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| **PROFESSIONAL WORK** | **LOVESONG** |
| **COMPANY** | **FRANTIC ASSEMBLY** |
| **SCENE / MOMENT** | **FIRST CONTACT** |
| **OVERVIEW OF WORK** | **Lovesong focusses on an older couple struggling to come to terms with an illness. As they entered a crucial week in their lives their house became filled with ever vivid memories of each other. Over the years, both Margaret (Maggie) and William (Billy) flirt with extra-marital affairs and struggle with the constraints of the expectations of married life. He makes financial decisions early on without her input; she takes a part time job against his wishes. And together they both struggle with the void left by their inability to have a child. The piece moves backwards and forwards through time as the four actors tell the story of this couple’s love, their marriage, and their shared yearning. The two versions of the couple interweave on stage and occasionally there are moments when they seem to catch a glimpse of their other selves in the past or the future.** |

**ELEMENTS**

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| **PERFORMANCE AND RELATIONSHIPS** | **DESCRIPTION** | **ANALYSIS** |
| Pace | * Pace of speech is fairly steady and naturalistic. * The delivery is considered with some natural pauses. * Slight increase is pace ‘maybe just maybe…’ | * Conversational feel – creates audience connection with the character * Gives sense of character being in control. She is reflecting and remembering her mother. * Reflects her previous desperation/denial of the situation then pace slows as she explains her current understanding and acceptance of her future. |
| Dynamics | Vocal delivery is slow and pensive.  Duet is fluid and never stops moving. Faster twists and transitions contrast with the sustained, controlled moments when bodies are in closer contact with embraces and eye contact.  Old Maggie’s walk across the stage and exit look jerky and stiff. | * Sense of sadness and reflection. * Shows the relationship – the two move together as one they are like one entity. * Heightened intimacy and sensuality, they linger in those close moments savouring the body contact and eye contact. They move quickly through the transitions when they separate to draw their bodies back together and slow down again. * This dynamic contrast shows the physical impact of age. |
| Timing | * The music stops abruptly when Old Maggie lies on the table with the younger two kissing over her. | * She is brought back to reality/the present by the physical pain (and perhaps the pain of the memory that has passed) as she attempts to lie on the table again. Highlights her body is not capable of the same things. |
| Musicality | First piece of music starts as an underscore to Old Maggie’s speech. The volume increases when the duet begins.  The duet works with the phrasing of the melody and dynamic quality of the music which has long, sustained background notes reflecting the fluid, continuous movement phrase.  The second piece of music does not have a clear melody. Young Margaret moves across the music, her movements are faster than before and the music is more of a backdrop to her solo. | * Suggests the beginning and strengthening of the memory and the crossover links the two times. * The music has a cyclic melody with repeating phrases which the actors reflect in their movement – there is a feeling of comfort and familiarity – they are familiar with each other’s bodies and movements. * There is a more sinister feel to the music and Margaret seems lost in her movement perhaps unaware of what is going on around her – this contrasts with the duet and presents young Margaret as an individual with her own fears and challenges. |
| Voice | Natural but rhythmic delivery  Low pitch, controlled delivery | * Connects audience with character emotions * Old Maggie comes across as a woman who is in control and feels confident with her new understanding of her situation. She now accepts she cannot ‘stave off the inevitable’ and sees the ‘madness’ of her previous belief that she might be able to. |
| Movement | A contact duet on the table.   * The actors remain in contact throughout and appears to be influenced by the principles of Contact Improvisation with the table replacing the floor. * and Maggie’s bodies wrap around one another in a series of embraces, as they slide, roll and take each other’s weight. * Fluid transitions are punctuated by intimate gestures of touching the face, stroking the face, burrowing the face into the neck, stroking the body, kissing the check and clasping hand behind the neck. There are moments of sustained eye contact and moments where one partner closes their eyes blissfully while the other touches them. * The movement ends when Old Maggie inserts herself between the couple and young Billy gently lowers her head to the table while the young couple kiss over her.   