



Flying Start 2:

Preparatory Tasks:



- 1.) Have a read through of the live review guide and 'A grade' exemplar.
- 2.) Have fun watching the show!
- 3.) To produce a 1000 word live theatre evaluation on the National Theatre Production of 'Exit the King' adapted by Patrick Marber.
- 4.) To create a detailed mind-map considering different points of view and responses for the following statement. (If you wish to present this information in a different way, that is absolutely fine too). As a starting point you should highlight areas where the 'A grade' example refers to the statement.

We will talk through the task set in your first lesson, so if you need any support, please feel free to ask/email.

'Live performance has nothing to say to a young audience'

- 5.) You are not expected to use the assessment criteria for your first live performance review of the term – but this is to give you an idea of what you are working towards.

A-level Evaluation Guide:

Notes to be made BEFORE the Performance about:

- ✚ **The space:** the acting area, the audience area, the actor/audience relationship.
- ✚ **The atmosphere:** Pre-show sound and lighting; foyer displays relevant to the show.
- ✚ **The Set:** You may be able to see the set and its architectural features to draw your attention to them.

Notes to be made in the INTERVAL and AFTER the performance:

- ✚ **PATIAL: acting area** - Does this change during the performance?

actor/audience relationship – Does this remain constant? Do actors use the audience space?

- ✚ **VISUAL: Set** (including scenery) – Where would you place it on the realistic to non-realistic' scale? Is it a single set, allowing for the representation of different locations? Are the entrances/exits well-placed? Is there a strong sense of period style? Are the colours strong, muted, etc? Does the set seem to be making a statement about the play? Are there different sets for different acts? Does each setting make a statement?

Costume – Are the colours strong, muted, etc? Does the costume seem to be making a statement about the play? Are there different costumes for different acts? Does each costume make a statement? Are some of the characters made to stand out, for example by the use of colour or style? If characters have more than one costume, is there some evident progression being marked by the changes?

Props – Do these blend in with the set, giving a consistent visual impression? Are there particularly significant props and are these effectively designed and used?

Lighting – Is the performance generally brightly or dimly lit? How does this vary from scene to scene? Is it effective in contributing to the atmosphere of particular scenes/moments? Is use made of particular colours/angles? Are there special lighting effects?

- ✚ **AURAL: Recorded Sound** – Is background sound used? Does it affect the atmosphere? Are 'functional' sound effects (e.g. cars arriving) effective? **Recorded Music** – What kind of music is used? Is it well-chosen and effective? Does it create a sense of period or atmosphere? Does it add to particular sequences or moments? What kind of music is used in the interval (if any)? **Live Sound** - Are there any live sounds (doors slamming, footsteps, etc.) effective? Does the cast contribute vocally in any way to the live sound?

- ✚ **SPECIAL EFFECTS: Pyrotechnics, smoke, etc** - If these are used, are they effective in creating atmosphere or moments of shock etc.?

- ✚ **ACTING: Interpretation** – How does the actor’s interpretation differ from your impressions from the text? Is there an overall acting style (this will affect the areas below)?
 Voice – What use is made of range, volume etc. At different points? Do the voices suit the characters? Are accents used (and appropriate)? Is the projection good enough?
 Movement – How do actors register their characters through movement and use of space?
 Relationships/Interaction – Are these as you saw them from the text? Are there moments in which relationships are defined or changed?
- ✚ **DIRECTION: This takes in all aspects of the performance** – Are there sequences or moments when you are aware that the visual, aural and spatial elements (as well as the acting) have been arranged to create particular effects? How significant are these sequences/moments in the overall effect of the performance? (Endings are especially important as they leave a final impression on the audience.) Are you aware of pace and rhythm in the performance?
- ✚ **AUDIENCE: Audience Reaction** – You will be able to tell by laughter, applause, etc. How the audience in general is receiving the performance. You could read reviews from newspapers and quote responses.

WRITING UP YOUR EVALUATION:

KEY TERMS:

PLAY = Generally used to mean the text created by company.

TEXT (or written text) = More specifically, the words on the page; with many plays, especially older ones, there may be different versions of the text.

PERFORMANCE TEXT = This is used to describe everything which happens in a particular performance (as distinct from a written text). It reflects a recent move towards ‘performance study’, separate from a study of the playwright’s written text.

PRODUCTION = A production may run for many performances (and occasionally, like *Les Misérables*, *Cats* and *Blood Brothers* in the West End, for thousands of performances).

Essentially the features of the production, as conceived by the director and designers, will remain unchanged, even though actors may come and go.

PERFORMANCE = A single occasion on which a specific audience meets in a specific venue to watch a specific cast perform.

SHOW = This vague term is used very generally to mean a play, musical, dance, performance etc.



'A Grade' Example:

'Live performance has nothing to say to a young audience'

Some would argue that in the 21st century, with the cinema, streaming services such as Netflix and a huge bank of content on the internet, that live performance has nothing to say to a young audience and is no longer relevant to them. In March 2018, I witnessed 'The Play That Goes Wrong' by 'Mischief Theatre' on their 2018 UK tour, at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre. In light of seeing this performance I wholeheartedly disagree with the above statement, the cinematic qualities, familiar acting styles and use of contemporary contextual references in the performance support the premise that live performance is still relevant and has things to say to a young audience.

