



**A SLIGHTLY
ISOLATED DOG**

THE TROJAN WAR

**VCE DRAMA
RESOURCE PACK**



THE TROJAN WAR

THIS RESOURCE IS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AS THEY EXPLORE THE 2024 PRODUCTION OF 'THE TROJAN WAR' BY A SLIGHTLY ISOLATED DOG.

THIS RESOURCE WILL EXPLORE CORE ELEMENTS OF THE VCE DRAMA STUDY DESIGN INCLUDING:

PERFORMANCE STYLES, CONVENTIONS, EXPRESSIVE SKILLS, PERFORMANCE SKILLS, PRODUCTION AREAS, ACTOR-AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP AND DRAMATIC ELEMENTS.

THIS RESOURCE WAS DEVELOPED BY NICK WAXMAN WITH A SLIGHTLY ISOLATED DOG ON THE LAND OF THE BUNURONG PEOPLE. WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO ELDERS PAST AND PRESENT ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

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THE COMPANY



A SLIGHTLY ISOLATED DOG

COMEDY. CHAOS. PARTICIPATION. DELIGHT.

A slightly isolated dog is a New Zealand-based performance company known for creating engaging, interactive, and highly energetic theatre experiences.

They are distinguished by their unique approach to storytelling, which often involves a blend of physical theatre, comedy, and direct audience participation. The company aims to create shows that are not only entertaining but also foster a sense of community and connection among audience members by breaking down the traditional barriers between performers and the audience.

Their productions are known for their innovative use of space, playful engagement with the audience, and a distinctive narrative style that combines elements of improvisation with carefully crafted storytelling.

A slightly isolated dog has produced a variety of shows that have been well received for their creativity, humour, and the way they invigorate traditional theatre forms with a modern twist.

Cast



Susie Berry

Lily



Jack Buchanan

Bastien



Andrew Paterson

Julie



Jonathan Price

Philippe



Comfrey Sanders

Ginger

Creative Team



Director

Leo Gene Peters



Nati Pereira

Set Design



Samuel Clavis

Sound Design / Operator

[CLICK HERE FOR BIOS](#)

A SLIGHTLY ISOLATED DOG



Since the company began the ethos has been to create theatre that doesn't feel like "theatre." A Slightly Isolated Dog (ASID)'s overall artistic vision focuses on evolving the form of theatre to engage the ever-evolving needs of audiences in new and unique ways.

All works aim to create a space for communal reflection and celebration through live performance. But ASID aim to more directly and intimately include the audience in that process of reflecting and celebrating.

Thus, ASID build more profound relationships with our audience by creating high quality works that fill needed purposes in innovative, unique and (they always must be) entertaining ways. ASID works exist on a spectrum, from highly explosive to extremely intimate and thoughtful experiences. Some pieces have broader commercial appeal while others speak to a more distinct audience.

ASID shows are inclusive experiences where audiences actively contribute to the live action as it develops.



THE SHOW

INTERVIEWS

Meet the Maker

NZ ARTICLE WITH LEO GENE PETERS

Aside Podcast

PODCAST INTERVIEW WITH LEO GENE PETERS

Use the time stamps to find specific topics that cover style, performance skills, dramatic elements, production roles and more.

Synopsis



This abridged version of THE TROJAN WAR is told by a travelling troupe of French performers and the audience gathered to hear it.

This version covers the introduction and interventional powers of the Gods Zeus, Athena, Aphrodite and Eris. We then hear a number of prophecies about Paris, Hector and Achilles. We meet the powerful and beautiful Helen as she marries a King. Later Helen meets Paris and they fall in love/lust, and Helen runs away with him.

The Greeks then follow their pledge to protect Helen as they believe she has been kidnapped, and so they go to attack Troy. To guarantee a strong wind for the sailing ships they sacrifice a virgin to appease Athena.

The Greeks sail across the sea overcoming a Cyclops, the Kraken and Sirens. Once the Greeks arrive in Troy a great battle begins. Achilles refuses to fight and so his lover goes into battle dressed as Achilles. Hector kills this fake Achilles - this causes the real Achilles great pain which sends him back into the fray. Hector is killed by Achilles in a duel. A brief ceasefire is agreed to so the bodies of the dead can be buried.

The war rages again 12 days later and in the battle Paris fires an arrow at Achilles' heel and the hero perishes dying on the fields of Troy as prophesised. With their hopes of winning dashed with the death of Achilles the Greeks must complete three tasks including stealing the Palladium hidden in a booby trapped room. The Greeks also construct the famous Trojan Horse, trick the Trojans and lay siege to Troy.

Troy is desolated, not a soul is left alive except for Queen Helen who returns to her husband the king. She apologises for running away, and he apologises for destroying a city. They live happily ever after.

The troupe are displeased with the ending and wonder why it happened and if it was all worth it. Fate arrives to set the record straight and expounds the harsh realities of predetermination.

THE TROJAN WAR is a raucous celebration of our ridiculous lives: combining theatrical magic, wicked pop songs and fierce wit to playfully explore questions around the current chaos of our times.

Boosh and Python

Like a wild dress-up party, this show combines theatrical magic, twisted pop songs and explosive wit. The most charming performers you can hope to meet play a revolving repertoire of outrageous characters. They deliver a frantic and hilarious mash-up in the style of **Python meets The Boosh**. Leave your inhibitions at the door and play.



"Python" refers to the British comedy group Monty Python, known for their groundbreaking and surreal sketch comedy series "Monty Python's Flying Circus," which aired on television in the 1970s. Monty Python's humour is characterised by its absurdity, irreverence, and intellectual wit, often featuring surreal situations, wordplay, and social satire. The group's style of comedy has had a significant influence on contemporary comedy and is celebrated for its subversive and boundary-pushing approach to humour.

"The Boosh" refers to "The Mighty Boosh," a British comedy troupe consisting of Julian Barratt and Noel Fielding. They are best known for their surreal and fantastical television series of the same name, which aired in the mid-2000s.

"The Mighty Boosh" features a unique blend of surrealism, musical numbers, and absurd humour, often set in bizarre and otherworldly environments. The show is characterised by its quirky characters, imaginative storytelling, and offbeat humour, creating a cult following among fans of alternative comedy.



Audiences familiar with Monty Python and The Mighty Boosh can expect a wild and unpredictable ride characterised by surreal humour, imaginative storytelling, and a playful approach to performance. The combination of theatrical magic, twisted pop songs, and explosive wit promised by A Slightly Isolated Dog brings you a performance that embraces the absurd and revels in the unexpected.

Audiences can expect a show filled with quirky characters, surreal situations, and moments of comedic brilliance that challenge conventions and celebrate the joy of uninhibited creativity.

Brief History of Trojan War plays

"The Iliad" by Homer (8th century BCE): While not a play, this epic poem is the cornerstone of all subsequent Trojan War narratives, influencing countless theatrical adaptations.

"The Trojan Women" by Euripides (415 BCE): A tragic play focusing on the aftermath of the Trojan War, particularly on the suffering of Trojan women.

"Hecuba" by Euripides (424 BCE): Another tragedy by Euripides, centering on Hecuba, the queen of Troy, and her descent into grief and vengeance after the war.

"Ajax" and "Philoctetes" by Sophocles (5th century BCE): Plays that explore the fates of Greek heroes Ajax and Philoctetes during the Trojan War, delving into themes of heroism, betrayal, and the psychological impact of war.

"The Oresteia" by Aeschylus (458 BCE): A trilogy of plays that, while focusing on the House of Atreus post-Troy, indirectly deal with the war's consequences, especially in the final play, "The Eumenides."

"Troilus and Cressida" by William Shakespeare (early 17th century): A play that mixes elements of comedy, tragedy, and history, offering a skeptical and satirical take on the heroes of the Trojan War.

"Les Troyens" by Hector Berlioz (1858): Though an opera rather than a traditional play, this adaptation is significant for its ambitious scale and its retelling of parts of the "Iliad" and the "Aeneid," focusing on the fall of Troy and the Trojans' subsequent journey.

"Tiger at the Gates" ("La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas lieu") by Jean Giraudoux (1935): A play that attempts to prevent the Trojan War through diplomacy, highlighting the futility and inevitability of conflict.

Modern adaptations and performances: Contemporary theatre continues to explore the Trojan War through various lenses, including feminist perspectives, reinterpretations, and critiques of war. Recent works often focus on untold stories or lesser-known characters from the myth, providing fresh insights and relevance.

