

BTEC Level 3 National in Performing Arts



Sample Marked Learner Work

External Assessment - January 2018

Unit 1: Investigating Practitioners' Work

Activity 1

How have **political** factors influenced the work of your chosen practitioners and their communication of the theme ***Chaos and Order***?

You should include:

- reference to a range of specific **political** factors that have influenced your chosen practitioners' work
- reference to a specific scene or moment from each practitioner's performance and production repertoire
- connections to the theme of ***Chaos and Order***
- reference to sources from your bibliography.

It is suggested you spend up to **40 minutes** on this activity.

(Total for Activity 1 = 12 marks)

Chosen Practitioners: Kneehigh Theatre – Tin Drum (Liverpool Everyman) & Frantic Assembly – Lovesong (Digital Theatre) & Othello (DVD)

Kneehigh Theatre combines tragedy and comedy to achieve their aim of forcing the audience to 'rock with laughter one minute and hold their breath in horror the next'¹. This use of contrasts throughout their work is clearly seen in the performance of Günter Grass' 1959 novel Tin Drum which explores the rise of fascism, increasing warfare, industrialisation and the mechanisation of life. This novel certainly had many resonances with life in 2017 with the perceived rise of the far right throughout the western world, the EU referendum and its polarising effect on the country and the rise of global conflict such as the Syrian war and negative attitudes towards refugees. Mike Shepherd in a recent interview said he has 'despaired of Cornwall recently – the fact it voted UKIP and then Brexit,² indicating his clear intent to make Kneehigh's work politically charged. Although he still wants the audience to be entertained, the main purpose of theatre he believes is to bring hope and he wants the audience to 'metaphorically and literally keep banging the drum'³ so that we can become more politically critical of our society. The political factors behind the choice and creation of their work, especially that of the Tin Drum is clearly evident and an aim of the company is to challenge the audience.

The political aspect of Kneehigh's recent work reflects the theme of chaos and order in that many moments of turmoil and anarchy are contrasted with the desire for social order and calm but owing to the overwhelming rise of fascism and racial cleansing a positive ordered society can only be achieved through rebellion and warfare. Oskar in particular, fights against the Black Witch who is a representation of political totalitarianism to rid the world of her negative and corrupting influences. The representation of the Black Witch to physically resemble Hitler, warns the audience

¹ <http://essentialdrama.com/tag/a-level/>

² <http://comedyfeed.co.uk/the-church-of-the-lost-cause-inside-kneehighs-wild-cornish-home/>

³ <https://www.everymanplayhouse.com/whats-more/2017/09/14/the-tin-drum-interview>

about the rise of tyranny and repression. Although portrayed by a woman, the long dark officer's trench coat and swastika-like armband leaves no doubt whom she represents. As she bursts out of a smashed window on a high rostra she begins to sing a low toned mantra of 'Come to me' slowly and hauntingly. As the music becoming slower, other characters on stage stop in their tracks as if hypnotised to watch her, their morality completely forgotten as though they are becoming brainwashed. They begin to dance manically as the music rapidly changes to a fierce electric mode with jerky, violent choreography as if they were her puppets. The volume of the music increases to a very high level and the Black Witch's voice becomes louder through her hand held microphone, a spotlight focuses intently on her while an arc of golden lights, around the window where she stands, gives the impression of a modern day rock star in concert. Oskar watches helplessly shaking his head and shouting for them to stop being won over by her but they act as automatons completely still and focused only on her. The stage becomes frantic, lights flashing as though in a disco and the music builds even more volume to an uncomfortably high level of distortion. Oskar is able to overcome the chaos by his piercing scream which has the power of a destructive weapon and as the puppet is held aloft in protest at the Black Witch, the set begins to shake, the glass windows burst open as though a blast from a bomb and the lights flicker and die which symbolises the end of the black Witch's reign of control. The silence and dim lighting is peaceful and quite beautiful after all the chaos of distorted sounds, flashing lights and angular movement signifying Oskar's breaking of the spell of the rise of fascism.

This is an example of how Kneehigh has used a current political framework of the rise of right-wing political views to symbolise how people can be influenced by charismatic leaders without consideration of the real effects of their policies and ideologies. This moment effectively warns the audience of the rise of the far right and how society can be brainwashed, it is a bleak and chaotic moment with the only hope of order being restored is with Oskar screaming at the mindless conformity that is trying to be created.

