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| **PROFESSIONAL WORK** | **LOVESONG** |
| **COMPANY** | **FRANTIC ASSEMBLY** |
| **SCENE / MOMENT** | **THE OPENING** |
| **OVERVIEW OF WORK** | Lovesong is a story of one couple, told from two different points in their lives – as young lovers in their 20s and as worldly companions looking back on their relationship. Their past and present selves collide in a tale of togetherness. |

**ELEMENTS**

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| PERFORMANCE AND RELATIONSHIPS | DESCRIPTION | ANALYSIS |
| Pace | Slow and considered  Reflective and contemplative | * Billy taking the time to be still, to reflect and to yearn, whilst all around him the world, his milieu is static and fixed. * Billy has been thinking a lot about what he wants to say – the audience feel as if it is poignant and important as stillness and reflection suggests thought. * We move between the time periods with pace and fluidity –it gives this moment a very cinematic quality as if a camera is waiting for the arrival of William and Margaret to inject some ‘life’ into Billy. Billy is stood just out of ‘shot’ watching the speed of the characters contrast his own. |
| Dynamics | Vocal delivery slow and thoughtful  Underscore music slow and legato  Energy changes on entrance of William & Margaret – pace and energy increases. | * Reflecting that Billy is contemplative and the audience understand that he has been thinking about a topic which is larger than he is. * Music and lighting subtly shifting support the idea that changes take time and aren’t instant. * When the other characters enter the space, the increase in energy acts as a stark contrast to what the audience has seen previously suggesting that Billy is excited by these characters. |
| Timing | * Timed to allow entrances by other characters after Billy’s Monologue * Billy and William both laugh in unison | * Entrance of William and Margaret comes at time when the audience are listening to Billy talk about death – clearly highlighting the juxtaposition of time passing – where is Maggie? Why isn’t she on stage? * Reflecting that they are the same person and that, even though their appearance has change, their sense of humour hasn’t. |
| Musicality | The underscore music over the top of Billy’s Monologue impacts the manner in which the audience interpret the character. | * Underscore supported the theme of the text, and played with rather than against it * It supports both the reflective nature of Billy at this stage of his life as well as makes the entrance of Margaret and William seem hopeful and important. |
| Voice | Natural but rhythmic delivery  Delivery is stern and low, connoting authority.  Change of tone when seeing William and Margaret.  Use of actors own cadencies reflects age and experience. | * Communicating with the audience– direct address coming from the heart – a character truth. The vocal decisions of Billy relate to the contrast when we see William – hopeful tone juxtaposed by cynical. Fast pace contrasting slower more methodical pace. * Trying to persuade and bring listener on board – Giving an insight into the character in relation to the past. * Billy’s chest resonance shows his history – strong, stern and knowledgeable. * There is a youthful joy in William & Margaret’s vocal delivery – their playful tone and softness reflects their relationship – particularly how in love they are. This highlights the importance of the absence of Maggie. |
| Movement |  | * characters to transform from young to old, old * to young and embrace indiscriminately. * Characters closeness – almost constant contact connoting relationship. |
| Gesture | * Subtle use of gesture appropriate to reflecting Billy’s age and experience. | * Margaret is gesturing to William with a stern yet playful energy – this is suggesting that she is mocking him making him feel loved. His gestures shift to mimic hers showing the closeness of their relationship and the constant time they have spent together – making the impact on Billy being by himself that much more important. |
| Character  The high-concept premise is that the same couple is portrayed by Sam Cox and Sian Phillips over a few days late in life, and in their 20s and 30s by the younger actors. Each pair of actors almost always interacts only with each other, but all four are frequently on stage at the same time | THREE different characters  William – Edward Bennett  \\godalming.ac.uk\dfs\Users\Staff\rns\Desktop\Capture.JPG | * Youthful, optimistic and energetic. Used as a stark contrast to Billy to show the passing of time. * Low resonance with a fast pace and a developed Lexis – this, again, contrasts to how we see Billy. * Articulation is strong and pronounced connoting a social status that appears higher than Billy – perhaps juxtaposing how life impacts him. * Laban – direct – contrasting Billy. * The best way to write about William is to look at the way in which he changes. Billy and William appear to be different characters. The actors shared laugh is a clear indicator to the audience that they are connected. The differences in them are hugely important in understanding who he is and why there are such distinct differences in his character. |
