GROUP DEvised PERFORMANCE

THE STUDY OF A GROUP DEvised PERFORMANCE PIECE AS A REHEARSAL METHOD IN A HIGH SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

CHRISTINA (LUCY) MILNE
B.A. (Hons), Grad. Cert. Arts Management.

MASTER OF ARTS, Honours
Performance

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University Of Western Sydney
Nepean

Faculty of Performance, Fine Art and Design
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

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Precis

Using the research methods from grounded theory and action research, this study examines a rehearsal method used for the development of a Group Devised Performance Piece. It details and analyses the process used in the transactional system of change and action/interaction resulting from the specific conditions that surrounded the Group Devised Performance, and examines the products of that process: the written script and the final performance.

The study was conducted with a group of HSC 2 Unit Drama students at a non-government high school in March 1996. The performance formed part of an assessment program for these students and was student devised and student driven.

There are several ways of arriving at a public performance. Frequently there is a rehearsed development of an already existing scripted play. Actors come to a work with their own belief systems and epistemologies. So too does a director. Each actor is assigned a role by the director or casting agent and given the script 'to learn'. Part of the rehearsal process is discovering how these individual sets of beliefs can work together for the collaborative good.

The specific process of Group Devised Performance differs from most rehearsal procedures because it begins with a group idea/concept/story and evolves through research and improvisation, culminating in a written script on which the final performance, before a live audience, is based. It is driven by the actors, with the facilitation of the director. It requires collaboration within the group and independent and individual contribution.

The research methods included the collection of data in questionnaires, the maintaining of detailed daily records, video tapes, photographs and the compilation of the written script.

Like any series of rehearsals, the process produced surprising and unplanned consequences (outcomes) and provided an environment that encouraged interaction and involvement, companionship and competition, humour and tension.
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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROJECT

1 THE STUDY

This research project explores the process involved in the development of a Group Devised Performance method and the culmination of that method in a public performance. There were two elements to the project: the process of the development of the Group Devised method, and the suitability of the process and final product as a specific Internal Assessment Task for Year 12 HSC Drama students under the guidelines of the Board of Studies syllabus and assessment requirements.

The project contains a 40% practical component, the final performance, as well as the written documentation of the Group Devised process that led to that performance. The final performance is the cornerstone of the project.

The project involved the researcher/teacher/director in the practical development of a scripted performance piece in collaboration with the students, and required a self-reflective analysis of the process leading to that performance.

The resultant piece, titled: and that made all the difference, was performed by a group of students of mixed gender who comprised the 1996 Higher School Certificate 2 Unit Drama Course at Barker College, Hornsby. It was rehearsed and performed during the first term of 1996 (February to March) and assessed by colleagues as part of the Internal Assessment Program of student evaluation for 2 Unit Drama in the HSC.

1.1 THE REHEARSAL PROCESS

The performance piece, originating from improvisation and workshops, was built around a central theme of 'individual choices and their consequences'. Robert Frost's poem, The Road Not Taken (1946) was used as one of the initial idea sources.
... I shall be telling this with a sigh somewhere ages and ages hence two roads diverged in a wood and I I took the one less travelled by and that made all the difference (1969, p77).

Once the theme was introduced, the students broke into groups of their own choice and researched the social, political and historical contexts of specific areas of personal interest that evolved from class discussions around this central theme. They brought that information to rehearsal and worked, in improvisations, on the material until the development of a written, three-part script. The script, which became the backbone of the final performance piece, was a crucial product of the process. The production of a written script differentiates this method from most other group devised processes (Tarlington and Michaels, Chapter Three). During rehearsals the script was 'layered' (Chapter 4) and developed until final performance.

1.2 THE FINAL PERFORMANCE

The performance piece incorporated characters and historical events the students had come to know from other topics studied in the 2 Unit Drama course. This was a key factor in the piece (see Chapter Two). The final piece contained three sections: an intellectual, esoteric, symbolic section based on the life of Jean Paul Marat, a lyrical movement-based piece constructed around the character of New Zealand short story writer Katherine Mansfield, and a third light-hearted section about a fictitious, contemporary, affluent adolescent named Graham. The three sections were connected by electronic music and African dejembe beats which were written, designed, generated and performed by the students.

The final piece ran for 50 minutes and was performed on two consecutive nights with the aid of technical stage equipment (luminaries, sound amplification etc) in the school auditorium before a mixed age and gender, non-paying audience of approximately 300 people on each night.
2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the rehearsal method used for a specific student production and to reflect on that rehearsal method as a vehicle for developing a written script and a performance piece, bearing in mind the context in which the study was being conducted. This context included the students, their school, the role of research/teacher, and the HSC internal and external assessment format/program.

The reasons for embarking on the project included finding a vehicle for satisfying the Board of Studies assessment criteria for "workshop activities" (Board of Studies, 1994, p18), providing an assessment task that was practical and performance based, incorporating specific syllabus topics into that task, exposing students to the large range of activities involved in the evolution of a performance, allowing each student maximum performance exposure and hopefully enhancing their potential performance assessment mark, and giving students the opportunity to devise their own piece of theatre and perform that piece before a live audience.

One of the main factors driving the Group Devised method centred on the large numbers of students (32 students in the 1996 cohort) involved in the production. This often meant that existing published scripts were inappropriate as they contain too few characters and leading roles that can dominate the piece, potentially giving unfair exposure and possible advantage to a minority of students. This was not thought desirable by the students, or their teacher.

A perceived value of the process was in attempting to create a level playing field for all performers. The Group Devised process also exposed the students to many areas of production and performance, handing over responsibility to them for their own contributions and consequent outcomes of their final performance. It required that they work both independently and in small groups on their own ideas and research, generating a final text and performance which gave fair opportunity to each. Ownership of the performance piece became an important aspect of this rehearsal method.
2.1 MAIN AREAS OF THE STUDY

This thesis is designed to cover:

- the context of the production, including the background of the study group
- the influences of selected Drama in Education and Directing theories on that method
- the exploration and documentation of the specific rehearsal method used for the production
- the consequences of the rehearsal method in performance for the actors and the assessors

The study will endeavour to determine the effectiveness of the rehearsal method in producing a written script and performance for an HSC assessment task through the investigation of four main areas, which can best be identified by the following questions:

1. Does the Group Devised Performance Piece provide a basis for covering the Content Areas of the 2 Unit Drama syllabus?
2. Is the Group Devised Performance Piece a useful method for developing the skills (performance and personal) of the individual student?
3. Is the Group Devised Performance Piece valid as a means of developing a specific HSC Internal Assessment Task?
4. What were the contingencies that arose from the rehearsal method?

2.1.1 Does the Group Devised Performance Piece provide a basis for covering the Content Areas of the 2 Unit Drama syllabus?