Young Maggie’s solo on the table   * Maggie repeats some of the movements from the duet but alone – her focus is now on the table itself. She strokes it, tries to smell it, rolls across it and lowers herself slowly backwards onto it. Finally stepping away while her hand lingers on the table top. As she exits she crosses the stage and strokes/touches the walls – her touch creates sparkles and balls of light (projected on the walls) | * Old Maggie recalls making love on the kitchen table. * Sensuality in the maintained contact plus emphasis on touch with sustained stroking and use of focus as they seem to drink each other in. * There is a gentleness to the movement showing the care they have for one another. Bill slowly lowers himself onto Maggie, she links her hands behind his neck and they gaze at one another, they pause to gently stroke each other’s cheeks – this is not wild sex but a beautiful, gentle, expression of their love. * Old Maggie inserts herself into the memory, recalling (and feeling) Billy’s gentle touch. This memory/moment is shattered by her physical pain and she is left doubled over the table alone. * Young Maggie is also remembering the encounter on the table. She is trying to recall and recreate some of those feelings. The fact she is now alone suggests she is looking for this same connection with Billy and perhaps no longer has this same intimacy. |
| Gesture | Old Maggie fiddles with and twists a small jar of face cream as she addresses the audience.  See Movement analysis above – intimate gestures within the duet show the feelings Billy and Maggie have for each other. | She is speaking about the cream and the ritual of applying her cream just like her mother did. The jar is familiar in her hand something she has used daily for years but there is a sense of discomfort with how she fiddles and twists it – perhaps her understanding of what it represents – her denial that things would change for her – a desire to maintain the traditions and follow the path of her mother. |
| Character | Three different characters (+ Old Billy lies out of sight asleep in the bed)  OLD MAGGIE    YOUNG MARGARET AND WILLIAM |  |
| Spatial awareness | The duet remains centred on the table while Old Maggie observes from behind. | * The table acts as a ‘stage’ on which Maggie can replay her memories. |
| Performer to performer | The young couple are completely absorbed in one another. Their physical and eye contact makes them move as one entity.  Old Maggie crosses form the bed to stand behind and observe until she finally inserts herself between the couple.  Old Maggie is left leaning on the table until Billy calls her, Young Maggie enters and mirrors her position then Old Maggie exits. | The closeness and intimacy of the couple is undeniable here they are lost in one another.  Maggie is watching and remembering.  She places herself in the memory – the way she is accepted seamlessly into the moment with the same gentleness by young Billy shows this is the same person at different times. |
| Contact work | (See Movement analysis above)  Clear use of Contact Improvisation principles/techniques | Choice of this form of movement is appropriate to the emotions/context of the scene: Trust, close physical contact, physical communication between two people, feeling at ease with one another and attune to the other persons desires, increased sensory perception and sensitivity.  (Definition of CI from [www.contactimprovisation.co.uk](http://www.contactimprovisation.co.uk) ) *The body, in order to open to these sensations, must learn to release excess muscular tension and abandon a certain quality of willfulness to experience the natural flow of movement. Practice includes rolling, falling, being upside down, following a physical point of contact, supporting and giving weight to a partner* |
| Performer to space | See spatial awareness above.  Old Maggie’s monologue is spoken while she sits on the bed | Adds to the feel of calm reflection. An intimate setting where we get to hear the character’s inner thoughts.  The bed is important as an unchanging element in the couple’s lives |
| Performer to audience | Direct address of text to audience | * Combined with vocal delivery feels as if speaker is trying to persuade the audience * Makes the story more personable * One could argue that the actor/audience relationship is strong due to very high emotional dependence. The actor plays the character in a naturalistic manner to convey to the audience real emotion. |
| Performer to accompaniment | See musicality above | * First Track (*Filmic* by Above and Beyond) starts as an underscore to Maggie’s monologue leading into the duet. Suggests the memory begins while she is on the bed. |
| Placement and role of audience | End on |  |