Key Events of The Trojan War

The Judgment of Paris: The goddesses Athena, Hera, and Aphrodite compete for the title of the fairest. Paris, a Trojan prince, is chosen to arbitrate the contest and selects Aphrodite as the winner after she promises him the most beautiful mortal woman, Helen.

The Abduction of Helen: Paris travels to Sparta, where he seduces or kidnaps Helen, the wife of King Menelaus, and takes her back to Troy. This act becomes the catalyst for the war.

The Greek Expedition: Menelaus seeks the help of his brother Agamemnon to retrieve Helen and avenge the slight against his honor. Agamemnon assembles a vast army of Greek warriors, including the legendary Achilles, Odysseus, and Ajax.

The Siege of Troy: The Greeks lay siege to Troy for ten years, attempting to breach its formidable walls and reclaim Helen. The conflict is marked by numerous battles, skirmishes, and duels between the heroes of both sides.

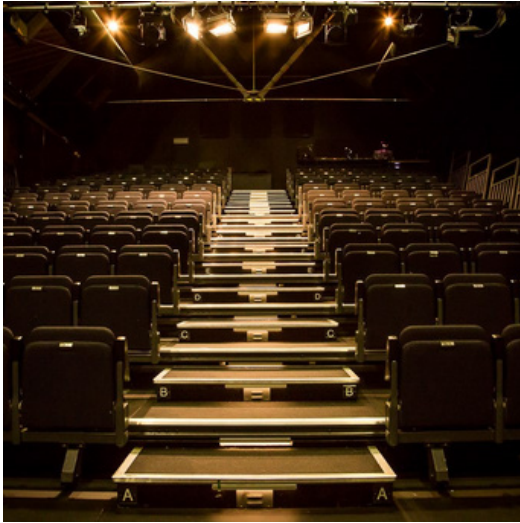
The Heroes and the Gods: The Trojan War features the intervention of various gods and goddesses from the Greek pantheon, who take sides and manipulate events to favor their chosen champions.

The Fall of Troy: The war culminates in the famous stratagem of the Trojan Horse, a massive wooden horse concealing Greek warriors inside. The Trojans bring the horse into their city as a victory trophy, unaware of the soldiers hidden within. Under cover of darkness, the Greek warriors emerge from the horse, open the city gates, and allow the Greek army to enter and sack Troy.

The Aftermath: The war concludes with the destruction of Troy, the deaths of many heroes on both sides, and the dispersal of the surviving Trojans. The most famous episodes of the war, including the wrath of Achilles, the death of Hector, and the fates of Odysseus and Ajax, are immortalized in Greek literature and art.

WHY NOT BRING THE STORY TO LIFE AS A 'WHOOSH'?
HOW? CLICK HERE.

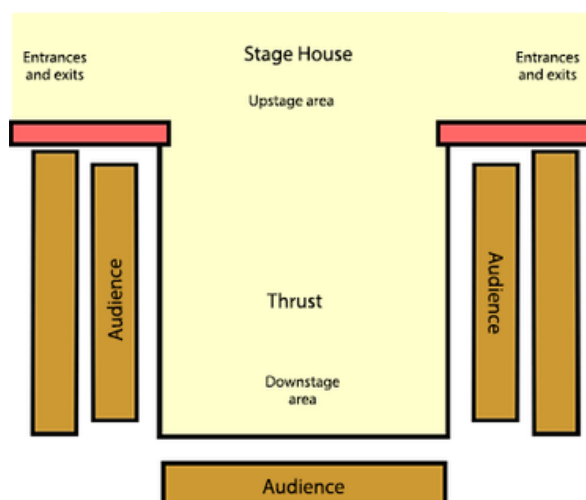
CHAPEL OFF CHAPEL



A Slightly Isolated Dog performs in a diverse array of venues and often employs a traverse stage configuration, as further explored on the following page.

For their Melbourne performance of *The Trojan War*, the staging is set up in The Loft at Chapel Off Chapel. The actors make dynamic use of the central staircase as an integral part of their performance space, frequently moving up and down the stairs during crucial moments of the play. This arrangement creates a classic traverse style, with the audience seated on either side of the action.

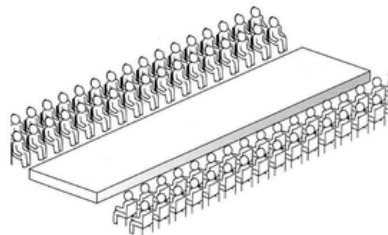
Alternatively, this setup could be described as a thrust stage, where the audience is positioned on raked seating that surrounds the performance area. It's noteworthy that much of the action still takes place on the traditional stage area, directly in front of the audience.



PARTIAL TRAVERSE STAGE

A traverse stage, also known as an alley, corridor stage, tennis court, or catwalk, features a long and narrow layout with the audience seated on both sides, similar to a catwalk.

This arrangement allows the audience to see each other, enhancing the reminder that they are part of a theatrical experience and deepening their immersion in the onstage action. However, this configuration necessitates minimalistic scenery to prevent obstructing views, rendering traditional backdrops impractical.



Design Considerations and Benefits

The unique structure of a traverse stage presents actors with the challenge of needing to project their voices more effectively, as addressing one side of the audience means turning their backs on the other. This requirement ensures that performances are more dynamic and engaging, compelling actors to constantly adapt their actions to be visible and impactful to all spectators.

The design of the stage itself must be carefully considered to maintain clear sightlines across the stage. This limitation actually serves as a catalyst for creative stage design, pushing designers to utilize every element purposefully to enhance the performance's aesthetic and focus. The audience, positioned on either side of the stage, experiences the performance from different perspectives, possibly leading to diverse interpretations of the same show. This setup fosters a deeper connection between the audience and the performance, often making the theatrical experience more immersive or metatheatrical.

Additionally, lighting a traverse stage requires inventive solutions to avoid casting shadows on the actors' faces from certain angles. These creative lighting techniques not only address visibility issues but also contribute significantly to the mood and atmosphere of the production, further engaging the audience.

The traverse stage, with its audience seating reminiscent of a catwalk and its demand for minimal scenery, offers unique benefits. It encourages a more intimate and interactive theatre experience and necessitates creative approaches to stage design, performance dynamics, and lighting, enhancing both the artistic and audience experience.

[CLICK HERE FOR A VIDEO ON TRAVERSE STAGES](#)

THEMES

Fate and Free Will

The performance delves into the tension between fate and free will, especially through the character Fate and the interventions of gods like Zeus and Aphrodite. Characters frequently discuss their destinies, questioning the extent of their control over their lives versus what is predetermined. This theme is humorously explored, such as when characters attempt to defy fate, only to find their actions seemingly predetermined, illustrating the complex interplay between destiny and personal choice.

War and Its Futility

The script provides a comedic and poignant commentary on the absurdity and tragedy of war. By reenacting the Trojan War with modern sensibilities and humor, including audience participation in battle scenes, the performance highlights the senselessness of conflict and its devastating consequences. The use of props like cardboard boxes for the Trojan Horse and the casual, comedic depiction of battle strategies serve to underscore the theme of war's inherent futility and the human cost it entails.

THEMES

Love and Loyalty

Through the relationships between characters such as Helen and Paris, and the involvement of audience members in roles such as Achilles' lover, the performance explores the complexities of love and loyalty. These themes are examined in both romantic and platonic contexts, questioning the characters' motivations and the impact of their decisions on their lives and the war. The interactive nature of the performance, involving the audience in these relationships, brings a personal dimension to these themes, making them more relatable and impactful.

Identity and Heroism

The script plays with the notion of identity, particularly through the portrayal of famous characters like Achilles and Helen in a modern light, blending their mythical heroism with human flaws and relatable concerns. This exploration is augmented by the audience's participation, as they step into the roles of these legendary figures, further blurring the lines between myth and reality, heroism and everyday life. The performance thus invites reflection on what it means to be a hero and how historical figures are remembered versus their actual lived experiences.