- What are the Content Areas described in the Drama syllabus? (Briefly, there are five mandatory Content Areas in the Drama syllabus: Playbuilding (particularly pertinent to this study), Elements of Production (stage management, lighting etc), Performance, Theatre in Australian cultures and societies, Theatre outside Australia (Board of Studies, 1993, p3).
- Does the process of this rehearsal method cover all of these Content Areas?
• What aspects of the Drama syllabus are excluded by this process?

2.1.2 Is the Group Devised Performance Piece a useful method for developing the skills (performance and interpersonal) of the individual student?

• What are the key performance skills outlined by the syllabus that benefited specifically by this work?

(The Board of Studies refers to such skills as: voice, movement, spatial awareness, rhythm, timing, sustaining a character, analysis of script (See Drama Syllabus, p12).

• Did this rehearsal method benefit the individual and/or the group in ways other than as a vehicle for delivery of the 2 Unit Drama syllabus?

2.1.3 Is the Group Devised Performance Piece valid as a means of developing a specific HSC Internal Assessment Task?

• What are the guidelines for this particular assessment task?

Board of Studies documents refer to criteria such as: using expressive skills in ways appropriate to the piece, realising and sustaining a character, performing as part of an ensemble, establishing a relationship with the audience (Board of Studies, Support Document, 1994, p44)

• Did the process and the final product fulfil the guidelines prescribed by the Board of Studies for this Internal Assessment Task?

• Did the process achieve adequate coverage of the assessment criteria for group presentation?

• Did this specific rehearsal method prepare the students for performance?

• Did it provide each student with an equitable amount of scope and exposure?

• What were the drawbacks of the process in relation to its use as an assessment task?
2.1.4 What were the contingencies which arose from the rehearsal method?

Strauss and Corbin refer to contingencies as agents that "change conditions and pose problematic and unanticipated situations..." (1990, p161).

- Were there any surprising findings generated by this process?
- What were the benefits or downfalls of these?
- What would/could be done differently in the future?
CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. INTRODUCTION

This research project arose from my need to verify the outcomes of devising theatre 'by committee'. While it was necessary to devise a means of enabling and empowering students to trust in their own creativity and expressions of that creativity by creating their own piece of live theatre, the purpose of the project rests more with the function of the rehearsal process as a means of creating that theatre. Collection of data on student reflection and self-analysis within that process is the territory of another research project.

This research study into the Group Devised Performance process has concentrated on the outcomes of the practical project rather than the student's analysis of the processes involved in developing those outcomes. The script and the final performance piece are vehicles designed to meet specific HSC Drama criteria, largely centred on course content and assessment. The project is also concerned with the inherent artistic merit in the production of the dramatic performance but does not seek to collect data nor analyse individual or collective student opinion or attitudes to the process. Nonetheless, it remains true that empowering students with independent learning skills is part of the role of the teacher, or should be. Treating students as individuals with their own histories and epistemologies is a key to empowering them in this collaborative process.

Equally, a detailed analysis of the nature and inherent worth of assessment, as a teaching tool or a reliable measurement of student growth and learning, is not in itself under review here.

The process of Group Devised Performance does, however, expose students to the possibility of developing interpersonal skills and interdependence. It builds a team of individuals committed to a complex collaborative task that results in public display and exposure. This human interaction grows increasingly imperative in a society dedicated to
promoting the individual. John Carroll, in "Drama and Technology: Realism and Emotional Literacy" (Nadie Journal, 1996) discusses postmodern society and its lack of interactive relationships. He suggests that drama may well be a way of maintaining/sustaining personal contact and emotional literacy.

I would suggest that drama education is the teaching methodology of this new future - it deals with the emotional literacy necessary to negotiate the new paradigm and it does so through providing for the personal intelligences a concrete form through dramatic re-enactment in role. (Carroll, 1996, p14)

The teaching of drama may well become a means of sustaining and teaching human contact mechanisms within an educational environment. How do we relate to the person standing in front of us when we spend our time at a terminal e-mailing our multiple personae around the planet to people we never see face to face? Hidden behind the terminal we can play as many roles as we like: reinvent ourselves many times over in each day. This in itself is a form of drama. But at some point we may need actual contact. The Group Devised Performance method is potentially a valuable tool for both teaching Drama and performance and encouraging interpersonal interaction.

ETHICS: The Year 12 performance students actively and knowingly took part in this project. They were aware that it was to form the basis of a written thesis and were supportive and encouraging. At no time did they resist or express any misgivings about their involvement. They were happy to be filmed, to complete questionnaires, to be observed by teachers they knew and people they had never seen before.

The student's observations on the project were important but they were not required to keep journals detailing their responses. The project itself was an assessment task in the middle of other assessment tasks that the students were required to complete. Asking them to write a personal
journal describing the rehearsal process was outside the scope of the task and what reasonably could have been asked of them. Students often are required to keep journals for Drama. These journals can become delicate and personal records of a student's thoughts and processes, reactions and interactions with others. Such personal adolescent recordings were deemed inappropriate for this study.

Rehearsals were conducted in a public fashion. They took place in the school auditorium which was open to view from the outside. Colleagues were often invited to watch the process and were called upon for advice and insights into what appeared to be happening for the students, the director and the audience. The assessors were both members of staff who had previous experience in drama, assessing HSC performances and appraising the teaching methods of the director. They were encouraged to be forthright in their opinions and suggestions. The major external influences and opinions used in correlation with the director's own record of events took the form of:

1. **HSC Internal Assessment**, where two assessors watched both rehearsals and the two final performances and provided verbal and written feedback and marks for individual students

2. the **critical review** by a separate and independent colleague who had critiquing experience and had seen other productions by these students, this director and other workers in performance both at the college and in profession theatre

3. verbal comments and a written report from the post-graduate supervisor on the rehearsal process and the final performance
MIXED PROTOCOLS: My cumulative background in film, dance, performance, directing, examining and management has provided certain stylistic and methodological ground rules. From this personal base a selection of diverse methodologies was chosen to reflect the nature of this creative endeavour. The research method was fundamentally descriptive in nature, using action research processes, grounded theory analysis of relevant conditions, actions and context(s) of the study, a specific case study, qualitative data collection, and various forms of documentation including written and verbal observations by self and others, the development of a written script, videotaped rehearsals and performances, questionnaires, reviews and detailed daily recordings.

The educational environment provided me with certain restrictions and guidelines. These included timetabling restraints, time considerations, HSC assessment procedures, numbers of students involved, varying student abilities, rehearsal scheduling constraints and other student demands. The combination of these two elements has resulted in this project and the collection of research methodologies listed below and documentation methods described in Chapter Four.

1.1 GROUNDED THEORY
The Group Devised Performance Piece was rehearsed and performed (the actions) under specific conditions, (location of performance, time-frame, etc), in a specific context (as an HSC subject, a specific Internal Assessment Task with particular students etc).