Frantic Assembly is a physical theatre based company founded by Swansea University students Steve Hoggett and Scott Graham. Having no formal theatre training they were inspired to become practitioners after seeing Volcano Theatre Company perform Christopher Hampton's *Savages* in which, as audience members, they experienced both sides of the fourth wall challenging their pre-conceived ideas about theatre. Volcano became their role model, perceiving their work as being 'alternative, sexy, intelligent and fierce,'⁴ something that would influence Frantic Assembly in creating their own work which fuses text, music and movement.

One of the main reasons Shakespeare's *Othello* was chosen by Frantic Assembly was that they were influenced by 'a book called 'Dark Heart' by journalist Nick Davies. 'Dark Heart' was a journey through the underbelly of UK society, of deprived council estates, child prostitution and drugs. It is a disturbing and sobering read.'⁵ This book, along with the Oldham race riots of 2001 made the directors contemplate the problem of poverty and self imposed racial segregation. The racially charged political climate in England at the time meant that at the heart of the story of *Othello*, a black man wanting to marry a white woman, was as relevant today as it was in Shakespeare's time. 'The underlying

⁴ Graham, S., & Hoggett, S. (2014) *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre*. England: Routledge: 2nd edition. p.4

⁵ <https://www.franticassembly.co.uk/resources/859/othello-resource-pack.pdf>

problems of poverty and unemployment in a town which once produced more than a tenth of the world's cotton, were blamed as long-term causes of the violence. But a major report by civil servant David Ritchie also highlighted the town's deeply-segregated neighbourhoods, with communities living alienated and apart from each other.'⁶The decision to set the production in a Northern pub also meant that they could explore the tensions within a working class background of the modern day making it visually pertinent to a contemporary audience; the political climate of the day was thoroughly explored and reflected within their production of Othello.

While wanting to explore the tensions within a Northern working class setting, Graham and Hoggett decided to make use of a pre-show sequence at the beginning of Othello, which was not to ease the audience into its world but to shock them into seeing the modern day working class setting come alive in front of them, 'It had to be edgy and unexpected.'⁷ As the audience entered, the Hybrid track 'Just for Today' played, the increasing pumping volume and the flickering pinball machine on stage left helped to create an unexpected atmosphere for a production of Othello which firmly sets it in a modern day. The issue of racism and a violent underclass is apparent when two men dressed in black hoodies enter the pub and one purposefully nudges the pool cue to Othello, initiating a violent showdown between the resident gang and the interlopers. Othello is seen as part of the 'gang' in the pub as everyone, women included, becomes involved with fighting off the interlopers to support the attack on Othello. The underlying sense of racism towards Othello is seen even from within his own group as Iago, sitting atop the back of a chair with an intense spotlight on him smoking a cigarette in slow motion as if time is standing still for him, intensely gazes at Othello and Desdemona intimately touching and kissing each other. This makes the audience question his inner thoughts and true attitude towards Othello as we see him contemplating the relationship between the two lovers, and hints at holding back his true feelings about Othello's race and relationship with Desdemona. Without any dialogue, the opening sequence of the production introduces the complex relationships towards race and status within the play while reflecting the highly tense situation that existed in major cities within Britain at the time which exploded into highly violent race riots, a main influence on the directors for the setting of the play.

⁶ <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/local-news/oldham-riots---10-years-861249>

⁷ <https://www.franticassembly.co.uk/resources/859/othello-resource-pack.pdf>

Comments on Content of Learner's Response

A Band 4 response

The learner demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of how a range of relevant political factors has influenced Kneehigh Theatre and Frantic Assembly's work.

Insightful connections have been made between the creative intentions of the practitioners' work and the theme *Chaos and Order*, supported by some very perceptive examples from each practitioner's performance and production repertoire.

The response demonstrates the application of a sophisticated investigation process. The learner has made perceptive use of a range of meaningful sources to fully support their conclusions.

The learner has included some contextual information that is not directly relevant to the activity to which the learner is responding at the beginning of their response on Frantic Assembly. Best practice would be that learners are encouraged not to include this kind of information. However, this does not detract from the learner's overall achievement.