It is a fair argument to make that The Play That Goes Wrong doesn't have any deep, socially conscious and resonating themes, however that doesn't mean it doesn't have anything to say to a young audience, and in fact this is one of the performances strengths. The average young audience member, recommended 8+ by Mischief Theatre, is likely to be looking for the exact opposite of symbolic, instead looking for an entertaining performance that presents the archaic (and stereotypically boring) genre of 'murder mystery' and subverts the tropes of the genre in a contemporary and comedic fashion, reflecting modern popular culture. The Play That Goes Wrong excels in these areas. Sound Designer, Andy Johnson, artfully uses sound and music to create pop culture references that draw on the schema of a young audience to create a comedic effect that resonates with the younger generation. The playing of 'Trevors' (played by Gabriel Paul) 'Duran Duran' CD on multiple occasions, interspersed with the slightly outdated slapstick comedy on stage subverts a young audiences reservations about the genre and says something to them by presenting a fresh and original take on it. While the youngest audience members may not directly identify this as Duran Duran, they will still recognise and appreciate the unexpected comedy created by cultural incongruity of the set and language on stage vs Trevor's rock soundtrack and Mancunian accent. Johnson also makes use of a 'Sting' (Dun, Dun, Dun!) to emphasise the ridiculous and zany sketches occurring on stage and compliment the actors excellent comedic timing. Many children's television and sitcoms use this same soundtrack to create extreme emphasis, however its overuse in pop culture has deemed it ridiculous and tacky and Johnson has used this to his advantage. Its continuous repetition throughout the performance is a perfect example of the disparate nature of the comedy in the production and makes a statement to a young audience because it aligns something they are very comfortable with, with a genre they may not have experienced or been interested in before, therefore creating a familiar yet fresh form of comedic entertainment.

The acting in the performance also has something to say to a young audience because director Mark Bell and writers Henry Lewis, Johnathan Sawyer and Henry Shields simultaneously draw upon acting styles and tropes young audiences are familiar with, while introducing them to completely new ones. The sketches and gags that occur in the performance are inventive and new but very familiar and young audiences will recognise the slapstick physical comedy and exaggerated shouting, seen in the character of Chris/Inspector (played by Jake Curran) from television shows such as the Chucklevision, televised Pantomimes and children's films. The performance does however introduce Brechtian elements, stylised acting and audience interaction which are both wholly reliant and unique to live performance and unlikely to have been experienced by young people. 'Trevor's' questions about his Duran Duran CD before the performance started, his questioning about a lost Dog in the pre performance foyer and the inviting of an audience member on stage all create a Verfermdungseffekt and compliment

the slapstick amateur dramatic context of the performance. This is achieved by reminding the audience that the performance is in fact a performance and highlighting the main theme that the play is destined to go dramatically wrong. This breaking of the 4th wall and Brechtian audience interaction is a feature unique to live performance, supporting the idea that live performance has something to say to a live audience, because as well as providing comedic entertainment through familiarity and slapstick sketches to a young audience, it creates comedic effect, excitement and entertainment value through Brechtian audience interaction, educating young people and introducing them to new concepts that are unique to live performance and only achievable in a live setting.

While some elements of the set design didn't have much of an impact on the performance and felt out place (such as the pyrotechnic bin fire), set designer Nigel Hook did an incredible job overall in presenting to the audience that the play really was going wrong on dramatic and grand scale. This was crafted and timed so well that sometimes the audience members doubted whether it was actually supposed to happen, or if the set genuinely was falling apart! The final sequence in which the entire stage fell inwards on itself, revealing the bare frame of the set was particularly effective and emphasise production values of the theatre, educating young people on the sheer complexity of live performance set design while creating a high tension, big budget, exciting and fulfilling ending for audience members. The incredibly visual, high intensity set pieces such as the falling second floor, breaking elevator and falling apart set also had a very cinematic quality to them, appealing to a younger audience who are more aquanited with the cinema and television who's approach to set design are less symbolic, more literal, more realistic and importantly high budget. The high budget of The Play That Goes Wrong means they have been able to capture the essence of this cinematic quality in their sets, creating a more engrossing, captivating and familiar production for younger audiences. This supports the idea that live performance does have something to say to young audiences because the play both exposes young people to theatrical conventions while maintaining their interest and attention through an impressive, visual and technical high budget set.

Overall, I disagree with the title statement. It is clear from 'The Play That Goes Wrong' that live performance includes many features which say something to a young audience. The alliance of the stereotypical genre with the modern, contemporary twist keeps a young audience captivated and entertained, the use of Brechtian acting conventions such as breaking the fourth wall educates young audiences about features unique to live performance while supplementing the comedy on stage, and the big budget set design adopts a cinematic quality that creates a dynamic and exciting performance that appeals to a young audiences expectations based off television and cinema. The production successfully says something to an audience in two ways, it provides satisfying, cathartic and hilarious entertainment and also introduces concepts that are unique to the theatre, to young audiences, expanding their horizons and understanding of theatre conventions and acting styles.