The process of recording those events involved the application of grounded theory and the use of action research methods. The
research methods used for this study are qualitative. They are based on the Grounded Theory approach expounded by Strauss and Corbin in *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques* (1990). They describe Grounded Theory as:

...one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of the data pertaining to that phenomenon...One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p23)

They describe the Grounded Theory approach as:

...a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon. The research findings constitute a theoretical formulation of the reality under investigation, rather than consisting of a set of numbers,...(Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p26)

The keys to the application of Grounded Theory rest in tracing out the conditions, actions and consequences of the study in a progressive process relying on change and the linking of action/interaction sequences. Strauss and Corbin think of Grounded Theory as a *transactional system*, "a method of analysis that allows one to examine the interactive nature of events" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p143). The transactional system has several key areas of investigation: different levels of conditions, a specific context, action/interaction, temporality, contingencies.

The techniques of Grounded Theory applied to this study included acquired knowledge (of the researcher and the students), recursive action cycles (rehearsals/classes) and the recording and methodological analysis of the following data:

**CONDITIONS/CONTEXT:** from the broad context of Drama teaching in NSW to the specific context of this study (outlined below)
ACTIONS: the rehearsal process as a means of enhancing skills (discussed in Chapter Four)

CONSEQUENCES: the performance and its value as an assessment task as well as unanticipated contingencies that arose from the process (discussed in Chapter Five)

1.1.1 Conditions:
The broader context inherent in this study involved:
- reading and assessing materials on national curriculum(s) and HSC Drama teaching in NSW
- discussions with peers and others on the above
- relevant personal experiences of Drama in a wider context, for example work as HSC examiner

Knowledge and understanding of the specific conditions under which the Group Devised Performance evolved (that is, as part of the NSW 2 Unit HSC Drama syllabus) were acquired in the following ways:
- observations of this school and others (both alike and dissimilar)
- practice in using the syllabus for several years. (The 2 Unit Drama syllabus context is outlined below)

1.1.2 Actions:
The actions (processes of the rehearsal method and their outcomes) were as follows:
- rehearsals (recursive, reflective cycles where work done in improvisations was reviewed and choices were made about what was to be included in the performance)
- written records of action/interaction transactional sequences, outcomes which provided the data for any
changes that were made in rehearsal techniques or directions that could/should be followed

- writing sessions and script-building (observation and recording)
- recording of rehearsals on video and in written format

1.1.3 Consequences (outcomes):
The consequences of the group devised rehearsal method were recorded by:

- the performance itself
- the written script
- questionnaires to assessors, actors, audience (the day after the performance)
- recording of the performance, including video and written sources such as programs, tickets, reviews
- personal observations of the performance(s) and verbal feedback from colleagues and students

1.2 ACTION RESEARCH
The process of the project followed the model of action research discussed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1982). They describe action research as collaborative, theme based group research centred around a shared desire to resolve a problem.

Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices...The approach is only action research when it is collaborative, though it is important to realise that the action research of the group is achieved through the critically examined action of individual group members. (Kemmis and McTaggart, eds. 1982, p5)

The research methodology used in this project shares several of the fundamental action research principles clearly expounded by Kemmis and McTaggart. The initial unresolved problem of this project was the need to design an assessment task that delivered performance equality to all students who participated. The project was inherently
collaborative, and designed that way, following similar guidelines proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart: identifying a thematic concern, planning, action, reflection and reformulating, leading to the construction of a communally shared understanding. All these actions are agreed by group consensus, through a process of group observation and reflection.

2. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Investigation of the context and conditions of the study involve reviewing:

1. HSC Drama Teaching in New South Wales
2. Regional Differences in Senior Drama
3. The 2 Unit HSC Drama Syllabus
4. Teaching of HSC Drama at Barker College
5. Assessment
6. The Group Devised Performance Piece as a Vehicle for Internal Assessment

2.1 HSC DRAMA TEACHING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Each year tens of thousands of senior school students in New South Wales sit for examinations set by the Board of Studies that come under the heading of Higher School Certificate. There are many subject choices within this set of examinations from Animal Husbandry to 4 Unit Mathematics, Design and Technology to Business Studies. There are areas of choice for each student: English, Mathematics, Sciences, Creative Arts. The results of the examinations in the student's chosen subjects are distilled to one mark, a TER (Tertiary Entrance Ranking) numbered from 0-100. Students who score below 25 do not receive a specific number on their certificate but an indication that they were below this mark. It is a highly competitive market and the experience results in enormous stress on some students, their teachers and parents. The final TER is taken by the University Admission Centre which calculates whether a student who has applied for a certain University course may be admitted to
that course. Not all students apply for university, and not all students who apply gain the mark they need to be allowed entry to the course of their choice. The HSC is supposedly the culmination of a student's academic school life. The reliability of this set of examination is a constant source of debate amongst educators, administrators and the general public.

The current 2 Unit Drama syllabus was introduced into the NSW Higher School Certificate curriculum in 1991 for implementation in 1992. It was the result of the determined effort of people from organisations like the Educational Drama Association over many years and with

Professor Rob Jordan (University of New South Wales) as the chairperson of this new 7-12 Drama Syllabus Committee and Mary Mooney (University of Western Sydney Nepean) as the Deputy, a dedicated committee at the Board of Studies triumphantly presented the Higher School Certificate 2 Unit Drama Syllabus in 1991. (Jeda, 1996, p44)

2.2 REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN SENIOR DRAMA

Drama is taught at Year 11 and 12 level in most states of Australia. In Victoria there are "Study Designs" (Mooney, 1995) and no set syllabuses, but Drama does have equal value with the other subjects a student may choose for the Victorian Certificate of Education. Queensland, where Drama as an accredited subject has existed for many years, has a new Drama syllabus that replaces two separate subjects: "Theatre" and "Speech and Drama". Its guidelines include the areas of forming, presenting, responding and transforming. Included in the syllabus are content areas such as Australian Drama, student devised drama and a topic on the elements of Drama. There appear to be some similarities with the New South Wales Syllabus, and certainly Queensland has a thriving Drama focus in schools and universities. Western Australia has a Year 11 subject entitled Drama Studies and follows this into Year 12 by a choice of Dramatic Arts, a tertiary entrance subject, or Drama in Practice. South Australia first
implemented Year 11 and 12 Drama at Public Examinations Board Level in 1984.

Then the two subjects PES Drama and SAS Drama Syllabus Statements superseded the PEB subject. There have been two reviews and adjustments made to these subjects since their phase-in period (Mooney, 1995).

Mooney attributes the acceptance and acknowledged value of Drama in South Australia to Don Dunstan's Labor Government and the political influence that contributed to creative arts being identified as "important in the education of young people" (Mooney, 1995).

2.3 THE 2 UNIT DRAMA SYLLABUS

In 1996 Drama was offered as a subject choice for students in approximately 350 NSW schools. Students undertake the 2 Unit Drama Course as one of five or six 2 Unit subjects for their Higher School Certificate. (All this is about to change with the implementation of the recommendations in the Government's 'White Paper' titled Securing Their Future, 1997, on reforms for the HSC in NSW.)

The Preliminary (Year 11) and HSC Course Syllabus is divided into five interrelated Content Areas.