The performance and production repertoire the learner has discussed is highly appropriate for each practitioner and fully supports the learner's response to both the theme *Chaos and Order* and the contextual factor named in the task.



TIPS!

- The response to Activity 1 needs to demonstrate the learner's understanding of how the contextual factors named in Activity 1, in this case Political contextual factors, have influenced the learner's chosen practitioners' performance and production repertoire. In order to access higher marks a *range* of relevant Political contextual factors needs to have been considered.
- Connections need to be made between the creative intentions of the chosen practitioners' performance and production repertoire and the theme, in this case *Chaos and Order*.
- Learners are likely to achieve a higher mark if the scene/s and/or moment/s they analyse from each of their chosen practitioners' practical performance and production work has relevance to the theme and the contextual factor named in the task paper.
- Ensure the performance and production repertoire used is fully appropriate to the chosen practitioners and the given theme.

Activity 2

Choose **one** of your practitioners and discuss how you feel their use of the following performance and production elements communicates the theme of ***Chaos and Order***?

You must answer using three elements from the categories below. You must choose at least one from each category.	
Performance and relationships	Production and repertoire
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact work • pace • performer to audience • voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sound • puppetry • text • choreography and/or direction

You should include:

- reference to a specific scene or moment from your chosen practitioner's performance and production repertoire
- connections to the theme ***Chaos and Order***
- reference to sources from your bibliography.

It is suggested you spend approximately **70 minutes** on this activity.

(Total for Activity 2 = 24marks)

Chosen Practitioner: Frantic Assembly

Elements: Contact work / Direction / Pace

In Frantic Assembly's *Lovesong* the theme of chaos and order can be seen in the way that the directors Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett have portrayed a relationship where both characters long for routine and order in their lives while coping with terminal illness. A sense of the chaos and questioning of the past, in the minds of the protagonists Billy and Maggie, is portrayed by the mingling of past memories with their present situation. Billy and Maggie, who we learn are childless, have in old age settled for a life of routine and mutual dependency until Maggie is diagnosed with cancer, whereas the portrayal of their younger selves displays a relationship of petty quarrelling and emotional turmoil with many moments of lost opportunity to embrace life and the moment.

In one moment the older Billy is looking upon a scene of his younger self and the younger Maggie quarrelling and making up. The idea of revisiting moments through memory and being able to inhabit the same space is an effective theatrical device enhanced by the use of movement and contact work. We sense that Billy, watching his younger self, is aching to relive a past memory or reclaim the connection between

himself and Maggie. Older Billy watches as his younger self moves closer to Maggie making intense eye contact and he gently lifts her and, taking each other's momentum, spins her around in his arms, he lifts her higher so she is above him and she looks down on him making eye contact as they smile at each other. He lowers her down and Maggie is held in a cradling position as she leans into the younger Billy's shoulder with her arms around him in a protective embrace. Throughout this the older Billy is watching the younger couple intently and holding out his arms to try and touch them as if to physically relive the memory. The contact work and the ease with which the bodies of the two actors entwined conveyed the intimate, physical side of the relationship this was enhanced by the pace of the scene which was conveyed through the slow, deliberate and controlled movements and the music which underscored it. The flowing, melodic music was enhanced by the sound effects of starlings which the director used as a motif throughout the play as they become 'the perfect link across time between the two ages within the play. They contained all events of the past in their song so that all acts live on ... the song of the starling means they will never be without the other, that, with the help of the birds their memory will live on long after they part.'⁸ In this one moment we witness the passion of the love between the newlyweds contrasting with the older Billy who is stuck in his life of order and routine as he desires to regain a sense of the freedom and abandon he experienced when younger. Through the use of contact work, sound effects and pace the director is able to make connections in the mind of the audience of the past and present and how they have formed the older Billy so that we can empathise and sympathise with him later in the play. The emotional aspect of the play allows the audience to potentially understand the nature of love and loss, 'If *Love Song* has anything to teach a younger audience, it is to enjoy life to its fullest, to accept love when it happens, and to understand that relationships are about being in a constant flux, even if you're nearing 'the end'.⁹