| Margaret – Leanne Rowe | * Natural tessiture. Mocking tone when talking about the size of the kitchen. * Vocal delivery is legato and reflective of a soft and kind character. * In this section, we don’t see Maggie so we, as an audience, are unable to see the same contrasts as we do with William and Billy. This gives an element of intrigue for Margaret’s character. * We can clearly see that their relationship is close as the proxemics and contact suggests so – there is a playfulness about her that is scene in her light physicality. |
| Billy – Sam Cox | * Reflective, contemplative and thinking about his own mortality. * Billy’s character is riddled with Pathos and this is accentuated by his voice and physicality. * There are clear moments of non-sequitor delivery showing the dissipated nature of Billy’s mind. Having this open the piece hugely impacts the audience because they are trying to figure out what has lead Billy to this point. * Billy’s attempt to reclaim the romantic gesture, to reclaim the connection with the younger versions of himself and Margaret. His attempts are often misjudged or mistimed but he has a beautiful redemption at the end when he finds the perfect way to defy time, aging, and make the most simple and devastating romantic gesture. |
| Spatial Awareness | Minimalist Spacing  See the source image | * 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. |
| Performer to performer | This opening section contains direct address  The connection between performer to performer comes from the entrance of Margaret and William – we see the closeness of the couple, which juxtaposes the stark loneliness of Billy. | * “I am young” – Billy shares a laugh with his former self, showing the connection between the characters. |
| Contact work | n/a |  |
| Performer to space | Centre stage – facing away from the audience  Gradually move towards the audience during the scene  Standing firm, until William and Margaret enter.  M & W looking at the space as if it has gotten smaller. | * Showing that the audience are ‘seeing in’ to an environment that they may not normally be able to access. * With a big sparse space with one solitary actor in, makes the actor feel slight isolated to the action. * When the other characters enter, Billy is proxemically distant as if he is looking in on them – showing the chronological distance between him and the past. |
| 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. By talking about something seemingly unimportant, Billy is making a clear statement about death – foreshadowing a key theme within the plot and narrative of the play. |
| Performer to accompaniment | See musicality above | * During this opening section the score stays the same showing a collective unity of the characters we see towards the end – somehow suggesting their similarities and as if they are all part of the same story. |
| Placement and role of audience | End on | * To begin to try and decipher the relationship between Billy and the two other characters that enter the space. * End on – makes the audience feel as if they are looking in on a story – with Billy talking directly to them, they are being shown that they are potentially going on a ‘journey’ with him. |

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| PRODUCTION AND REPERTOIRE | DESCRIPTION | ANALYSIS |
| Text | Lyrical  Episodic  Direct address | * Written by: Abi Morgan * Use of Direct Address the start of the play which immediately broke the fourth wall. It was used because the audience need to know that there will be a crossing of time periods, and that the characters they are seeing are not naturalistically conveyed. * By establishing from the start that characters may communicate directly to the audience, the audience are able to see clearly that they are being expected to understand the stark differences in characters throughout different time periods – accentuated by the fact that earlier versions of the characters are seen at the end of this section. |
| Choreography/direction |  |  |
| Score/music | The piece opens with the song Requiem for the Static King, Pt. Two by  ‘[A Winged Victory for the Sullen](https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B00556H6D8/ref=dm_ws_ps_adp)’ | * The song is boundless and thoughtful with bold strings and plummeting crescendos, reflecting contemplation and measured consideration. Billy is wearing earphones suggesting that he is listening to the music meaning that, in this opening sequence, the audience are seeing an example of diegetic and non-diegetic sound being used simultaneously. The atmosphere that is being created by the use of this music sets up the mood of the piece and its nuance and subtlety that is replicated throughout the entire production. * When Billy adjusts the earphones, the music hits a powerful crescendo, then returns to being contemplative and sullen – replicating the mood of the character in this moment. The music fades when Billy sees the sticky notes on the fridge and removes his earphones. After a moment of pause after his first lines, the music returns as a non-diegetic underscore. “A breakthrough occurred found the duo A Winged Victory for the Sullen on the Erased Tapes website. “It was gorgeous, spacious and gentle. It promised a world within which the words of *Lovesong* could sit without being crowded.” |