This syllabus for Year 11-12, makes the study of performance and dramatic art, as collaborative activities, its central concern. The syllabus comprises two courses: a Preliminary course and an HSC course...This syllabus covers the main aspects of the subject by requiring the study of five content areas. In the Preliminary course three areas emphasise the elements of drama and theatre through (1) improvisation, playbuilding, acting, (2) the elements of production and (3) the processes of performance.

The HSC course builds on and extends the study of these areas through the fourth and fifth Content Areas which provide students with the opportunity to examine specific aspects of drama and theatre in Australian and other societies and cultures. (Board of Studies 1993 p2)
The first three Content Areas, which are the practical ones, are compulsory. Teachers are then able to choose the exact topics with which they feel most comfortable in the last two Content Areas of the syllabus. For this study we chose Alma De Groen from Content Area 4, and Peter Brook from Content Area 5. These choices are important as this Assessment Task had to relate to selected topics stipulated in the Subject Manual Number 7 (Board of Studies, 1994). In the section on Assessment Guidelines it states: "Workshop Activities - Content Areas 4 and 5... 40%" and that these workshop activities will "draw on assumed knowledge from Content Areas 1, 2, 3" (Board of Studies, p38).

2.4 TEACHING OF DRAMA AT BARKER COLLEGE

Barker College educates boys from Years 3-6 in a Junior School, boys 7-10 in a Middle School, and both boys and girls in years 11-12 in a Senior School. All three campuses are on the same 40 hectare property, but are allocated different areas within that property. It is predominantly a boys' school that has an intake of girls, from local private and public schools, into Year 11. The school is generally financially 'comfortable', with fees in the Senior School being approximately $2000 per term for four terms of the year.

Currently Drama is taught at Years 9/10 as an elective subject and is not part of the Year 7/8 Curriculum. The students taking the Year 9/10 electives are naturally all boys. The number of students choosing this elective has increased three-fold over the past few years. A Preliminary Course of Drama is introduced in Year 11 and is open to both boys and girls. Students may then opt to continue into the Year 12 HSC Course. Approximately 70% of students choose to take this option. The rise in student enrolments in the subject can be viewed as an indication that the subject is considered 'worthwhile', that Drama at Barker has a solid reputation for achievement and that the skills inherent in the subject have a broader use and value outside of the school context both socially and for enhancing career options. (See Chapter Three.)
At the College there is a well equipped Drama Studio, where most classes from Years 9-12 are accommodated. There is also a school hall (The Leslie Hall) that is available for performances. This hall was used as the performance venue for this Group Devised Performance Piece. It seats approximately 850 people and has a proscenium arch stage at its southern end. Acoustically it is poor. It is reasonably well equipped with luminaires and a computerised lighting console for the control of stage and auditorium lighting but has no blackout facilities, limited wing space and no dressing room amenities. It is possible to change the configuration of the performing space, as was the case for this project, when three large boxes were placed on the floor in front of the stage apron and auditorium seating was moved to enable closer proximity to the audience. Increased student numbers in Drama have placed significant demands on available rehearsal/class spaces.

2.4.1 The Students

Thirty-two mixed gender students participated in this project. They came from broadly the same middle-class socio-economic background. There are very few scholarships given at the school, so it is reasonable to expect that all students who attend the school are paying the term fees. Most students live with their parents in suburbs ranging from Roseville to Hornsby on the North Shore, and in more western districts like Pennant Hills, Beecroft and as far as Dural. There are also students who come from overseas and board at the school.

The age of the 2 Unit HSC year 12 students ranged from 16-18 years. In the 1996 cohort (ie. the group of students presenting for examination in 1996) there were 12 girls and 20 boys. It has been the case in previous years that the ratio of boys and girls has been more even. The reason(s) for the imbalance in 1996 are not clear, but may have something to do with a) Barker being a boys' school to Year 11 and the perception by the girls that the boys may have been more exposed to Drama in the
middle school (years 7-10) and therefore be more experienced in
the subject, b) that the girls may be generally more tentative and
shy, c) that the girls may perceive that it is difficult to get high
marks in their HSC for Drama or, d) it may be that they
perceive Drama as a 'recreational' activity that does not
contribute to their future careers and finally e) parental
pressures. The 2 Unit Drama syllabus states that it is "designed
for both students who have completed the School Certificate
Drama course and for those students who are studying Drama
for the first time" (Board of Studies, 1993, p1).

The range of abilities in the Year 12 group(s) tends to be varied.
Results from previous HSC groups in their final examinations
have varied from a mark of 45 to a mark of 100, with several
students gaining a place in the top ten in the State of New
South Wales, and one student in equal first place. The
student's final mark is not the only way of measuring the
success or value of the subject for the individual. The
development of 'key competencies' is paramount here.
Different students have different abilities and strengths.

2.4.2 Entry to the HSC Drama Course
Entry to the HSC course is through the completion of the
Preliminary Course in Year 11. In Term 3 of Year 11 the
students have the option of selecting 11 units of work from the
13 units they originally were obliged to take at the beginning of
Year 11. Some students therefore choose to 'drop' Drama at
this time, thereby losing a 2 Unit subject to give them a final
total of eleven units. There is no pressure placed on students.
They often consult with their teachers who may assist them
with their choices. There is also a 'Tutor' system in the Senior
School at Barker where one teacher (or tutor) is assigned to the
'pastoral care' of approximately 40 students. The student's tutor
may offer advice to them at this stage. There is no selection
process for entry into the Year 12 class for drama. The only pre-
requisite is that a student has "satisfactorily completed the Preliminary Course" (Barker College Publication, 1995). No student in Year 11 has yet been unable to comply with this pre-requisite, so all those who decide to continue with Drama have been allowed to do so. As a consequence of this, within the group there is a range of intellectual abilities, physical skills, stamina and personal commitment to the school, the subject and to each other and the group.

After the completion of the Year 11, Preliminary Course students make a further subject selection based on consideration of relevant aspects such as the results (marks) the students may have attained in each subject, whether they enjoy the subject or perhaps whether the subject has any employment implications for them. The students then decide to continue or discontinue a particular subject.

2.5 ASSESSMENT

The final HSC mark is comprised of two elements weighted equally: external assessment by examination set by the Board of Studies and internal assessment devised by each school individually, under guidelines set by the Board of Studies.

2.5.1 External Assessment

At the end of Year 12 all students who so wish sit for examinations in all the subjects they have elected. Each subject has a unit value: for example, 2 Unit Drama, 2 Unit Ancient History, 3 Unit Visual Arts. The higher unit number requires a supposedly higher standard of work. There is some perception that the higher the number of units the more likely it is that a student's final mark will be 'graded up'. This term is used frequently by students who are seeking a competitive edge and striving for marks that will enable them to be selected into university courses upon completion of the HSC.
The minimum number of units a full-time student can take in Year 12 is eleven units. The students present for final examinations around October/November. These examinations and the results of the Internal School Assessment Program are combined together to give a final mark. The students are then ranked against all other candidates across the state of NSW and awarded a TER (Tertiary Entrance Ranking). On the basis of this mark and the subsequent ranking undertaken by universities, the students are awarded a UAC (University Admittance Centre) mark and if they wish to apply for a place at a university this mark will often determine which course they will be accepted into. Ironically, this does not apply to many tertiary Drama and Theatre courses, which audition students regardless of their TER. The audition is the deciding factor.