The directors have spoken about how Billy needed to 'reclaim the chaos from the enforced order of his life.'¹⁰ In many moments throughout the play the older Billy is seen as a calm and rather dull character who now hides his regret about past events and the inability to have children and to create a legacy. His life with Maggie has for years been ordered and routine and now Maggie's illness has thrown this security into emotional chaos. Both older Maggie and Billy reflect on their past lives and recall the physical passion of their younger days, aching to relive and return to those times. Many of older Billy's scenes have a deliberate and calm pace to them to convey the mood of routine and reflection, the opening section when he sits passively in the kitchen, often motionless, listening to music on his headphones conveys him in deep thought. He moves almost aimlessly around the kitchen slowly putting on his jacket, spending time pulling down his sleeves, putting his collar straight, gazing into the middle distance. When he speaks to the audience about his thoughts on the passing of time his pace when delivering this monologue is deliberate and measured with brief pauses to convey his thoughtfulness around the sadness of loss which is a contrast to the following reliving of his memory when the younger Billy and Maggie enter. Their pace in both movement and vocal delivery is faster, more urgent conveying a sense of energy and enthusiasm. They discuss the peaches in the garden with close physical contact embracing each

⁸ <https://www.franticassembly.co.uk/resources/861/lovesong-resource-pack.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.ayoungertheatre.com/review-love-song-frantic-assembly-abi-morgan-lyric-hammersmith/>

¹⁰ <https://www.franticassembly.co.uk/resources/861/lovesong-resource-pack.pdf>

other, moving around the stage with a fast pace holding each other's hands, pulling at each other as they almost run off stage in excitement while the older Billy, totally still, watches them with a look of wistfulness. The directors have used pace here to not only contrast the past and the present but to establish the character of older Billy as someone who, used to order and routine in his life, is unsure how to deal with the emotional turmoil of having to cope with its disruption, but longing for a return to the past. As Scott Graham comments in an interview, 'there are moments that are beautiful ... but also very dark... it's a sophisticated emotional story'.¹¹ One result of this directorial decision is that it emotionally engages the audience with the older Billy so that when we later learn of Maggie's illness his sense of loss is even more distressing for the audience as we realise that Billy, a man used to hiding his feelings is in emotional turmoil.

The directors made a strong visual symbol by using a bed as one of the main pieces of set. 'One of the first ideas that came to mind in the initial development sessions was of a scene where the bed they have shared over 40 years gets to tell its story.'¹² One moment where the bed is used as a focal point reflecting the chaos in the mind of Maggie and Billy is when the older Maggie is lying on the bed writhing as if in agony. The directors' aim is to convey the pain the older Maggie suffers with her illness, Sian Phillips recoils on the bed as if in agony, her arms are outstretched with staccato and sharp movements, sitting upright and then falling back on the bed she slowly rubs her hands over her legs in jerky movements as if to ease away the pain. She lies flat on the bed holding out her arm when the younger Maggie emerges from the bed as if being pulled out by her, the younger Maggie rolls on top of the older as they make body contact and the older Maggie disappears into the bed. It is as if the older Maggie is trying to escape into her memory of being young so that she can escape her pain momentarily. The directors further convey the importance of the bed for the couple as we are now shown a portrayal of the intimate and passionate element of their relationship when younger as Maggie, on the bed, repeats similar actions to the older Maggie but, being younger, are performed with a faster pace and more fluidity in the movements, creating an expression of pleasure. There follows a highly effective moment where the two Billy's emerge from the bed and all three characters engage in choreographed contact work that portrays the intimacy and physical representation of their relationship. While remaining on the relatively small space of the bed the directors have ensured that there is close physical contact for the three actors throughout. At one point younger Maggie stands on the bed and falls down while the younger Billy touches her shoulder and the older Billy catches her, once fallen they all move to the front of the bed and perform a movement routine where they all move closer while making hand movements in the air around them as if touching each other. They fall into each other and rhythmically move apart to repeat a similar action but the younger Billy cradles Maggie's head as she looks at the older Billy who moves closer to her until all their bodies become entwined. At this point the older Maggie appears behind them and both Billy's take turn in caressing her as she falls into their arms. The younger couple exit through the bed and we are left with the distressing image of the older Maggie again writhing in agony while the older Billy looks on helplessly and distraught. The direction here through the use of physical theatre effectively conveys different aspects of the relationship between Maggie and Billy showing the present chaotic situation of illness

¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubXLHpQmtmg&feature=youtu.be>

¹² <https://www.franticassembly.co.uk/resources/861/lovesong-resource-pack.pdf> p.32

and pain while contrasting it with the longing of both characters to return back to a time of passion and intimacy, a time for them which was ordered and routine. The directorial decision to use the bed as a permanent visual symbol also allows the audience to accept the fluid playing with time throughout the play, it also allowed the directors to create a scene where 'all the couples morphed in and out in a frenzied blur of memory and reality.'¹³

¹³ Graham, S., & Hoggett, S. (2014) *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre*. England: Routledge: 2nd edition. P.205

Comments on Content of Learner's Response

A Band 4 response

This is a sophisticated response to Activity 2, which very effectively meets all the assessment descriptors in Band 4.

The learner's three chosen elements of contact work, pace and choreography and/or direction have been considered in a holistic way within this response. A broad interpretation of the meaning of these elements is completely appropriate.

Critical analysis of the Frantic Assembly's work is accomplished with comprehensive and insightful connections to the theme - *Chaos and Order*.

There is a sophisticated understanding of performance and production repertoire supported by perceptive examples.

The response demonstrates a sophisticated application of an investigation process with perceptive use of a range of meaningful sources to support conclusions.

The performance and production repertoire the learner has discussed is highly appropriate for the practitioner and fully supports the learner's response to the theme *Chaos and Order*.



TIPS!

- Learners should choose one of their chosen practitioners to discuss in Activity 2. They must not refer to work from both of their chosen practitioners.
- The response to Activity 2 needs to analyse *at least* one scene or moment from the chosen practitioner's performance and production repertoire in relation to three of the elements in the activity *and* the named theme, in this case *Chaos and Order*. At least one of the elements must be chosen from each of the two categories – performance and relationships / production and repertoire.
- It is helpful if learners signpost the elements they have chosen to respond to within their response. This learner has listed the chosen elements at the beginning of their response, which is good practice.
- Contrasting and/or comparing moments is an effective strategy to use when responding to this activity and to activity 3.
- Learners are likely to achieve a higher mark if the scene or moment they analyse from their chosen practitioner's practical performance and production work has an insightful connection to the theme.
- Ensure the performance and production repertoire used is fully appropriate to the chosen practitioner and the given theme.

Activity 3

The following statement has been chosen as the motto for a forthcoming performing arts festival:

"We live in a rainbow of chaos."

-Paul Cezanne

Both of your practitioners will have some relevance to this statement and the organisers would like you to suggest one of the practitioners to headline the festival.

Recommend which of the practitioners' work is best related to the statement through a comparison of their work.

You should:

- use specific examples from both practitioners' performance and production repertoire
- make reference to your bibliography.

It is suggested you spend approximately **70 minutes** on this activity.

(Total for Activity 3 = 24 marks)

Chosen Practitioners: Kneehigh Theatre & Frantic Assembly

The motto, 'a rainbow of chaos', is a highly relevant and suitable slogan for the festival in relation to my chosen practitioners Frantic Assembly and Kneehigh Theatre Company. For me, the motto suggests a presentation not of a realistic world or representation of life but an 'impression' of life or a character showing many contrasting facets as does Paul Cezanne in his paintings. Both of my chosen practitioners use individual stylistic features that convey a sense of highly theatrical concepts that give the audience a clear experience of a 'rainbow of chaos' in presenting us with, in relation to LoveSong, an intimate personal relationship, or with Tin Drum, a commentary on a wider social and political aspect of modern day life.

A moment in Lovesong that reflects a sense of presenting a theatrical impression of life's experiences is the section when the older Maggie looks fondly on the passionate relationship the younger couple once had. Even though Maggie at this point is ill and frail she still views Billy as the young man she fell in love with and herself as a young woman full of vitality and femininity. The impression the audience gets of her past relationship is rather ambiguous as we are unsure whether it is an actual memory or a fantasy, these moments leave much interpretation for the audience and reflects the 'impression' of the relationship as it appears to the older Maggie. The moment begins with the Frantic technique of 'picking oose' which is the constant touching of one another through small actions such as Maggie lightly gracing her fingers over Billy's shirt and putting his hands on her waist. The soft simple movements create the contact-connection and