SONGS

Song Title	Artist	Key Lyrics	Why It Was Chosen
"Boss Bitch"	Doja Cat	"I'm a bitch, I'm a boss / I'm a bitch and a boss, I'ma shine like gloss"	Introduce Helen of Troy in a modern, powerful light, emphasizing her autonomy and influence over her own story, contrary to traditional narratives.
"Total Eclipse of the Heart"	Bonnie Tyler	"Once upon a time I was falling in love / But now I'm only falling apart"	The dramatic and emotional depth of this song reflects the complex and tumultuous relationship between Paris and Helen, highlighting the theme of doomed love that underpins their story and the Trojan War.
"Your Ghost"	The Decemberists	And at your final end / When you are free again / No longer long to be / You will belong to me	These lyrics reflect a sense of foreboding and perhaps foreshadow the eventual fate of many characters involved in the Trojan War. It suggests that the repercussions of their decisions will follow them, much like a ghost, inevitable and inescapable.

SONGS

Song Title	Artist	Key Lyrics	Why It Was Chosen
"Horizon"	Aldous Harding	Let me put the water in the bowl / For your wounds, babe	This haunting melody could underscore the sense of loss, mourning, and the spectral presence of those lost in the war, reminding the audience of the human cost of the conflict and the lingering memories of those who fought.
"Wrecking Ball"	Miley Cyrus	"I came in like a wrecking ball / I never hit so hard in love"	This song's themes of destruction and the aftermath of a tumultuous relationship may mirror the devastating impact of the Trojan War and the personal and collective losses experienced by its characters.
"Ultimate"	Denzel Curry	"I am the one, don't weigh a ton / Don't need a gun to get respect up on the street"	Utilised towards the show's climax, this song's assertive lyrics and intense rhythm could symbolize the ultimate confrontations and resolutions of the war, as well as the characters' assertions of identity and destiny amidst chaos.

MAJOR AND MINOR

In **THIS** interview Director Leo Gene Peters talks about MAJOR and MINOR moments of actor focus throughout The Trojan War.

Major Moments are those that carry the central narrative forward, demand the full attention of the audience, and often involve key developments in the plot or significant character interactions. These moments are where the primary action or drama unfolds, requiring the actors to focus their energy and efforts to ensure that the audience's attention is squarely on the main storyline or a pivotal event. For instance, introducing a major character like Achilles in a dramatic fashion would constitute a major moment.

Minor Moments, on the other hand, are subtler, perhaps involving background action, asides, smaller character interactions, or improvisations that add depth, humor, or additional context to the main narrative without necessarily driving the plot forward. These moments allow for a richer, more layered performance, giving the audience a more immersive experience by filling the space with continuous activity. However, these elements are crafted carefully to ensure they do not detract from the major moments.

Peters discussed the balance and interplay between these major and minor moments, emphasising the need for actors to remain aware of the overall structure and flow of the performance. This balance ensures that while the stage is alive with activity, the audience's attention is drawn to the right place at the right time. The strategy of using major and minor moments is part of what makes their theatre work engaging and dynamic, allowing for moments of surprise, humor, and direct connection with the audience, all while telling a coherent story.

RISE, SUSPEND, FALL & ROLL

Rise

Rise refers to the buildup or anticipation phase in a moment of performance. It's the initial increase in energy or tension that draws the audience's attention and sets the stage for what's to come. This could be the beginning of an actor's movement, the start of a narrative buildup, or any action that initiates a sequence.

Suspend

Suspend involves holding the peak of the tension or energy created during the rise. It's a moment of pause that heightens audience anticipation and engagement. In this phase, performers maintain the level of intensity without resolution, creating a sense of expectancy. This can be likened to the moment just before the climax of a story or the peak of a physical movement, where everything seems to hold still for a moment.

Fall

Fall is the release or resolution phase following the suspension. It's where the built-up tension or energy is released, leading towards a conclusion or the next phase of action. This could manifest as the completion of a movement, the delivery of a punchline, or any action that resolves the tension created during the rise and held during the suspend phase.

Roll

Roll signifies the continuation or aftermath of the action, leading seamlessly into the next sequence of movement or narrative progression. It's the motion that carries the performance forward after the fall, ensuring a fluid and dynamic transition. This phase ensures that the energy and momentum of the performance are maintained, avoiding abrupt stops or disjointed transitions.

In practical terms, Peters uses this concept to choreograph and structure the flow of the performance, ensuring that it captures and holds the audience's attention through a continuous cycle of anticipation, tension, release, and progression.

ACTOR-AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIPS

Direct Audience Address

In this production, actors frequently speak directly to the audience, not just as narrators but as participants in the unfolding story. This technique is used to engage viewers from the outset, making them feel part of the theatrical world. For instance, actors might directly ask the audience's opinions on a character's decisions, drawing them into the narrative and making the experience more immersive.

Audience Participation

Audience participation is integral to the show's structure, with viewers invited to play minor roles or contribute to the storyline through their actions or responses. This could involve audience members being asked to stand in as characters from the story, such as soldiers or townspeople, or to provide sound effects or movements that complement the action on stage. This technique blurs the lines between performers and spectators, creating a unique shared experience.

Audience Interaction

Interaction goes beyond simple participation by encouraging spontaneous exchanges between actors and audience members. This might manifest in improvised dialogues, where actors react in character to audience members' comments or actions. Such interactions contribute to the sense of unpredictability and excitement within the performance, as no two shows are exactly alike due to this dynamic interplay.

ACTOR-AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIPS

Endowment

Endowment involves actors attributing roles, characteristics, or items of significance to audience members, thus 'endowing' them with a specific identity or role within the theatrical experience. For example, an actor might declare an audience member to be the long-lost lover of a character, thereby endowing them with a backstory and relevance to the narrative, further blurring the line between observer and participant.

Establishing the Fourth Wall

While much of the show is interactive, there may be moments where the actors deliberately create a boundary between themselves and the audience, focusing intensely on their inter-character relationships and the internal world of the play.

These moments are carefully chosen to heighten dramatic tension or to focus attention on significant narrative developments, providing contrast to the interactive segments and enhancing the storytelling.

Breaking the Fourth Wall

The show frequently breaks the fourth wall, acknowledging the presence of the audience and the artificiality of the theatrical experience. This can happen through direct address, commentary on the action by the actors, or visible transitions between roles. Breaking the fourth wall serves to remind the audience of the constructed nature of the narrative, inviting them to engage with the performance on a more conscious level, and often with a sense of humor and playfulness.

These techniques, ranging from direct address to breaking the fourth wall, are not used randomly but are carefully orchestrated to deepen the audience's engagement with the performance, enhance the narrative, and create a memorable theatre experience that challenges traditional boundaries between actor and audience.



PERFORMANCE STYLES

PERFORMANCE STYLES

*IN THIS SECTION SEVEN PERFORMANCE STYLES ARE
EXPLORED BRIEFLY.*

*EACH OF THESE DESCRIPTIONS FOCUS ON
'THE TROJAN WAR' AND THE CONVENTIONS USED
THROUGHOUT.*

WHILE YOU READ
*HIGHLIGHT THE SPECIFIC CONVENTIONS YOU
THINK WERE USED IN THIS PERFORMANCE.*

***Keep in mind, this theatre piece is eclectic, incorporating a
variety of styles and conventions for distinct purposes and
reasons.***

PERFORMANCE STYLES

ECLECTIC WITH ASPECTS OF...

01

PHYSICAL THEATRE

Expressive storytelling through bodily movement, gesture, and non-verbal communication.

02

VAUDEVILLE & BURLESQUE

Humorous and provocative stage shows, combining parody, comedy, and adult humour.

03

FRENCH FARCE

Comedic drama using exaggerated situations and physical humour

04

LAECQ AND GAULIER

Schools focused on teaching physical theatre, mime, and clown techniques with emphasis on play

05

CABARET

Entertainment featuring music, dance, drama with a political leaning, in a nightclub setting.

06

GROTOWSKI / POOR THEATRE

Prioritises bodily expression over traditional theatrical elements, aiming for a direct connection with the audience through physical storytelling.

07

BRECHTIAN EPIC THEATRE

Disrupts traditional narrative, encouraging critical thinking through techniques like alienation, song and episodic storytelling.

PERFORMANCE STYLES

01

PHYSICAL THEATRE

This dynamic performance style centres on expressive storytelling through bodily movement, gesture, and non-verbal communication, diverging from traditional theatre that relies heavily on dialogue. Key conventions include the use of mime techniques to convey emotion and narrative without speech, integration of dance and acrobatics to enhance the visual storytelling aspect, and a focus on the physical relationship between actors and the space around them.