The final HSC examination in 2 Unit Drama contains 3 elements: a Group Devised Performance (worth 30%), an Individual Project (30%) and a one and a half hour written examination (40%).

It is generally the case that the final HSC external examinations in October/November comprise 50% of the final TER, the other 50% being internally assessed within the school the student attends (that is, the Internal Assessment Program).

2.5.2 Internal Assessment
As part of this HSC assessment there is also an Internal Assessment Program for each subject with specific guidelines established and published by the NSW Board of Studies. For Drama, the students must complete Internal Assessment Tasks in "Workshop Activities (including Oral Reflection), Written Reflection, Development of Group Presentation, Development of Individual Project" (Board of Studies, 1994, p18).
Each task set has a mark weighting attributed to it. These weightings are also dictated by the Board of Studies. Workshop Activities comprise 40% of the total mark, written reflection is 30% and the remainder is divided between the development of the Group Presentation and the Individual Project. "The components and weights listed for the HSC are mandatory" (Board of Studies, 1994). The Subject Department Head is required to design tasks that meet those criteria and include task descriptions, outcomes, objectives and mark weightings.

The Group Devised Performance Piece referred to in this study is part of this Internal Assessment Program. It is a task that is also mirrored in the final HSC set of examinations. It was the first task set for Year 12, 2 Unit Drama students for 1996. The weighting applied to this task contributed 20% to the student's final Internal Assessment mark, which in turn contributed 50% to their final HSC mark. These internal assessments and the school report are more likely to be taken into account by auditioning panels for tertiary Drama and Theatre courses.

2.6 THE GROUP DeVISED PERFORMANCE PIECE AS A VEHICLE FOR INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Part of the reason for this study is to investigate the potential of the Group Devised Performance Piece as a valid and potentially beneficial method of assessing students in performance. Internal assessment tasks are given broader parameters by the Board of Studies, albeit with regulated mark weightings and areas to be covered. The Group Devised Performance Piece establishes a similar framework for students as they need to prepare for group performance as part of their HSC examinations. It puts them into small groups (the Board of Studies requirement for HSC is from 3 to 6 in one group), it encourages them to develop performance from a theme (as they must do in the HSC), it allows them the experience of performing before a live audience while being assessed (as they will do for their final examination). It does not restrict the pieces to a certain time frame (to
which they must adhere in final examination) but it does show them practical applications (or not as the case may be) of timing, pace and rhythm in performance.

The Group Devised Performance Piece serves as a valuable method for assessing performance skills such as: creating and sustaining a character or role, expressive skills in voice and movement and students’ ability to contribute to the ensemble piece in performance.

As a result of these aims, the methods described in this process are designed to give students access to character development, both practically and in written text form, to encourage them to experiment with vocal, physical and musical forms, and to work together on a common goal with diligence and enthusiasm that will be reflected in the final performance.

The merit of the project does not lie in investigation of the nature of assessment but in whether the rehearsal method produces a performance outcome that can enhance the student's assessment experience and mark.

3. ACTIONS OF THIS STUDY
The actions involved in the process of developing the Group Devised Performance Piece for performance were documented in the following ways.

3.1 REHEARSAL DOCUMENTATION
- Planning and scheduling of the rehearsal process in advance and recording of those schedules in written outline form
- Observations of the rehearsals which led to the production of a detailed 'diary' providing keys to aims, objectives, outcomes which was maintained pre-rehearsal period, during rehearsal and post rehearsal. This formed the basis of the rehearsal documentation and attempted to be both an objective record of events planned and carried out, as well as a personal record of
assessment of those outcomes and strategies. As director/researcher the process was intrinsically self-reflective.

- **Videotape** recordings were made of two rehearsals from a static camera position and were used to observe the rehearsal patterns of individuals and groups as well as a visual and physical record of the session and staging outcomes during the rehearsal process
- **Still photographs** of rehearsals were taken infrequently and used as a visual record of spatial relationships between groups and individual
- Rehearsals were observed and commented on by the academic supervisor of the project as well as other Drama teaching staff. (Observation by others is a frequent occurrence in Drama classes.)

### 3.2 PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION

The Group Devised Performance Piece was performed over two nights, March 28 and 29 1996. On the first night the students were assessed as part of their HSC Internal Assessment Program. The postgraduate supervisor from University of Western Sydney Nepean, Visual and Performing Arts Faculty (Ms Anne Marshall) was also present at this performance. Her report is included in the Appendix.

Documentation of the performance included:

- The production of a **written script** which arose from research and improvisation and formed the basis of later rehearsals which could be 'layered' with music and movement sequences. The written script was a valuable record and outcome of the process and a mechanism of differentiation between the method of Group Devised Performance under review here and other methods of Group Devised Performance that do not require a written script but work largely (solely) on improvisation and memory.
- Both of the performances were **videotaped** from a static camera position on one of the school's video cameras and
used as a record of the event for assessment and performance verification for students and teachers. The video of the production, while nowhere near a professional recording of the event, nonetheless represented a tangible outcome of the performance that was/could be viewed by others. It provided a means of assessing the outcomes of the process because it remained a visual map after the event/ performance had finished. It provided evidence of dramatic elements inherent in the performance such as time, space, movement (See Chapter Six also)

- **An annotated script** was developed for lighting crews and SFX cues and was used to call the show during performance.
- **Notes** were made by the post-graduate supervisor when she visited both a rehearsal and a performance and offered production suggestions and comments on the process
- **A review** of the production was written by a colleague experienced in the genre and was valuable as a comparatively objective opinion of the event
- **Questionnaires** were given to the audience, the students and the assessors at different stages of the process to provide information on historical contexts, personal opinions and personal observations

Ancillary Performance documentation included:

- The *advertising material* announcing the event including public notices, posters and tickets gave evidence of the design of the production, its intended audience
- Still *photographs* were taken by the Publication Office of the College on the opening night of the production and these served as a limited record of blocking, set design, costuming and make-up
- *Programs* were written by the teacher/director and printed at the College and contained background on the students, the assessment environment and the process of rehearsal and production
4. CONSEQUENCES

The consequences relate to the evaluation of the above research methods and are discussed in Chapter Six.

They include a study of:

- the final performance in terms of structure, skills developed by the actors and the theatrical elements of the production
- the value of the group devised method as a means of performance assessment under the conditions and guidelines imposed by the 2 Unit Drama syllabus
- the contingencies that arose from the process of rehearsal and the final production and the effect they may have had on change and interaction within the study.
CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL INFLUENCES ON THE PROJECT

INTRODUCTION
There are two sections to this chapter:

1. Drama in Education
   This section deals with Educational Drama, with reference to Drama as a vocational tool, and secondly with Drama in Education practitioners.