disconnection which creates a sensual atmosphere and the impression of their desire for one another. Billy swings Maggie around his body and as they intertwine it creates a stronger sexual intensity between them. This intense atmosphere for the young couple is enhanced by the lighting which becomes dimmer with a soft focus spotlight on the kitchen table illuminating them while the older Maggie stands behind the table in the shadows looking upon them, which symbolises Maggie's fragility as the dark is beginning to enclose her. Young Maggie begins to circle around Billy, basking in his gaze feeling their sexual attraction, as they both stare at each other. Confident in her sexuality she smiles at Billy and he takes her waist and spins her around as she touches him for support, their bodies moving in rhythm and their gaze never breaking. Younger Maggie conveys strong femininity and sexual confidence in this moment as the older Maggie watches, envisioning her youth, which gives the audience the impression that in our minds, older memories of our past still live on creating and affecting a present moment, which raises questions about what is reality. It is this narrative of past and present that connects the play to the motto of the festival in that we are not presented with a realistic picture of the life of Maggie and Billy but we are presented with glimpses of moments that have formed them over the years. The directors try to express the complexities of coping with approaching death and loss through physical theatre and narrative structures giving the audience a sense of the perceptions and inner workings of the minds of Billy and Maggie in their time of chaos and pain. This contrasts with *Tin Drum* in that although there are moments of emotional intensity within it, we never feel personally connected to the characters, especially to Oskar, who is portrayed for most of the play by a puppet, 'a quite terrifying black-eyed puppet.'¹⁴ The portrayal of the younger and older couples in *Lovesong* simultaneously engages our interest and empathy for them making it more accessible for the festival.

Kneehigh Theatre in the *Tin Drum* does not tackle the personal and intimate aspect of our lives but the wider more politically relevant facet of our lives. The production is much bigger in scope and production values than *Lovesong* with live music, visually impressive and symbolic moments and the use of a puppet as the main character. Set during a thinly disguised Germany in the 1930s we witness the rise of fascism, hate crimes, expulsion of ethnic groups along with the disorder and anarchy that then exists in society. In many ways the play is an explosion of chaos through its use of theatrical devices which links it effectively to the motto for the festival. 'The chaos of the world which so exasperates Oskar is captured with great energy and darkness by director Mike Shepherd; action is disjointed, loud and brutal – there is often so much going on that it's impossible to know where to look which isn't necessarily a bad thing. Likewise, composer Charles Hazlewood injects the piece with jarring, affecting sounds which alarm as much as they impress – the sound is not of any one style, but a free for all which works well with Shepherd's direction to thrust a sensory explosion at the audience.'¹⁵

In Kneehigh's *Tin Drum* we are confronted with a disjointed and hostile world wherein Oskar, who has incredible intelligence and powers believes the world is at his command, stops himself from growing up into an adult as he sees the world as a troubling and dangerous place, but his life experiences force him to grow up and become an adult. The

¹⁴ https://www.whatsonstage.com/liverpool-theatre/reviews/the-tin-drum-liverpool-everyman-kneehigh_44786.html

¹⁵ <https://alwaystimefortheatre.com/2017/10/19/kneehighs-the-tin-drum-dark-sophisticated-chaos/>