Physical theatre often incorporates elements of clowning and mask work, challenging performers to explore and express complex themes and emotions through their physicality. This genre demands a high level of creativity and physical fitness from its practitioners, as they must communicate effectively with the audience using their bodies alone.

PERFORMANCE STYLES

02

VAUDEVILLE & BURLESQUE

Vaudeville and burlesque, though distinct, share a historical lineage in the evolution of American entertainment, blending a variety of acts with their unique flair and purposes.

Vaudeville, a variety entertainment genre popular from the late 19th to the early 20th century, showcased a wide range of performances such as comedy sketches, musical numbers, and acrobatic feats, structured to escalate in excitement and presented by a master of ceremonies. It aimed to entertain a broad, family-friendly audience through a series of unrelated acts.

Burlesque, on the other hand, emphasised satirical comedy, musical theatre, extravagant costumes, and often striptease, focusing more on adult-oriented content. It parodied popular cultural and artistic works, blending humor, satire, and provocative performances.

Both forms significantly influenced the development of modern entertainment mediums, including film, television, and musical theatre, but while vaudeville catered to a general audience with its diverse and wholesome content, burlesque offered a more risqué, satirical commentary on society, showcasing the artistry and empowerment of its performers.

PERFORMANCE STYLES

03

FRENCH FARCE

French Farce, a genre celebrated for its boisterous blend of exaggerated situations and relentless physical humour, epitomizes comedic drama through its reliance on brisk, convoluted plots and a repertoire of slapstick comedy, mistaken identities, and rapid scene changes designed to entertain and incite laughter. This theatrical tradition thrives on the deliberate complexity of its narratives, featuring an array of rapid twists and turns that challenge the audience to keep pace with the unfolding chaos. Integral to the genre are its stock characters—often archetypes like the cunning servant, the jealous husband, and the wayward wife—placed in absurdly improbable situations that escalate to heights of hilarity.

French Farce is distinguished by its liberal use of sexual innuendos, double entendres, and a pervasive sense of mischief, pushing the boundaries of societal norms with its bold humor and suggestive themes. The style's foundation on visual gags, exaggerated expressions, and an unending stream of physical comedy has solidified its status as a significant precursor to modern entertainment forms, including sitcoms and comedy films. The farce's enduring influence is evident in contemporary media, where the essence of its humor continues to resonate, proving the timeless appeal of its formula.

PERFORMANCE STYLES

04

LECOQ & GAULIER

The Lecoq and Gaulier schools are renowned for their emphasis on physical theatre, teaching actors to harness the balance of humor and seriousness while using the body as the primary storytelling tool. This training encourages the exploration of dramatic and comedic elements without reliance on elaborate sets or extensive dialogue, focusing instead on the expressive potential of physicality.

The training in these schools equips actors with the ability to inhabit characters that often challenge societal norms and critique human behaviors, broadening their theatrical expression. This aspect of the curriculum enriches their performance repertoire, sharpening their skills in engaging audiences on both intellectual and emotional levels.

This holistic approach to actor training cultivates a deep understanding of human emotions and relationships, equipping performers to captivate audiences from varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The emphasis on ensemble work and collaborative creation also enhances the communal aspect of theatre, making performances a shared experience that resonates with universal themes of humanity and connection.

PERFORMANCE STYLES

05

CABARET

Cabaret, as a distinct form of entertainment performed in nightclubs or theatres, intertwines music, dance, drama, and at times comedy, captivating audiences in a notably intimate atmosphere. This genre meticulously selects songs not only for their entertainment value but also for their thematic depth, weaving them into the broader narrative of the cabaret. These musical selections often serve as poignant reflections or critiques of societal norms, politics, and human emotions, thereby enriching the narrative and connecting with the audience on a deeper level.

The core conventions of cabaret include the artful blend of various performance elements, direct engagement with the audience—often breaking the fourth wall—and the pivotal role of a master of ceremonies (emcee) who ensures a seamless flow between acts. The chosen songs, with their thematic significance, play a crucial role, acting as both a mirror and a window to the world outside, offering insights and challenging perceptions.

Whether leaning towards the sophisticated and polished or the avant-garde and politically charged, cabaret's adaptive nature allows it to resonate with the evolving social and cultural attitudes, making it a dynamic and reflective form of entertainment.

PERFORMANCE STYLES

06

GROTOWSKI / POOR THEATRE

Poor Theatre, pioneered by theatre practitioner Jerzy Grotowski, is a performance style that prioritizes the expressive potential of the human body over traditional theatrical elements such as elaborate sets or costumes. It focuses on physical storytelling through bodily movement, gesture, and non-verbal communication, diverging from reliance on dialogue.

Poor Theatre often incorporates mime techniques, dance, acrobatics, and clowning, challenging performers to convey complex themes and emotions through their physicality. This style demands a high level of creativity and physical fitness from practitioners, as they communicate with the audience using their bodies alone, creating a powerful and visceral theatrical experience.

By stripping away extraneous elements and focusing on the raw essence of performance, Poor Theatre aims to create a direct and immediate connection between performers and audience, transcending language barriers and cultural differences to evoke profound emotional responses. It encourages a deeper exploration of human experience and emotion, inviting audiences to engage with the performance on a deeply visceral and emotional level.

PERFORMANCE STYLES

07

BRECHTIAN EPIC THEATRE

Brechtian Epic Theatre, influenced by playwright Bertolt Brecht, seeks to disrupt traditional narrative structures and engage audiences in critical thinking. It employs techniques such as alienation, where actors break the fourth wall, and episodic storytelling, which highlights social and political themes.

This style encourages audiences to remain analytical, questioning societal norms and power structures depicted on stage. Through deliberate use of distancing effects, like projected titles and direct address, Brechtian theatre prompts viewers to reflect on their own perspectives and the broader implications of the narratives presented. Costume changes in front of the audience and bare lighting serve to reinforce the Brechtian technique of alienation, highlighting the constructed nature of the performance and encouraging critical reflection on the social and political themes presented.

By challenging conventional theatrical conventions and fostering active audience participation, Brechtian Epic Theatre aims to inspire social change and consciousness-raising.



DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

MOOD

Mood oscillates between light-hearted comedy and profound tragedy and pathos. The mood shifts throughout the performance using stillness & silence, music, lighting as well as using verbal and no- verbal language to communicate joy, surprise, shock and worry.

Through exaggerated physicality, creative set design and sharp contrast in lighting schemes, the mood is crafted to immerse the audience in the fantastical world of ancient mythology.

With each scene transition, the mood shifts seamlessly, keeping the audience engaged and emotionally invested in the epic narrative unfolding before them. Whether evoking laughter or eliciting pathos, the mood serves as a guiding force, enhancing the overall theatrical experience and leaving a lasting impression on the audience.

A clear example of Mood is

The use of comedy to juxtapose the tragedy of Achilles and Creon's experience. As Achilles mourns the loss of his friend and Creon begs for Hector's body back the two engage in comedic banter, this abruptly shifts to a ballad about the loss of life.

CLIP - MOURNING

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

RHYTHM

A Slightly Isolated Dog's signature energy is tangible in The Trojan War, orchestrating a rhythmic cadence mirroring the ebb and flow of battle. From frenetic battle sequences to carefully crafted fight choreography, the production employs stylised movement, rhythmic dialogue delivery, and musical interludes to propel the narrative forward.

Each beat resonates with intensity, drawing the audience deeper into the heart of the conflict and heightening the emotional stakes. With precise pacing and strategic timing, the rhythm evokes a sense of urgency and suspense, keeping audiences captivated from start to finish.

A clear example of rhythm is:

The arrival of Achilles. Note the shift in rhythm from the frenetic and chaotic battle, to the deliberate and measured slow motion fight scene - this is emphasised by the shift from sword and shield sound effects to 'O Fortuna'.

CLIP - SLOW MOTION

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

TENSION

A Slightly Isolated Dog masterfully weaves tension throughout The Trojan War, leveraging the looming threat of conflict and the complex interpersonal dynamics between characters (and the audience). Through strategic pacing, dramatic pauses, and moments of heightened emotion, the production maintains tension in moments central to the story, as well as in the moments orchestrated with audience members.

Each surprise turn in the narrative, tension mounts, building to a climactic crescendo, culminating in a collective hope for a better outcome. Whether on the battlefield or in the intimate moments of unrequited love, the tension serves as a driving force, propelling the story forward and immersing the audience in the drama unfolding before them.