2. Theories of Directing
   The second section refers to very specific directors and performance theoreticians and the impact of their work on the development of the Group Devised Performance piece.

   Neither section is comprehensive in its parameters nor in the number of theoreticians chosen. This project is a practical performance research study based largely on reflection of the process and the outcome of a performance. The researcher has been influenced by key theories and practices but the study is not an analysis of assessment per se, or a comprehensive report on contemporary play theory or the nature of adolescent learning.

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1. DRAMA IN EDUCATION

Introduction
Drama is taught as a Higher School Certificate subject in the hope that:

The skills and knowledge acquired through the study of this syllabus may be further developed and employed in a variety of professions, including - but not confined to - theatre, media and community arts.
The study...will develop the potential talents and capabilities of all students -physical, emotional, intellectual, social, creative and expressive. This process should develop student's self-confidence and self-esteem...
(Board of Studies, 1993, p2)
There are two distinct elements here:

1. Educational Drama as vocational training
2. Educational Drama as self-development.

This section attempts to deal with both aspects. Educational Drama is important for the student and his/her personal and creative development. It also has the potential to serve a purpose for the long term employment options for the Drama participant. If it is the case that the subject may lead to employment possibilities, it is useful to attempt to establish what employers may be looking for in school leavers.

In 1991/2 the Australian Education Council (AEC) set up firstly the Finn Committee, and subsequently the Mayer Committee, to review national policies on education.

The Finn Committee was established as a national group consisting of the State Directors of Education, Employer representatives and Employer/Union representatives - this composition determined the perspective of the Finn Report (Horsfield, 1992, p1).

The committee was set up to review the potential for a nationally consistent framework for the recognition of training. They evolved a list of 'key competencies' stating:

...there are certain essential things that all young people need to learn in preparation for employment and that they should be able to develop these employment-related key competencies regardless of the education and training pathway they follow (Mayer Committee, 1992, p2).

The Mayer Committee was established to undertake further work on employment related 'key competencies' that were revealed in the Finn Report. The Mayer Committee:
was set up by the Australian Education Council (AEC) and the Ministers for Vocational Education, Employment and Training (MOVEET) to undertake further work on the employment related key competencies concept contained in the Review of Young People's Participation in Postcompculsory Education and Training (The Finn Report) (Horsfield, 1992, p 1).

The Mayer Committee defined 'key competencies' as being able to provide the student with "better preparation for initial employment and a foundation for their continuing vocational education" (Horsfield, 1992, p2). The Finn Committee identified six areas of employment-related competence:

Language and communication:
- speaking
- listening
- reading
- writing
- accessing and using information

Using Mathematics:
- computation
- measurement
- understanding mathematical symbols

Scientific and Technological Understanding:
- understanding scientific and technological concepts
- understanding the impact of science and technology on society
- scientific and technological skills including computing skills

Cultural Understanding
- understanding and knowledge of Australia's historical, geographical and political context
- understanding of major global issues
- understanding of the world of work, its importance and requirements
Problem Solving
- analysis
- critical thinking
- decision making
- creative thinking
- skill transfer to new contexts

Personal and Interpersonal

The Mayer Report considered three more areas:
- Creativity (including the Arts)
- Family and Household Management
- Information Technology

The key competencies were regarded as being cross-curricular and are said to appear in all Key Learning Areas (KLA's) of subject syllabuses.

The Committee identified a set of national curriculum principles to enable all young people, ..., to develop key competencies. The curriculum principles are those which should underpin curriculum for 15-19 year olds in general across schools...Examples of these principles are:
...curriculum must cater for ability at all levels of all kinds, diverse interests and different initial vocational and educational destinations.
Curriculum must be appropriate and relevant to the full range of students so that all students can experience success and satisfaction in their learning and so that the talented can be challenged to extend themselves fully (Board of Studies, May 1992, p2).

The 2 Unit Drama Syllabus is clear in its attempts to be accessible to all levels of student academic ability. It states that Drama is a method of learning that should be enacted and, through this enactment and the fusion of many different art forms, it hopes to expose the students to the attitudes and values of different cultures and peoples while creatively developing the individual student capabilities: "physical, emotional, intellectual, social...self-confidence and self-esteem" (Board of Studies, 1991, p2). It also aims to provide a basis for future employment in a variety of professions.
"including - but not confined to - theatre, media and community arts"
(Board of Studies, 1991, p2).

As a subject it adequately covers most of the areas mentioned in the Key Competencies: Language, Communication, Cultural Understanding, Problem Solving, Personal and Interpersonal and can even provide a background for the study of Science and Technology by its use of experiential learning and enactment and providing for research and role-play possibilities in these areas. It provides the potential for research into any number of social, political and historical contexts while facilitating the use of that material in a medium/form that is relevant to the particular student and their own level of understanding and dexterity.

In the HSC: A Survey of Employer's Views (Board of Studies, 1992) 55% of employers interviewed ranked "Aural communication skills (ie listening)" as essential for school leavers. "Oral communication skills (ie speaking)" were next in the ranking with 53% stating they were essential. "Written communication skills" were fourth on the list at 43% with "Basic Numeracy Skills" at 55% (Board of Studies, 1992, p15). It is obvious from this report that employers are looking primarily for communication skills, both oral and written. It is also obvious from the Drama syllabus and the orientation of the subject, that Drama sets out primarily to enhance these skills: the ability to communicate (written, oral, gestural), the ability to listen to and respond to others and in psychotherapy terms, to "speak for self" (see Jansen and Newman, 1989).

As vocational training the 2 Unit Drama Syllabus:

- covers most of the 'key competencies' mentioned in the above reports, directly or by research and enactment
- builds confidence and communication skills deemed a first priority by employers hiring school leavers

The Group Devised Performance Piece:

- encourages oral, written, gestural communication
- explores cultural/time/space differences
• provides an environment for problem development and problem solving
• develops confidence, motivation, creativity and self-esteem
• involves both the intellect and the emotions
• encourages, in fact insists upon, a team collaboration
• supports the commitment of the individual to each member of the group

1.2 DRAMA IN EDUCATION

The current HSC 2 Unit Drama Syllabus appears to have been greatly influenced by the work of Dorothy Heathcote. Heathcote believes that, through group improvisational Drama, students are able to explore and experience social issues and relate them to personal experiences and universal truths. "Educational Drama", according to Heathcote, "involves people in active role-taking situations in which attitudes, not characters, are the chief concern" (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p61). To create a learning environment the students must be encouraged to take and test their own decisions. Educational Drama allows children to explore their own views of life and people and use their own standards of evaluation. Heathcote expects, in fact demands, that the students take ownership of their work. She is not concerned so much with the finished product(ion), but more with the process and learning inherent in the role-playing activity itself.