play uses a narrator who remains on a high gantry on stage right overlooking the action of the play and commenting upon events in the play. Until the end of the play the voice of Oskar is performed by a female actor with a childlike voice but at the end when Oskar is forced to grow up, the narrator slowly advances to the centre stage where the puppet Oskar is being held high by his puppeteers and a spotlight focuses both the puppet and the narrator. Other performers place a jacket on the narrator and give him the toy tin drum which mimics the opening of the play when Oskar is born, this conveys the moment that Oskar has decided to confront the world of chaos and use his power to impose order on it by growing up. The stage becomes dim and shadowy with birdie lights across the front of the stage creating distorting shadows on the actors' faces and the use of sinister live music creates an eerie atmosphere for the moment when Oskar does transform into a man. Oscar confronts the horror of the rise of fascism as he is the only person who can stop it by beating his drum symbolising his resistance against it. The music becomes highly distorted with ear splitting high frequencies with the overlay of the wild beating sound of Oskar's drum giving the impression of time being turned back. All the performers become overwhelmed by the sound and 'dance to his beat' in a distorted and animalistic manner until Oskar, who is constantly repeating the line 'and listen,' calms the atmosphere by saying that you may have to be in the dark but there will be light. For one of the few times throughout the play the stage becomes silent and still as the Oskar acknowledges the dire political state of the world, he quietly announces 'I can only go onwards... I know nothing... I am a humble man who will listen.' The delicate, haunting music box-like waltz music begins as characters begin to gather their belongings together to leave the ruins of their homes to start life anew. This moment uses many production values to highlight the transformation from chaos to order, its quiet and calm ending leaves the audience as if in shock after the chaos that had preceded this moment. There are many layers of meaning and performance elements that like a 'rainbow of chaos' unite to create a vivid and effective moment for the audience. So although there are highly effective and theatrically exciting moments in Tin Drum, and at the end of the play we are emotionally exhausted having witnessed the horrors and repercussions of a totalitarian regime, 'It's a fevered swirl, a grotesque, magical response to growing up in an impossible climate,'¹⁶ I didn't feel as emotionally connected with the individual characters as I did with Lovesong.

Although both practitioners and plays link to the motto 'a rainbow of chaos' I feel that the better option for the festival would be Frantic Assembly and their production of Lovesong. Its intimate and very personal portrayal of love and loss is likely to have a lasting impact on the audience along with the very clever structure of the scenes involving the younger and older couple. There are many visual moments that give the piece a clear link to the motto, in particular the use of the projections of the swallows and the cave paintings. These fleeting visual moments give a brief glimpse into past memories and, even more importantly, symbolise their yearning not just for the past but also for a future and the need for Billy to carry on with his life. Lovesong's portrayal of an intimate relationship reaffirms the belief that love is fundamental to human existence, and as Lyn Gardner states in the review, 'Crying is not mandatory, but only the hard of heart will remain completely unmoved.'¹⁷

¹⁶ <https://www.timeout.com/london/theatre/the-tin-drum-review>

¹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2011/oct/04/lovesong-review>

Comments on Content of Learner's Response

A Band 4 response

The learner demonstrates effective and at times perceptive comparison of Frantic Assembly and Kneehigh Theatre's work.

There is a clear response to the specific demands of Activity 3 – to recommend a practitioner to headline the performing arts festival. The learner provides comprehensive justification for Kneehigh Theatre's work to be included in the festival before recommending Frantic Assembly's work.

There are authoritative independent judgements throughout and the learner perceptively uses a range of detailed examples from both practitioners' work to support their conclusion. There is perceptive linking of the production/practitioner's work to the quotation in Activity 3.

Use of language, structure, tone and subject specific terminology is sophisticated and accomplished.

The response demonstrates a sophisticated investigation process with perceptive use of a range of meaningful sources to fully support conclusions.

The performance and production repertoire the learner has discussed is highly appropriate for each practitioner and fully supports the learner's response to the specific requirements of the task.



TIPS!

- The response to Activity 3 needs to engage with the specific requirement of the task - the given statement/quotation for the performing arts festival.
- Learners need to compare each of their chosen practitioners' work in relation to the specific requirements of the performing arts festival and suggest *one* practitioner to headline the festival
- Contrasting and/or comparing moments from each of their chosen practitioners' work is an effective strategy to use when responding to this activity.
- Learners are likely to achieve a higher mark if the scene or moment they analyse from each of their chosen practitioners' practical performance and production work is relevant to the statement in the activity.
- Ensure the performance and production repertoire used is fully appropriate to each of the chosen practitioners and the given theme.

Bibliography

Frantic Assembly and Kneehigh Theatre

Frantic Assembly performance of Lovesong seen on Digital Theatre

Frantic Assembly performance of Othello seen on DVD

Kneehigh Theatre performances of Tin Drum seen at The Liverpool Everyman

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Comments on Content of Learner's Bibliography

A range of sources have been included in this bibliography and, most importantly, referred to in the learner's work. The result is that *a range of meaningful sources* have been effectively used to fully support the learner's conclusions, thus demonstrating a sophisticated investigation process at the heart of which has been the learner's research into the performance and production repertoire of their chosen practitioners.