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| **PRODUCTION AND REPERTOIRE** | **DESCRIPTION** | **ANALYSIS** |
| Text | Lyrical  Monologue  Direct address | * Written by: Abi Morgan * Use of Direct Address breaks the fourth wall. * Conversational/naturalistic – invites the audience into the story * Helps build emotional connection with audience |
| Choreography/direction | Choice of Contact Improvisation-inspired movement highlights the theme/relationship between characters. | Presenting the sexual encounter through dance movement enables the director to demonstrate the emotional connection and the audience sees a beautiful, sensitive, intimate moment without feeling voyeuristic or awkward.  Combination of naturalism and dance movement is used as a tool to show this is a flashback – Maggie’s memory plays out in front of her and it is the emotional connection she remembers over the details of the act itself. |
| Score/music | Duet: *Filmic* by Above and Beyond:  Steady rhythm  Cyclical melody with long sustained bass notes held beneath.  Solo: No top melody, more distorted sound, long drawn out bass notes | * Music cerates a sense of nostalgia, it feel positive, happy but with darker undertone. * Repetitive of melody suggests idea o routine, repeated actions (link to the everyday rituals in Maggie’s speech) * More sinister in contrast * As young Maggie remembers the lovemaking on the table there is more of a sense of yearning, sadness, and loss – she tries to recreate the emotions but without Billy for the connection the table doesn’t create the same positive reaction. |
| Content | THEMES:  **LOVE**  **TIME**  GENERATIONAL ATTITUDES (TO: MOTHERHOOD, **ROLE OF WOMEN**, MARRIAGE,  **INABILITY TO CONCEIVE**)  **GENERATION GAP**  **AGEING**  **MORTALITY**  GRIEF  **INEVITABILITY OF DEATH**  ASSISTED SUICIDE  THE ONE LEFT BEHIND | This scene explores Maggie’s acceptance of the inevitability of death. She uses the ritual of creaming her face as a metaphor – she has always done it as her mother before her did but now sees that this act can’t stop the inevitable aging process.  The duet highlights the strength of emotional connection between Young Billy and Maggie – sensitive, gentle, intimate, beautiful.  Young Maggie’s solo with the table suggests a different emotional response to the memory of love-making on the table – perhaps for young Maggie the memory highlights to her what was missing (conception of a baby) or what has been lost (their emotional connection.  When Maggie is brought back from her flashback by her pain this highlights the generation gap in terms of physicality – Maggie’s body is deteriorating and not physically capable of those actions. |
| Genre | Naturalism mixed with a physical theatre response | * Naturalism creates believable characters and enables an emotional connection for the audience. * Physical theatre is used as a device for the characters inhabit the same space while revisiting moments through memory. |
| Style | Physical Theatre  Influences of Contact Improvisation | (See Movement analysis above)  Choice of this form of movement is appropriate to the emotions/context of the scene: Trust, close physical contact, physical communication between two people, feeling at ease with one another and attune to the other persons desires, increased sensory perception and sensitivity.   * (Definition of CI from [www.contactimprovisation.co.uk](http://www.contactimprovisation.co.uk) ) *The body, in order to open to these sensations, must learn to release excess muscular tension and abandon a certain quality of willfulness to experience the natural flow of movement. Practice includes rolling, falling, being upside down, following a physical point of contact, supporting and giving weight to a partner* |
| Set |  | Quote from director/Choreographer SCOTT GRAHAM:  As we looked at early design ideas for Lovesong with Merle Hensel we were all desperate for the set not to appear to be commenting on the protagonists or making a judgment that the couple had lost something through time. This was difficult to avoid but remained an important aspiration. It is not original to suggest that they had lost that loving feeling! We were eager not to restrict the world of Lovesong too. At times I think myself and Steven had attempted to crowd Merle’s design with ideas of moving floors and disappearing furniture. Seeing through this Merle has delivered a beautifully elegant and minimalist set that presents several rooms and suggests many more walls of a house filled with love over many decades. |
| Staging and special effects |  |  |
| Costume | See images above  Old Maggie: Long, button-up maroon pyjamas, floral dressing gown  Young Maggie: 1960s style, short, green A-line dress, tights, no shoes  Young Billy: Smart white shirt, trousers, stripy knitted tie, smart shoes | Realistic  Signify a time period  Highlights the ‘Generation gap’ – young, sexy, fresh, stylish versus practical, comfort, warmth. |
| Hair and makeup | Young Maggie: Backcombed (bouffant) to give height on top, French pleat style. | This was a popular style with young women in the 1960s.  Signifies a time period |
| Mask | n/a |  |
| Lighting and multimedia | The different sections of the scene are distinguished with lighting changes | During the duet Old Maggie stands upstage in the shadows. She is just visible but the couple are lit with spotlight – lost in the moment and one-another, unaware of their surroundings.  When Old Maggie cries out the lights come up – snapping back to reality.  The lighting for Maggie’s solo is much dimmer and reflects the darker mood. |
| Projection | Maggie interacts with a projection as she exits after her solo – as she touches the walls at the back balls of light spread from her hands. | Highlighting the power of touch and links to sensual memory. Old Maggie leaves her hand lingering on the table before she leaves, young Maggie enters and places her hand in the same way – sometimes a smell, sound or the feel of something can evoke stronger memories. In the feel of the table both Maggies are ‘transported’ back to the feel of the moment.  The projection suggests the house is full of these ‘sense memories’. |
| Sound | See Music analysis above. |  |
| Puppetry | n/a |  |

**CONTEXTS (please ensure you fill this in after the class discussion and from your own research)**

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| Historical |  |
| Social |  |
| Cultural |  |
| Geographical |  |
| Economic |  |
| Political |  |