Heathcote, in the tradition of Peter Slade (1954), "believes in children" and "education for self-direction (Heathcote in Burgess - BBC video documentary, 1994). Her primary concern is with the sociological learning that can take place in the Drama room. Each session is driven by Heathcote's urge to "widen the children's capacity to new experiences" (ibid). Her process of power endowment, what she termed 'the mantle of the expert', she believed, would enable children to reveal, and therefore understand, "what they know but didn't know they know" (ibid).

While Heathcote encourages association with other people's lives, she also insists that the participants in her Drama workshops are fully aware of what Boal called metaxis (1979): the interplay between the fictitious and the
actual. She would remind the students that there was one world of the Drama and other world of 'real life', some aspects of the context in which the Drama was occurring.

This notion of context seems to be a shortfall in Heathcote's work. She does not place emphasis on the context of a) the child, b) the teacher and c) the classroom. She speaks very little about the history of the child, what "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1984) they may bring to the work. Heathcote also rarely discusses the environment that has contributed to that cultural capital—the university, the school, the workplace. In a BBC produced documentary on her life she does talk of her own origins and early work at the knitting mill. She even admits that this heritage has given her a specific point of view (Burgess, 1994). But she does not seem to make the connection between her personal attitudes and values and how they may impact on any workshop she conducts. She maintains that she is able to place herself in other people's shoes and feel and experience what they are feeling and experiencing. This is a refutable point. How possible is it to experience exactly what someone else is experiencing?

The teacher, "one who creates learning situations for others" (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p61), usually takes a 'role' within the Drama, becoming a player in the improvisation. Heathcote believes that the teacher guides the action of the improvisation, but from within the playing of the piece. Heathcote herself leads through a series of questions, constantly challenging the performers to explain their actions and responses. She talks of the teacher/student relationship and the high level of trust that must exist in that relationship. Her use of role-play is perhaps her most well known innovation. By encouraging the students to take on the lives of others (by identification and not transformation), Heathcote believes this will make the students look at their own behaviour. She has specific aims in mind, and a specific personal history as well, that drives her work.

In the training of teachers in using Drama in Education, Heathcote insists that the individual teacher must have the drive to teach in the first place and must constantly seek feedback from the students. She sees Drama as a
medium for teaching a wider curriculum and so she therefore sees herself as a teacher first and a Drama teacher second.

I am primarily in the teaching business, not the play-making business, even when I am involved in making plays (Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p92).

Burton (1991) remarks of Heathcote that her writings are largely inconsistent and her philosophical point of view barely expounded. Burton also claims that Heathcote talks little of 'imagination' and the role that plays in her methodology. However, Heathcote does make primary reference to her own imagination in a BBC documentary (1994) where she remarks it is her one skill,

"...something to do with very high imagination registration...a quality of images, speed of images...that flourishes in action...if I talk about a tree, I am a tree, about 8 different trees. I choose the one necessary" (Heathcote, in Burgess, 1994).

Heathcote assumes control over the Drama process. Her leading of the Drama is interventionist, which she admits. The Group Devised Performance method relied more on the 'imagination' and control of the participants (who were also the perciptents). Nonetheless her determination to encourage students' ownership of their work, and what she later referred to as 'Stewardship' (in an entropic sense) (Heathcote, 1993), was a guiding principle in the Group Devised Piece.

For David Hornbrook, the teacher stays outside the Drama action behaving more, as one might imagine, like a professional theatre director. Hornbrook is more concerned with product - the production of a theatrical event.
...although it is true that both actor and child are involved in processes, Dramatic art, the outcome of that process, is itself inescapably a product. In more complex forms of Drama making, such as the performance of a play in a theatre, many participants with a wide range of specialist skills are likely to have contributed to what we commonly know as production process. But the classroom improvisations also involve production process, even though, of course, there may never be a formal, enacted presentation (Hornbrook, 1989, p104).

Hornbrook lessens the significance of Drama as a means of connecting the idea of "personal knowing to the wider project of liberal humanism through its claims to facilitate access to the transcendental essences of phenomenology" (Hornbrook, 1989, p 80) and tends to equate it more with other forms of art.

Drama is a 'learning medium' to the extent that all art is edifying in this way. We may therefore regard Dramatic art not so much as another way of knowing, but rather as a way of participating in Dramatic conversations which can lead to new perceptions, to us making better sense of things. (Hornbrook, 1989, p110)

He believes that teachers of Drama have a fundamental responsibility to equip those they teach with the tools of Dramatic expression. Students must learn to use elements of Drama, such as space, movement, sound and language, with the aim of presenting in performance before an audience. He tends to base his performance work on pre-existing written texts rather than developing improvisations into structured performance pieces.

Improvisation, role-play, script-work and technical training will all have a part to play in the delivery of attainment in Dramatic art...The making and interpreting of Dramatic texts remain at the core of Dramatic art. (Hornbrook, 1989, p133)

Hornbrook has set himself in opposition to Heathcote and followers of her method such as Gavin Bolton. In an article titled: Piss on His Face (Bolton, 1993) - a somewhat aggressive title - Bolton accuses Hornbrook of having more to do with "ego building than with honest exposition of theory" (Bolton, 1993, p23). Hornbrook, he maintains, does not even attempt to understand the process of experiential Drama, and this lack of willingness
and subsequent ignorance, allows Bolton to dismiss Hornbook's contention that product is more important than process. Like Heathcote, Bolton believes

...that the use of 'teacher-in-role as an approach to Drama is the most important strategy in a teacher's repertoire.
(Bolton, 1993, p24)

Hornbrook acknowledges that role play has a function to fulfil in the development of personal skills:

The idea that role-play can be employed to help develop personal skills and explore social encounters of various kinds is now widely accepted...and is used in management training and in a plethora of courses designed to build confidence, relieve stress or encourage assertiveness (Hornbrook, 1991, p9).

But in contrast to Heathcote, Hornbrook believes that role-play requires few skills and serves little function outside personal development. It certainly does not teach theatrical skills. These personal skills, he insists, are a separate issue from the acquisition of performance and theatrical skills. Hornbrook acknowledges Drama as a cultural system and an aesthetic product, and that a student's knowledge may well be expanded as a result of analysis of this cultural aesthetic art form.

By locating Drama in this fertile landscape not only is aesthetic recognition more likely but the possibilities for expanding student's knowledge and understanding are enhanced. (Hornbrook, 1991, p38)

Hornbrook regrets what he sees as a Drama-in-education move away from the written text (1993). Story-telling is at the heart of all Drama, he maintains, and there are many educationally valuable texts that have been written. He insists in the cultural specificity of a "social text" (1991, p53) and believes that locating the Drama in context encourages further learning. The Drama lesson that revolves around the teacher creating and 'entertaining' the students in a "cycle of continuous gratification" has obscured the idea of "Drama as craft" (Hornbrook, 1991, p70).
Hornbrook's emphasis on product and performance as an outcome, plus his desire to impart theatrical skills to students were of considerable use in the rehearsal process, even though the group devised process did not start from an already existing Dramatic text. A text was, however, an early product of the process, and the performance was generated from that text.