A clear example of tension is:

The use of sound, movement, props and stakes creates a brief moment of tension as the audience hopes the Greeks can make their way through this dangerous trap. The implied swooping blades and the audience members lack of experience makes this moment that much more tense.

CLIP - BOOBY TRAP

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

SPACE

A Slightly Isolated Dog ingeniously manipulates space in The Trojan War, utilising the stage as a dynamic canvas to convey the vastness of the battlefield and the intimacy of personal interactions.

Through creative set design and fluid movement patterns, the production transforms the performance space into a multi-dimensional world where characters navigate the complexities of war and human relationships.

With each shift in spatial arrangement, the audience is transported to different realms within the story, from the towering walls of Troy to the inner chambers of the Greek encampment. Through strategic use of space, the production creates a sense of depth and immersion, inviting audiences to explore the intricate layers of the narrative and engage with the story on a personal level.

The traverse stage and fluid actor-audience relationships means the whole space - seating, stage and beyond - becomes part of the acting space.

A clear example of space is:

The audience creating the ocean as the Greeks voyage to Troy. Every part of the acting space is utilised in this moment from seating to stage, including underneath the canvas and around the space.

CLIP - OCEAN

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

CONTRAST

A Slightly Isolated Dog skillfully employs contrast in The Trojan War, juxtaposing moments of light and darkness, comedy and tragedy, to create a rich tapestry of emotional depth and complexity.

Through bold contrasts in lighting choices, and sound design, the production underscores the themes of the work. From the absurdity of war to the poignancy of personal loss, each contrast serves to highlight the nuances of the narrative and challenge audience perceptions.

By embracing the inherent tension between opposites, the production captivates audiences with its bold storytelling and thought-provoking imagery, leaving a lasting impression.

A clear example of contrast is:

Use of song and lighting in key moments to emphasise a shift in tone , or to emphasise a character's power/status.

Here the troupe banters with the audience and compliments Helen's inner and outer beauty, this is juxtaposed with sharp shift in lighting, music and tone as she sings about being a boss.

CLIP - BOSS

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

CLIMAX

A Slightly Isolated Dog would craft a climactic finale in "The Trojan War," building tension to a breathtaking crescendo that leaves audiences on the edge of their seats.

Through a series of carefully orchestrated events, the production would escalate the conflict to its ultimate resolution, culminating in a dramatic showdown that irrevocably alters the course of the narrative. With each heart-pounding moment, the stakes would be raised, drawing audiences deeper into the unfolding drama. As tensions reach a fever pitch, the production would deliver a cathartic release, offering closure to the story's central conflicts and leaving audiences with a sense of awe and satisfaction.

Through strategic pacing and masterful storytelling, the climax would serve as a powerful conclusion to "The Trojan War," leaving a lasting impression on audiences long after the final curtain falls.

A clear example of climax is:

The extended duel between Hector and Achilles includes numerous climaxes and finished with a brand and tragic death. The audiences gasps and cheers as the actors masterfully create a exciting battle.

CLIP - DUEL

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

CONFLICT

A Slightly Isolated Dog ingeniously crafts conflict in The Trojan War through the visceral medium of physical theatre and symbolic representations.

The clash between the Greeks and Trojans is vividly portrayed through dynamic movement sequences, choreographed battles, and expressive gestures that convey the intensity of the conflict.

Characters embody the physicality of war, from the tense anticipation before battle to the raw emotion of hand-to-hand combat. Symbolic imagery, such as shields clashing and spears thrusting, further heightens the sense of conflict, representing the clash of civilizations and the struggle for dominance.

Through the language of the body and the use of powerful symbols, A Slightly Isolated Dog evokes the brutal reality of war, immersing audiences in the chaos and carnage of The Trojan War with intensity.

A clear example of conflict is:

In the final scene between Fate and the troupe. Fate, represented by an audience member, speaks with a magnified, deepened, and echoing voice, demanding that the complaining actors cease questioning her authority. They are instructed to accept the conflicts inherent in the story, symbolizing the demands that fate places upon us.

Also this duel.

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

SOUND

In *The Trojan War, A Slightly Isolated Dog* elevates the theatrical experience through the use of live sound production, with actors creating sound effects in real-time. Much of the sound design is pre-recorded (which does not count), but there are key moments when live sound is used such as in battles, movement sequences and when playing shared roles.

From the thunderous roar of battle to the haunting wail of lamentation, the soundscape is brought to life by the skilled manipulation of the human voice and body. Actors use vocalisations, percussive sounds, and Foley techniques to evoke the sights and sounds of war, enhancing the immersive nature of the performance.

Through the inventive use of sound, *A Slightly Isolated Dog* creates an immersive auditory experience that complements the visual and narrative elements of the production, enriching the overall theatrical experience for audiences.

A clear example of sound is:

The extended initial battle as the Greeks attack Troy. The actors use the recorded track as inspiration for guttural shrieks, screams and wails.

CLIP - BATTLE

The background is a solid pink color. In the top right corner, there is a white diagonal line segment. On the left side, there is a large white circle. On the right side, there is a large white 'C' shape, which is a thick outline of the letter 'C'.

ACTORS PLAYING CHARACTERS

Ginger



Ginger as described by Comfrey Sanders

She's a hot mess with a French accent and foolishly big feelings. If you love her she'll take a bullet for you, if you try to leave her she'll ruin your life.

Expressive Skills

To communicate this character I use a high vocal pitch, a deliberately exaggerated French accent and explosive physical energy. I am very off center when I'm still, leaning heavily on one hip, and when I move through the space I move quickly and purposefully. I switch back and forth between delighted and devastated in a chaotic manner. I want to always be like a hot flame, about to catch the whole house on fire.

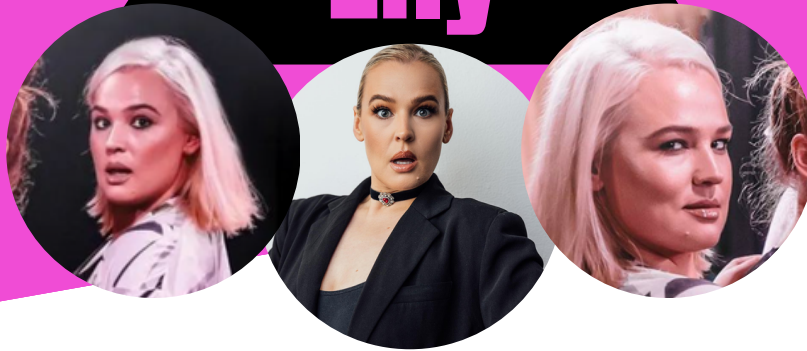
Performance Skills

I make sure that I am always either balancing or in opposition to my company members, taking major and minor in a dance with them, and simultaneously outward on the audience, focusing on bringing them alongside us. I concentrate on keeping the ball (performance energy) in the air between us all, as a collective experience.

Other Roles

I play several other characters who are shared between the company and the audience. These characters often come with a prop and I use the prop as the foundation for the character. As we share the characters between us, we are less concerned with transformation of actor into character and more interested in clarity, simplicity and recognition for the audience. For example when I play Helen of Troy, it will always be evident to the audience that it is Ginger playing Helen in a crown and veil. This is important to the format of the play and adds to the quality of 'play' we are creating with the audience.

Lily



Lily as described by Susie Berry

Lily is passionate, warm, loves to host a party. She is a storm. She can be wild and dark but the clouds always clear away quickly for the sunshine to come through.

Expressive Skills

How Lily is feeling is what her face looks like, she wears her heart on her sleeve. As an actor, I'm not really thinking of my face – I'm trying to listen and be present and respond in the moment and in doing so, my face expresses what's happening for me in that moment. If I become too self aware, then I'm out of the moment and then I'm not doing my job. In saying that, there is still a discipline in terms of serving the moment – so there are moments where I know I need to be deadpan, look my most innocent etc in order for the moment to be the most funny or tell the story the best way I can.