|  | THEMES: | * The story of one couple’s enduring but far from perfect relationship gradually emerges, which survives his addictive tendencies, temptations of infidelity on both sides, and an inability to have children that affects them both profoundly but differently. What flirts with, and sometimes succumbs to, melodrama is the crisis the older couple are facing, which becomes apparent via the accretion of details: Maggie’s frequent doctor visits, her inventory of the house’s contents, and the post-its she’s putting up everywhere, though verbally expressive of their feelings in younger life, the older couple find themselves unable to talk about what’s going on. * Brief choreographed passages are where the emotional subtext is communicated. A sensual movement scene first performed by the younger couple is repeated late in the show, with older Billy lifting and caressing his wife in her younger incarnation. Most movingly, all four writhe in pain and grief on the same bed. But jacking up the volume of recorded music in these movement breaks feels emotionally manipulative and distrusting of the material’s power. * Over the years, both Margaret and William 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. |
| Genre | Naturalism mixed with a heightened contemporary physical response. | * Due to the fact that the audience are trying to figure out what has lead Billy to this point at the start of the play, we see a contemporary structure adopted that relates to the idea; does the audience perception of a story change if there is a snapshot of the final moments at the start. It keeps the audience intrigued and asking questions until the inevitable big reveal at the end. |
| Style | Physical Theatre | * Supported by naturalistic characters and dialogue. |
| Set | Fridge  Table & Chairs  Symbology of the Leaves | * The performance takes place in the kitchen and bedroom of Billy and Maggie’s house, which is stalked by the ghosts of their younger selves. The set was simplistic; only featuring basic statement furnishings of the house (such as the fridge, table, bed and wardrobe). The spacious stage was left empty; allowing room for scenes of elaborate physical theatre. Using these furnishings for entrances and exits gave the impression of all their memories together being tucked away. This larger space made the crosscutting techniques more effective and gave the audience a feeling of looking in on the scenes. An aspect of the set left open to interpretation was the use of the autumn leaves scattered across the stage floor; I believed this was symbolic of decay and time passing. * “This specific vagueness (as we shall call it, like I have coined something important) extended across the production. We talked about the setting of the play as a feeling rather than a defined place. It was somewhere warm, near a lake as a long summer was ending. We all knew instantly the colours and sounds of this world but we never gave it a name. The closest we ever came was; ‘a kind of New Englandy, lakey type place’. All of us nodded, knowing exactly what we meant.” |
| Staging and special effects |  |  |
| Costume | See images posted above  Realistic  Signify a time period  Signify status  Billy – Reflects an older  Margaret – More formal – prim and proper  William – Causal – polo shirt and jeans | * Autumnal pallet reflecting the relationships between the two characters. * Soft, thoughtful and reflective – Autumn is a time for change – something cold and bleak to light and warm – Autumn is representative of change. The contrast between Billy and William & Margaret shows the journey that the characters go on. Billy ends with a bland and linear colour palette where as William is dressed with colours of optimism and LIFE. * Billy is wearing a suit jacket and formal shirt – showing his age as well as contrasting the way in which he has changed over time. |
| Hair and makeup | Billy/William – Loses hair  Margaret – 60’s haircut reflects time period. | * Balding with a large amount of stubble showing that he has let himself go. * The ability to see two versions of the same character shows that time has passed and is era specific. |
| Mask | n/a |  |
| Lighting and multimedia | * Each time period has a specific lighting design / feel. The lighting is working with the time periods. * During the opening section these different time periods are established so each character is immediately set up with their design around them * Warm tungsten feel to the lighting with deep oranges and brown gels – side lighting – reflects the autumnal feel of the set and costume – fitting with the entire colour palette. * naturalistic lighting, multi light sources, orange gels | * On Margaret and William’s entrance, stark bold lighting which casts shadow on Billy. Showing his isolation and distance from the past – he is proxemically close showing the connection but this is contrasted by the lighting making him seem distant. * The entrance of William & Margaret is a soft and subtle shift in the lighting connoting the closeness of their relationship and impacts the mood – positive, playful and loving – this is replicated in the physicality and vocal choices of the characters. |
| Projection |  | * Ian William Galloway’s projections play out on the back wall and the peach tree in the garden comes to symbolise the younger Margaret and William’s expectations of their future together, and later their older selves are able to look back on it as a constant throughout their time in their house together. The peaches perhaps reference T S Eliot’s *The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock*, which appears to be an inspiration for the piece. * Projected at the start of the play and appearing throughout are starlings flying away. * One of the inspirations for this production was the song STARLINGS by Elbow |
| Sound |  |  |
| 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 |  |