Knowledge and understanding of style, genre and context.**

Question 10(b)

Snow in Midsummer – Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig

- (b) As a designer of lighting, sound and projections, explain how your designs for **two or three** linked or separate sections of the play would be appropriate to your interpretation of *Snow in Midsummer*.

[30]

Specimen answer

This modern play relies on constant movement back and forth between the spirit world inhabited by ghosts, and the living world of power, corruption and suffering. One of the ways the two worlds are made real for the audience is the use of lighting, sound and projection to continually move the scene, change the atmosphere or simply tell the story by layering the past and present over each other. In this essay I will explore how my design ideas for these elements will enhance the drama and help take the audience from one level of awareness to the next.

The first section I will look at is Act 1 Scene 9, which contains two simultaneous locations, one in the present and one in the past, as well as supernatural elements that occur during the execution. The challenge to the designer is to create firstly a naturalistic scene in the New Harmony Guest House, and then overlay the scene between the Judge and Dou Yi onto that, signaling a change of location as well as time whilst retaining all the physical setting in terms of furniture on the stage.

To create the initial part of the scene, set at night as Fei-Fei is going to bed under the Yuan dynasty table, I would use a visible light source such as an interior domestic table lamp. This would be supplemented by a light pool around the table, just wide enough for the two actors to be visible, including the space under the table. The light pool would be created by three or four soft-focused fresnels with a fairly warm colour filter, probably straw or rose, which would mimic the feel of a domestic light source in an interior. Barn doors would be used to prevent light spill to the sides of the stage or upstage. A small amount of backlighting from the overhead rig would help create the sense of the table and the actors as an isolated location, with the rest of the set becoming less visible.

At the beginning of the scene there is a subtle soundtrack of crickets singing. This sound would become audible during the previous scene, set at dusk, and by continuing the sound across the scene break as the lighting cross fades to scene 9 the idea of night-time is established for the audience. Crickets singing is a repetitive, slightly hypnotic sound and so its sudden silence as indicated in the stage directions at the bottom of page 37 signals a dramatic shift of mood for the audience.

The shift to the scene set in the past is created abruptly in my design by a rapid dipless cross-fade to a harsh light flooding the whole stage. This would be created by a mixture of

Specimen answer, continued

overhead LED parcans and wide focused fresnels. The parcans would be set with a faint steel blue colouration but I would keep the fresnels unfiltered. I would use a small amount of front lighting, equally broadly focused and with steel blue filter, to ensure the actor's faces were clear, as it is important to see facial expressions in this scene, but the purpose of the overhead lighting is to create shadows on Fei-Fei under the desk, so that she effectively disappears from view. The steel-blue filters create a colder atmosphere and contrast strongly with the warmth and intimacy of the earlier section.

I would accompany the lighting change with a faint, pulsating soundtrack underscoring the dialogue through the scene. There would also be a jarring sound of doors being opened and slammed, voices shouting orders and the rattle of chains. If possible I would want to create a slight echo effect in these SFX to suggest a large, empty official space. These sounds would be layered over each other and would last only a few seconds to signal the shift of location and time, leaving the underscoring non-diegetic sound to run throughout the scene.

After the Judge's line: 'You won't be paraded through the streets' the pulsating underscoring sound would get louder as Dou Yi is led around the stage and taken to the table where she stands for the final section. The lighting shift indicated in the SD at the bottom of page 39 is a slower cross-fade than before and includes the gradual emergence of a back-projected outdoor scene of blue sky and trees. The lighting tint shifts to a pale yellow for the sunny outdoor sequence and two simple profile spots loaded with foliage disruption pattern gobos and green filters add to the effect of an outdoor scene with trees, as required: 'It turns into a lush summer's day.' As Dou Yi steps onto the table the pulsating sound abruptly stops and is replaced by a sudden sound of birdsong and water flowing. This should be allowed a few seconds to establish the mood, almost comically, before Dou Yi speaks. When she starts her extended monologue on page 40, the background sounds will be slightly lowered in volume to leave the impression without overpowering the words.

The sound is disrupted when the rifles fire on page 43. It would be best to do this with blank firing weapons on stage, or by the Stage Manager detonating a

pyrotechnic sequence, but if that is not available I would create a separate sound track of three rifle shots to be played through a separate line-in to the sound desk and set up so that it can be cued instantly on the actor's last word 'will my innocent soul be –'. This would also be the cue to fade out the bird song and water rapidly, during the few seconds when the audience will be reacting and adjusting to the sound of the gunfire. As the flag turns red, which I will do as a special effects prop rather than a projection, the back projected summer sky would also change, becoming more grey and if a special FX front projector is available I will show snow falling across the stage. This could be supplemented by actual snow in the form of small paper pellets or shreds being dropped from above the stage, or a snow machine is one is available.

Specimen answer, continued

At the very end of the scene, the lighting change takes us back to the initial location. This time it would be a slow dipless X-fade back to the state on page 36 at the beginning of the scene, during which the falling snow would stop and the interior lamp would be brought up again. (This would be controlled throughout on a lighting dimmer circuit if possible, or by a separate dimmer controlled by the ASM.)

My final section is pages 73–74 in Act 2 Scene 5. This is a scene of interaction between the ghost of Dou Yi and the living characters. The SD states that the ghost ‘looks stronger and more alive than ever before.’ I would help create this by setting up a tightly focused light pool close to the position of the altar, so that the actor can stand in the pool and knock the urn off the altar without having to leave the space. This pool will be created by an overhead profile spot and two front profiles, tightly focused with shutters to prevent light spill. Colour will be a warm white, a blend of light straw and rose, rather than the more obvious pale blue for a ghost, because I want the lighting to suggest her strength and life. The effect will be that this light pool will be more intensely lit than the surrounding space, making her presence more imposing and significant in the scene.

For the SD on page 74 ‘The sky darkens. Stars appear in the sky.’ I will slowly fade down the natural light on the scene, replacing it with a dark blue wash, but leaving the intense strong light on Dou Yi. The soundtrack of water and frogs will fade in slowly. When the light levels have dropped sufficiently, back projection will be used to show patterns of stars in the upstage space. At the very end of the scene all the wash will fade to darkness and the soundtrack will fade with the lights, and then the spotlights on Dou Yi will go dark in a sudden black out to prepare for the next scene set in the past.

Examiner comment

This is a detailed answer with a firm focus on the design brief ‘lighting, sound and projections’ throughout. The candidate shows a clear understanding of how lighting can be used to create a sense of location and mood, and understands the basic technical elements of sound and lighting and how they are used in the theatre. The design approach proposed takes account of the fluctuating style of the play, moving between naturalistic and non-naturalistic scenes.

The discussion of how projection could be used is a little undeveloped and unclear, and there is room for more engagement with the overall style and genre of the play.

The mark awarded would be likely to be in the range

17–20 marks for **Performance interpretation of drama text and use of detail**

7–8 marks for **Knowledge and understanding of style, genre and context.**

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