Performance Skills

Lily is less of a character and more a role or a mask. So it's less something that I put on and "become" and more a collection of things that free me up to be my most playful and powerful. It's kind of like when you wear your favourite outfit on a night out and feel really confident; or when you're playing dress up as a kid and you put on a sparkly gown or a wig or a pair of boots and you feel like a completely new person for the afternoon. The mask for us is the French accent – it let's us be more sexy, more flirty, more bold than we are in real life. It's also silly and playful. The audience is also a key to the whole show – otherwise we're like puppets with no one pulling the strings. It sounds oversimplified but the best thing you can do to grow this relationship is breathe and listen. When you're really listening you don't have to invent, everything you need is right there and that's the beauty of improvising and working the show out with the audience each night.

Other roles

One of the main other characters that I play is Helen of Troy. I interpret her as very feminine, regal and grounded. In the main scene that I play her, she's falling in love. I try and tell this story by making my body light and excited and open. This lightness is quite different to Lily's default energy placement which is quite grounded. I do this by placing the breath in the chest, rather than down in the belly.

Bastien



Bastien as described by Jack Buchanan

Bastien is the naughty little imp of the group, delivering dark or disturbing stories and lines with a cheeky puppy dog smile. He is simultaneously innocent and a little bit wicked, he always speaks before he thinks, and he takes delight in finding the naughtiness within everyone.

Expressive Skills

There are a couple of key things to slipping into character as Bastien. The first and most important is the French accent, which now is second nature to me. I find another key for him is to have wide eyes and slightly raised eyebrows, he holds a very open and excited expression most of the time and I find this also helps with the quality of listening required for the show. Knees bent at all times, ready to make sudden and fast movements, and an expressive use of my arms to make big gestures.

Performance Skills

A lot of this is down to the relationship with the audience. The French accent is a wonderful mask to slip into that allows you to be much cheekier with an audience than you normally would get away with. We spend 15 minutes before each show begins interacting with the audience, - flirting with them, asking them personal questions, making friends - and I find this not only warms them up to play with us, it warms me up to be cheeky and naughty and to think fast on my feet. Throughout the performance the key things I think about are listening and timing. The nature of the shows means that they will never be exactly the same twice, and so you have to be actively listening the whole time in order to respond to what's happening in the room live and authentically. In regards to timing, as an ensemble we think about the rhythm or the music of the show - the storytelling and the comedy often relies on finely calibrated rhythms bouncing between the 5 of us, so knowing when to suspend a moment, when to propel something forward, when to have a cheeky little jab, and when to stay quiet are all absolutely crucial to the success of the show.

Other roles

Bastien does occasionally play other characters in the show, but it's always "Bastien as Achilles" or "Bastien as Paris", so it's not really about transforming or drastically changing character. It has more the vibe of our characters playing dress-ups inside the show, so to become these characters it's more about throwing on a wig or a bucket on the head, and then making slight adjustments to physicality and voice, not in order to fully transform but more to find my joy in the ridiculousness of pretending to be these other characters.

Philippe



Philippe as described by Jonathan Price

Philippe is dragged through life by his passions, kicking and screaming, cheering and sobbing. Perhaps more than any other member of the “troupe”, Philippe *believes* the stories they are telling.

Expressive Skills

Philippe’s centre of gravity is much lower than mine: I find myself often in half-squats and lunges. Movement-wise, I will alternate between leading from my hips – bowling about the stage at pace – and the heart – usually when speaking to audience members. I keep my body very open for Philippe: straight spine, shoulders back, etc, as he’s got to be vulnerable and available to make his story work and for the audience to warm to him. Philippe’s voice is higher than my natural voice, and more nasal. I can’t say this was a choice, and I’m often shocked when I see/hear recordings of our shows.

Performance Skills

I reckon there are two tiers when it comes to these skills: the tier of representing the role/character, and the tier of serving the rhythm/music of the moment. As far as character goes, Philippe has a fast internal rhythm, a feeling of searching or grasping quite desperately, interspersed with explosions of very direct energy. With audience, the game is simply to make friends or lovers of the audience, and my mode is always to go through passion: using superlatives to describe people, “feeling” things and asking if they felt it too. Most other skills are dictated by the needs of the moment. We all need to control the flow of the show, whether it’s building, suspending or exploding, and we all need to conduct the audience’s attention so they’re looking at the right thing at the right time.

Other Roles

I, or rather, Philippe plays Paris, Helen and Hector in The Trojan War. The intention is always for the characters to feel “put on”, and we do literally put on masks, mostly makeshift helmets. Often managing a “mask” such as these will force you to make choices – I can’t move my head very much with the Hector helmet on and therefore Hector has a stiff neck. I deepen my voice slightly for Hector. Helen is still, relaxed, with a smoother voice. For Paris I become a bit of a jock. But with these “in-the-story” characters, they are made to be playful in way that feels to the audience like they could join in and play them too. Because we do ask them to join in.

Julie



Julie as described by Andrew Paterson

Julie is the mother of the group, she runs the show, and is trying to keep everyone under control and moving forward with the story

Expressive Skills

The heels are a big part of the character for me, as soon as I put them on it forces me to move in a different way, and I have to totter around. I like to use imagination with my characters, and imagine that I am like Cate Blanchett. Emulating this, the I employs calculated, expansive gestures to cut through the ambient noise of the ensemble, asserting her dominance and guiding the narrative's progression. This is not merely about physical movement but also about embodying the essence of Blanchett's versatile performances, from her poised elegance to her capability to convey strength and vulnerability simultaneously. Embodying elegance and grace with an upright, confident posture, I navigate the stage in heels with calculated steps, my thoughtful gaze hinting at untold jokes.

Performance Skills

This show and these characters rely heavily on timing. Holding suspensions for comedic effect is one of our greatest tools. The biggest game we play in the shows is with the audience, by chatting to them as they are coming into the space, we are building a relationship with the individual before the show, that we can call on later in the piece. We want to have everyone in the audience love us and want to play along. Through deliberate eye contact and body orientation, I maintain a silent, captivating connection with the audience.

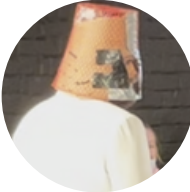
Other Roles

I play Achilles at one point and Hector, I find it fun to not make them the cool heroes or hyper masculine as its all been done before and at the end of they day they are just regular humans. So, I like to make them a bit smaller, round my shoulders, hunch my back a bit, and make my gestures a bit more floppy and flaccid.

Shared Characters



Calchas (Seer) created using...



Prince Hector created using...



Achilles created using...



Prince Paris created using...



King Priam created using...



Helen created using...



King & Fate created using...



Various guards, soldiers
created using...



PRODUCTION AREAS

PROPS

Props, such as suitcases, play versatile roles throughout the performance. They morph into tanks, weapons, a horse, and, of course, remain suitcases. Additionally, representations of the Cyclops come to life through a white balloon and a handheld torch, while the Palladium is symbolized by a doll statue, and the dead body of Achilles' friend is a scuffed and stuffed white suit bag.

The fluid transformation of props blurs the lines between prop, costume, and set. For instance, a bucket hat becomes emblematic of Achilles, and a simple ocean tarp creates the illusion of vast waters. These inventive conventions are characteristic of eclectic theatre, reflecting its spontaneous nature and its ties to the theatrical approaches of Grotowski, Lecoq and Gaulier.



Costume

In *The Trojan War* by A Slightly Isolated Dog, the actors embody base characters like Philippe, Julie, Ginger, Bastian, and Lily, while also transforming into various roles using wigs, props, a bucket, and voice distortion. This aligns with the theatrical principles of Lecoq and Gaulier. These principles champion the actor's physicality, movement, and inventive expression in portraying multiple characters and stories within a single performance. The choice of base costumes in white, black, and red, along with symbolic accessories for other characters, provides a visually impactful yet simplified means of facilitating quick character changes, highlighting the performers' physicality and acting prowess rather than relying on elaborate costumes.

Jacques Lecoq and Philippe Gaulier place the actor's body at the forefront of storytelling, suggesting that an actor can inhabit any character or narrative through physical expression. The use of minimal, adaptable costumes in *The Trojan War* allows actors to seamlessly shift between roles, underlining the physical and creative demands of Lecoq and Gaulier's techniques.

The costume design in *The Trojan War* is a testament to the show's creative ethos, using everyday objects and simple articles of clothing transformed through imagination to represent characters and thematic elements. The choice of a limited colour palette - black, white, grey with splashes of red or pink - not only unifies the visual aesthetic of the production but also imbues it with a formal elegance that allows performers to embody their roles with confidence and expressiveness.