Question Number 1	Analyse and evaluate the live performance you have seen in light of the following statement: ‘Live performance must appeal to as many people as possible in order to survive.’ Your answer should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include analysis and evaluation of key moments from the performance you have seen and the contribution made by different theatre makers • offer balanced consideration between your analysis and evaluation of the performance and your response to the statement. 	
Marking instructions In AO4, analysis is required in order to reach evaluative judgements and conclusions in the context of student’s own work. Responses must show balanced consideration between analysis and evaluation and marks are equally distributed across these two elements. Responses that demonstrate isolated analysis without evaluation can only achieve a maximum of 4 marks.		
Level	Mark	Descriptor (AO4)
	0	No rewardable material
Level 1	1–4	Limited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive, basic approach with underdeveloped analysis of live performance elements, supported by a limited knowledge and understanding and limited use of subject-specific terminology. • Limited evaluation demonstrating limited ability to formulate and justify personal judgements of how ideas, meaning and impact have been created by relevant theatre makers • Uneven treatment of analysis and evaluation with a tentative attempt to engage with the statement, resulting in a limited overall response.
Level 2	5–8	General <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally appropriate approach with partial analysis of live performance elements supported by adequate knowledge and understanding and use of generally accurate subject-specific terminology. • Emerging evaluation demonstrating basic ability to formulate and justify personal judgements of how ideas, meaning and impact are created by theatre makers’ use of production values and dramatic elements. • Generally sound response supported by emerging but inconsistent moments of analysis and evaluation, with a general attempt to engage with the statement.
Level 3	9–12	Competent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear approach with competent analysis of live performance elements, supported by secure knowledge and understanding and accurate use of subject-specific terminology. • Consistent evaluation demonstrating adequate ability to formulate

		<p>and justify personal judgements of how ideas, meaning and impact are created by different theatre makers' use of production values and dramatic elements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear personal response with consistent and generally balanced analysis and evaluation, showing a secure reasoning, interpretation and engagement with the statement.
Level 4	13–16	<p>Assured</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident approach with assured analysis of live performance elements, supported by comprehensive knowledge and understanding and effective use of subject-specific terminology. • Effective evaluation demonstrating assured ability to formulate and justify personal judgements of how ideas, meaning and impact are created by different theatre makers' use of production values and dramatic elements. • Comprehensive personal response with assured and balanced analysis and evaluation, showing confident reasoning, interpretation and engagement with the statement.
Level 5	17–20	<p>Sophisticated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical and perceptive approach with sophisticated analysis of live performance elements, supported by precise knowledge and understanding and articulate use of subject-specific terminology. • Perceptive evaluation demonstrating accomplished ability to formulate and justify personal judgements of how ideas, meaning and impact are created by different theatre makers' use of production values and dramatic elements. • Sophisticated and in-depth personal response which perceptively draws together relevant and balanced elements of analysis and evaluation, showing sensitive reasoning, interpretation and engagement with the statement.
<p>Target Grade:</p> <p>Level/Grade Achieved for this section:</p>		
Teacher Comments:		
Student Comments		

AGREED TARGETS:	

SECT A Q1 (A04)	WORTH 20 marks	CHECKLIST ✓	✓
		Analyse and evaluate the live performance you have seen in light of the following statement:	
'Live performance has nothing to say to a young audience.'			
Your response should include the following:	Included? (Y/N/T)	An example could have been...	
Include analysis and evaluation of KEY MOMENTS (<i>K.M. to be referenced throughout</i>)			
Refer to the contribution made by different THEATRE MAKERS (Directors, Designers, Actors)			
Offer balanced consideration between your analysis and evaluation of the performance and your response to the statement.			
RESPOND to the thought-provoking statement in light of the live theatre experience. Make it personal!			
ENGAGE with the statement as informed members of the AUDIENCE and discuss the contribution made by at least two different theatre makers.			
Arguments that agree, disagree or offer a balanced REACTION to the statement			
Analysis and understanding of the role of the director and how various PRODUCTION VALUES have been used to communicate ideas and meaning to an audience. (Advise at least ONE production value per paragraph)			
Analysis and evaluation of how dramatic elements have been used to create THEATRICAL IMPACT such as set, lighting, costume, sound, staging and acting.			
DEBATE THE STATEMENT - that 21st century theatre has nothing to say to a young audience . Select and embed KEY TERMS from the statement.			
Evaluation of KEY THEATRE MAKERS , their COLLABORATION and the CONTRIBUTION they have made to specific aspects of the production.			
Consideration of performance STYLE , INFLUENCE and theatrical INTERPRETATION			
Analysis of AUDIENCE and AUDIENCE REACTION			
REFER to other ARTS FORMS and the ROLE OF THEATRE IN SOCIETY (suggested through statement)			
Analysis and evaluation of the OVERALL AIMS and INTENTIONS of the production.			
A.P.P.E.A.L paragraphs			