The transformation of Helen through a "shimmering gold veil and a microphone" is particularly poignant, serving not to identify Helen with a single actor but to evoke her ethereal beauty and elusive nature, a technique that exemplifies the production's approach to characterisation as fluid and imaginative. The consistent use of red for accents and makeup, such as Julie's red lips, injects vibrancy into the visual narrative, symbolising passion and vitality within the storyline.

SOUND

The sound design in *The Trojan War* is intricately layered, playing a crucial role in bridging the mythic past with the present audience experience. Sam Clavis, the sound designer, employs a mix of pre-recorded sounds to create a soundscape that elevates the storytelling to a celestial level.

A standout example includes the manipulation of sound to grant audience members a god-like presence within the narrative, such as when simple gestures are met with thunderous sound effects, encapsulating the divine intervention theme within the play. This technique not only underscores the mythical quality of the story but also engages the audience directly, making them an active participant in the unfolding epic.

Another illustrative moment mentioned by Peters involves the strategic use of sound during the transformation of everyday objects into narrative symbols. The transformation of plastic wrap into the churning ocean is accentuated by sound, enhancing the visual illusion and drawing the audience deeper into the story's world.

The interactive aspect of sound design where audience improvisations are met with responsive sound cues, showcases the dynamic and fluid interaction between performers and spectators.

This responsiveness is pivotal in maintaining the immersive quality of the production, allowing for a seamless integration of the audience into the fabric of the performance.

WATCH THIS CLIP

How is sound used in this moment to build tension?

DIRECTION

Leojean Peters' direction and the innovative use of staging in "The Trojan War" exemplify the production's commitment to creating an immersive, participatory theatrical experience.

The intimate traverse staging not only facilitates a closer connection between performers and the audience but also transforms the theatre space into a dynamic battleground where myth and reality intertwine. The decision to maintain house lights throughout the performance is a radical departure from conventional theatre practices, designed to keep the audience visually and emotionally engaged with the unfolding drama.

This approach allows for spontaneous interactions and ensures that the audience is always part of the narrative landscape. One of the most compelling uses of space is the transformation of simple plastic wrap into a vast ocean, a creative decision that invites the audience to suspend disbelief and dive into the mythic world of the Trojan War. The choreography of the fight scenes, described by Peters as akin to a "tennis match," showcases the meticulous planning and execution required to use space effectively, ensuring that each movement and moment resonates with the audience.

Through the meticulous integration of diverse styles, Peters achieves a dynamic and fluid narrative landscape, enabling the audience to traverse seamlessly between the mythic grandeur of the Trojan War and the intimate, immediate reality of the theatre space.

Additionally, the production's ability to upend traditional spatial dynamics, as seen in the use of the plastic wrap where actors and audience members interact beneath and around it, blurs the lines between performer and spectator, creating a shared realm of experience.

LIGHTING

In The Trojan War production by A Slightly Isolated Dog, lighting design is masterfully used to create an immersive and dynamic theatrical experience.

General Wash for Audience Engagement: The initial use of a general wash lights up the stage uniformly, effectively blurring the lines between actors and audience. This technique ensures the space feels inclusive, setting a communal tone for the performance that invites the audience into the narrative from the very beginning.

Cross Lighting for Visual Interest: Employing cross lighting, the production adds depth and dimension to the stage, enhancing the visual storytelling. This method illuminates actors from opposite sides, creating rich shadows that delineate space and emphasize the emotional and physical dynamics of the scenes, adding a layer of visual complexity that engages the audience further.

Strategic Blackouts for Punctuation: Blackouts are utilized with precision to mark transitions and heighten dramatic tension. These sudden shifts to darkness serve as breaths between scenes, allowing the audience moments of anticipation and reflection, and effectively segmenting the narrative to maintain a rhythm throughout the performance.

Blue Lighting for Symbolism: The use of blue lighting to represent water stands out as a creative and thematic choice. This specific use of color not only sets a mood but also conveys deeper symbolic meanings, transforming the stage and enveloping the audience in the imagery and emotions associated with water.



WATCH THIS CLIP

How are contrast and lighting used to enhance meaning?





ACTIVITIES

BRAINSTORM SOME WAYS THAT EACH STYLE IS INCLUDED IN THE TROJAN WAR - USE THE STYLE BREAKDOWNS ABOVE AS WELL AS THE INTERVIEW WITH THE CREATIVE TEAM TO HELP YOU IF YOU'RE STUCK

***PHYSICAL
THEATRE***

***VAUDEVILLE
BURLESQUE***

***FRENCH
FARCE***

***LECOQ,
BOUFFON &
GAULIER***

CABARET

***GROTWOSKI /
POOR THEATRE***

***BRECHTIAN EPIC
THEATRE***

ACTOR-AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP

BRAINSTORM SOME OF THE WAYS A SLIGHTLY ISOLATED DOG USES ACTOR-AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP IN THE TROJAN WAR.

Establishing a fourth wall creates an invisible barrier between performers and audience, maintaining illusion; *breaking the fourth wall* involves performers acknowledging the audience's presence or the fictionality of the performance; **direct audience address** is when performers speak directly to the audience without necessarily breaking character or the narrative flow; **audience participation** invites the audience to contribute to the performance in a structured manner affecting the course of the performance; while **audience interaction** engages the audience in spontaneous and direct exchanges. Additionally, **endowment** refers to the act of imagining, pretending, or assigning roles to audience members.

BREAK THE FOURTH WALL

AUDIENCE INTERACTION

ESTABLISH A FOURTH WALL

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

DIRECT AUDIENCE ADDRESS

ENDOWING

EXPRESSIVE SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE SKILLS AS DEFINED BY VCAA

**Expressive skills are used to express and realise a character.
Expressive skills may be used in different ways in different performance styles.**

Voice, for example diction, pitch, pace, tone, resonance, muscularity and vocal sounds.

Movement, for example gait, posture and stance.

Gesture, for example using the body or body parts, usually the hands, to create symbols and meaning.

Facial expression, for example manipulating facial expressions to communicate emotions, reactions and meaning.

**Performance skills are used to enhance performance and
together create an actor's presence.**

Focus is the ability of the actor to commit to their performance and to use concentration to sustain characters. Focus may also be used to create an implied character or setting through the manipulation of the audience's attention towards a specific place. The manipulation of focus may assist the actor to develop an effective actor–audience relationship. Timing

Timing is used to control or regulate the pace of a performance. Timing may be manipulated in drama to build dramatic tension, to evoke feeling, to coordinate effective synchronisation within an ensemble and to develop the comic potential of a scene.

Energy is the intensity an actor brings to a performance. At different times, an actor will use different levels of energy to create different performance dynamics. An actor may use low energy to create pathos. Conversely, an actor may use high energy to create a moment of tension.

Actor–audience relationship The actor considers what impact they intend their performance to have on the audience. The actor–audience relationship is the way in which an actor deliberately manipulates the audience's moods, emotions and responses to the action. This may be done through the placement of the actor in relation to the audience, the way the actor addresses and engages the audience, and the emotional and intellectual response to the character's situation. An actor–audience relationship only exists as part of an actual performance.

NOTE IN A FEW WORDS HOW EACH CHARACTER IS CREATED USING THE EXPRESSIVE AND PERFORMANCE SKILLS

	<i>LILY</i>	<i>BASTIEN</i>	<i>JULIE</i>	<i>GINGER</i>	<i>PHILIPPE</i>
<i>VOICE</i>					
<i>GESTURE</i>					
<i>MOVEMENT</i>					
<i>FACIAL EXPRESSION</i>					
<i>FOCUS</i>					
<i>ENERGY</i>					
<i>TIMING</i>					
<i>ACTOR- AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP</i>					

DRAMATIC ELEMENTS DEFINED BY VCAA

Climax is the most significant moment of tension or conflict in a drama and often occurs towards the end of the plot. Multiple climaxes and/or an anti-climax may also occur. The action of a drama usually unravels after the climax has transpired but the work might finish with a climactic moment.

Conflict generally occurs when a character cannot achieve an objective due to an obstacle. This obstacle may be internal or external and between characters or between characters and their environment. Conflict may be shown in a variety of ways, for example through physical, verbal or psychological means. Conflict may be embedded in the structure of the drama.

Contrast presents the dissimilar, or opposite, in order to highlight or emphasise difference. Contrast may be explored in many ways and may include contrasting characters, settings, times, themes, elements, production areas and performance styles.

Mood is the overall feeling or emotion that a performance may evoke. This may be achieved through manipulation of acting, conventions or production areas. Rhythm is a regular pattern of words, sounds or actions. Performances have their own rhythm that may be influenced by the emotional nature of the plot, the pace of line delivery, the dialogue (long and/or short lines), the pace of scene transitions and the length of scenes.

Sound is created live, by the actor, in the performance. Voice, body percussion and objects can be used individually or in combination to create sonic effects in performance and to enhance meaning. Sound may include silence or the deliberate absence of sound.

Space involves the way the performance area is used to communicate meaning, to define settings, to represent status and to create actor–audience relationships. This may be achieved through the use of levels, proximity and depth. The use of space may be symbolic.

Tension is the suspense that holds an audience's attention as a performance unfolds. The release of tension may have a comic or a dramatic effect.

Listen to [The Aside Podcast episode](#) with Creative Director he articulates some moments from the show that utilise the dramatic elements clearly. Write one example from the interview and then come up with your own.

LEO GENE PETERS**OTHER EXAMPLES****MOOD****RHYTHM****TENSION****SOUND****SPACE****CLIMAX****CONFLICT****CONTRAST**

Previous VCAA Exam Questions

2019 Drama Exam - Section A Question 1:

- a. Describe how one production area was used in the performance of your selected play. (3 marks)
- b. Evaluate how the actor(s) manipulated the actor–audience relationship in one particular moment. (5 marks)
- c. Analyse how the actor(s) used conventions to represent character and to communicate meaning in the performance. (7 marks)

2020 Drama Exam - Section A Question 1:

- a. Describe how the performance skill of either focus or energy was applied in a specific moment in the performance of this play. (2 marks)
- b. Explain how the actor(s) applied one or two expressive skills to represent a character(s) in the performance of this play. (3 marks)
- c. Evaluate how the actor(s) manipulated one convention and one production area in the performance of this play to create meaning. (5 marks)

2021 Drama Exam - Section A Question 1:

- a. Describe how one actor manipulated one performance skill in one specific moment in the performance of this play. (3 marks)
- b. Evaluate the use of two or more dramatic elements to enhance the performance in one specific moment in the performance of this play. (5 marks)
- c. Analyse how one production area was used to enhance the performance in two specific moments in the performance of this play. (7 marks)

2022 Drama Exam - Section A Question 1 :

- a. Describe how one actor applied one expressive skill to communicate one character to the audience in the performance of this play. 3 marks
- b. Analyse how one or more actors manipulated two conventions of the performance style to communicate meaning to the audience in the performance of this play. 5 marks
- c. Evaluate how one or more actors manipulated two production areas to both establish and maintain the actor–audience relationship in the performance of this play. 7 marks

2023 Drama Exam - Section A Question 1:

- a. Describe how one actor used focus in one moment in the performance of this play. (2 marks)
- b. Evaluate how one actor applied and manipulated two dramatic elements in the performance of this play. (5 marks)
- c. Analyse how one or more actors used a convention of the performance style in the performance of this play to manipulate the actor–audience relationship. In your response refer to one moment from the performance of this play, one convention from the performance style, and one or more production areas. (8 marks)

Sample Questions

Describe a moment in the play where an actor's use of body language or vocal modulation significantly contributed to the development of their character. How did this choice impact your understanding of the character's motivations or emotions?

Analyse how the use of lighting and sound design in a pivotal scene created dramatic tension or atmosphere. Provide specific examples to support your analysis.

Evaluate the use of a specific prop or costume piece as a symbol within the play. How did this choice contribute to the overall theme or message of the performance?

Discuss how the staging of the play, including the use of space and movement, influenced the audience's perspective or engagement with the narrative. Were there any moments where the spatial arrangement had a particularly strong impact?

Reflect on a moment in the play where the actors directly engaged with the audience, either through breaking the fourth wall or another method. How did this moment affect your connection to the performance?

Identify the primary performance style of the play and discuss how adherence to or deviation from this style influenced the effectiveness of the storytelling. Provide examples of moments that were particularly well-served by the chosen style.

Analyse how modern technology (e.g., projections, digital soundscapes) was used in the play. Did these elements enhance or detract from the live performance experience?

Describe how the contrast between two characters was established through their expressive skills and performance techniques. How did this contrast contribute to the central conflict of the play?:

Evaluate a scene where an actor had to portray multiple characters. How did they differentiate between these roles, and what techniques were most effective in conveying this transformation to the audience?

Discuss the pacing of the play and its impact on narrative tension and audience engagement. Were there moments where the rhythm of the performance significantly enhanced the storytelling?



CLIPS

Below are some short clips of the show recorded at 'The Basement' New Zealand in 2022
Note: this is a slightly different cast (Cherie Moore not Comfrey Sanders)
A video of the whole performance can be purchased by contacting the education team

CLIP 1 - AUDIENCE LOVERS**CLIP 2 - GODS INTERVENE**

HOW ARE THESE TWO CLIPS USING THE ACTOR AUDIENCE RELATIONSHIP TO ENHANCE THE THEMES OF THE WORK?

CLIP 3 - PROPHECY

HOW DOES COSTUME, SOUND, LIGHTING, DIRECTION AND STYLE ENHANCE THIS MOMENT?

CLIP 4 - FOCUS

HOW DO SOUND, TENSION, FOCUS, VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL LANGUAGE ENHANCE THIS MOMENT?

CLIP 5 - CONTRAST

DESCRIBE HOW CABARET, CONTRAST AND MOOD ARE UTILISED IN THIS MOMENT TO ENHANCE A THEME

CLIP 6 - "SOUND THE ALARM"

ANALYSE THE USE OF EXPRESSIVE SKILLS AND PERFORMANCE SKILLS IN THIS SHORT CLIP

CLIP 7 - OCEAN

HOW WERE PROPS, SET, SPACE AND TIMING USED TO ENHANCE THIS MOMENT?

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CLIP 8 - WAR

HOW DOES MOVEMENT,
SOUND DESIGN, ENERGY,
ACTOR-AUDIENCE
RELATIONSHIP AND TIMING
ENHANCE THIS MOMENT?

CLIP 9 - ACHILLIES SLOW MOTION

DESCRIBE THE USE OF
EXPRESSIVE SKILLS,
PERFORMANCE SKILLS AND
SPACE IN THIS MOMENT

CLIP 10 - DUEL

ANALYSE THE USE OF TIMING,
FOCUS AND EXPRESSIVE
SKILLS TO CREATE CLEAR
CHARACTERS IN THIS
MOMENT

CLIP 11 - BURIAL (MOOD)

HOW IS MOOD MANIPULATED
FROM COMEDIC TO
MOURNFUL IN THIS MOMENT?

CLIP 12 - BOOBY TRAP

WHICH CONVENTIONS OF
WHICH PERFORMANCE
STYLES ARE BEING USED IN
THIS SHORT CLIP?
HOW IS TIMING USED?

CLIP 13 - TROJAN HORSE

HOW HAVE THE PERFORMERS
TRANSFORMED THE SET IN
THIS SEQUENCE? HOW IS THE
SEQUENCE ENGAGING?

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Resource Writer

Nick Waxman is an award-winning teacher, director, and writer, currently leading the Theatre, Drama, and Dance department at Haileybury College. He contributes to Australian Teacher Magazine and has had a wide range of his written work published, including articles, plays, and poetry. As a PhD candidate at RMIT, Nick's research focuses on theatrical enquiry, learning environments, and student voice & agency. He serves as Treasurer for Drama Victoria and is on the board of Fusion Theatre, and is Curriculum and Resources manager for several state government projects, including the Blended Arts Project, Next Stage Project, and Positive Start Project. He has worked with VCAA in various capacities as an assessor of both the written and performance exams. He has also run workshops for drama students and teachers across Australia, Beijing, New Zealand and the USA. Nick hosts the Aside Podcast and produces the interactive video series 'Drama Victoria Presents...'

He is passionate about musicals and recently wrote and staged the delightful musical 'Bearded' in 2023 and is currently working with First Nations artists on an 'open script' anthology for schools and the stage.

Education Manager Jonathan Price

Cast & Creative Team of A Slightly Isolated Dog

Thank you to every member of the team for being available to talk about the show, write about their characters and discuss the show through a VCE lens.

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