Jonathan Neelands (1993) attempts to contextualize the teaching of Drama in a Post-Modern society. He believes that Drama "does not reflect society rather it gives value to certain meanings within it" (Neelands, 1993, p57).

Neelands places Heathcote, Bolton and Hornbrook together in what he refers to as a neo-conservative approach to the teaching of Drama, claiming there is a...

...the refusal to countenance the possibility of any progress beyond the theory and practice of Dorothy Heathcote and Gavin Bolton...I do challenge the dogmatizing and conservative tendency which tries to fix the theory of Drama for all time within the texts of these key figures...I ought to add that I include Hornbrook in this neo-conservative grouping. Under the guise of a 'Post-Modernist' perspective Hornbrook urges a conservative view of theatre based on a socially constructed hierarchy of forms which ignores both the politics and the 'weapons' of Post-Modernism, which are parody and critiquing...the theatre that Hornbrook speaks of is not a healthy model for the development of Drama...still hankering after the old 'certainties', the old stories (Neelands, 1993, pp56-57).

Neelands maintains that Hornbrook has moved the focus from Heathcote's sociological Drama to the reproduction of a genre "without reference to the social process and power relations which have given certain theatre genres power over others" (Neelands, 1993, p58). Neelands, himself, is in direct descent from the Heathcote traditions, and not in hostile opposition to it, as is Hornbrook, according to Neelands who is concerned with semiotics and truth as "structurally and culturally specific" (ibid, p59). While he derides Heathcote for not allowing enough 'context' into the classroom, he also claims that Hornbrook does not see the Post-Modernist power structure inherent in any art form, as does Heathcote.
Neelands claims Hornbrook's concern, that content is given precedence over form, dismisses the work of third world practitioners such as Boal and Sircar. Neelands becomes guilty of what he accuses others. He fails to signify the cultural and social context in which both these practitioners work. Boal is very culturally specific. While his techniques of Forum Theatre and the use of side-coaching in the form of The Joker are useful Drama tools, Boal had a political imperative in constructing these devices. For Boal, both the process and the product were important (Boal, 1979).

This Group Devised Performance owes more to Hornbrook and Neelands than to the techniques of Heathcote and Bolton. The product, in a Post-Modernist society, was of considerably more interest to the players. They had a vested interest, their final assessment mark, as well as their desire to produce work of a high standard. After all it culminated in a public performance in front of an audience of their peers: one of the most demanding of audiences.

Soem believe, like Bruce Burton, that Drama and theatre are part of the same experience, "and therefore should be part of the same curriculum" (1991, p2). Like Richard Courtney, he sees Drama as the spontaneous process and theatre as the art product. Of Dramatic art, Richard Courtney states:

Drama is a human process based in imagining ("what if") and Dramatic action ("as if"). It takes a number of forms: play, improvisation, role play, ritual, and the most hieratic, theatre. Theatre is a particular Dramatic form: it is the tip of the iceberg where the whole is the human Dramatic process. (Courtney, 1989, p141)

Courtney is concerned with analysis: analysis of audience, performers, teachers, actors/performers. His cognitive approach to theories on the making of Drama reflect a contemporary preoccupation with the mechanism(s) of the Dramatic activity and their production. His investigations into "intuition" (1989) reveal an approach that seems to suggest the work of Dorothy Heathcote.
Courtney has developed "Strategies for Drama Teachers" (Courtney, 1989, p204) to encourage students' intuition. In his list he mentions "having a fresh vision", classroom atmosphere, an honest and genuine teacher/student relationship with students making the key decisions in the classroom. He refers to the questioning method of Dorothy Heathcote and her ability to place the onus on the students playing in the Drama. The students make the key decisions of place, time, language, characters and events contained in the Drama. However, Heathcote has very clear political ends in mind. This is not necessarily unusual, but should certainly be acknowledged and factored into the Drama classroom. Teachers should encourage the student's intuition, according to Courtney by, "continual use of immediate Dramatic experience; presenting materials in a variety of medium; challenge and debate, new perspectives; the use of metaphors and images..." (Courtney, 1989, p 205). One point on his list of strategies is important but very rarely achieved within the framework of Drama in the classroom: "Allowing time. Intuition does not obey time slots or school bells" (Courtney, 1989, p205). Most importantly he stresses the fictional nature of Drama as a key into Dramatic action.

Focusing on the fictional. It is this, and only this, which makes action Dramatic. Clearly there is a close relationship between intuition and imagination, empathy, and tacit knowing. All are linked in the practical knowledge of Drama and arts teachers (Courtney, 1989, p205).

It is the task of the teacher to set up situations that push the students into new directions while making the Drama "relate to the learner's needs, purposes, and intentions" (Courtney, 1989, p103) and ensuring the learner is actively involved in the activity.

Courtney is concerned with the process of creation and the self-learning encoded in such a process, where Drama is the "prime mediator between our inner selves and the environment" (Courtney, 1982, p5). Burton (1991) points out that "while Drama can provide this learning experience, it is not fully realised without the act of reflection". For, he adds, "reflection will only occur when the teacher intervenes to control the Drama process"
(Burton, 1991, p53). David Boud (1993) may well maintain that learning through reflection does not necessary require teacher intervention.

Boud believes that learning is socially and culturally constructed, and each learner comes to an experience with societal values and assumptions. This must include the teacher/director (or Slades' facilitator) as well as the student. Learning is a process for all involved in a collaborative venture. For learning to occur, the participant in the experience must return to that experience, acknowledge and deal with their own assumptions and feelings, re-evaluate the experience in the light of this self-analysis, associate the learning with the experience, integrate it into their own ontologies and appropriate it to the original experience and to other diverse situations -to make it their own. (Boud et al., 1993).

While the learning process for the students involved in the Group Devised Performance Piece was important in the overall teaching of Drama skills, analysis of this learning experience does not constitute part of this report. The reflective learning of the director is the major action here. The Group Devised Performance Piece set out to inform the theatrical skills of the participant and to assist them in their Internal Assessment Task. The conclusions come from the reflections of the research. Another project may well look at the learning processes of the participants.

The work of Errol Bray is particularly significant to this study. *Playbuilding: A Guide for Group Creation of Plays with Young People* (Bray, 1991) offers some approaches to the production of group devised pieces that are valuable to this discussion.

On playbuilding, Bray remarks:

Playbuilding is a dynamic and interactive process that draws out the individual creativity very intensely while also developing strong group co-operation and commitment. It allows people, whatever their talent, to be immediately involved in a richly creative process. (Bray, 1991, p1)
He strongly supports the technique of group devised work as it enables students to experience "every aspect of Drama and theatre: to be playwright, performer, director, composer, technician, critic" (Bray, 1991, p1). He works through improvisation, discussion and rehearsal until they arrive at a finished product. He combines the process of playbuilding (Heathcote) and the product of performance (Hornbrook) in a format that creates opportunities for students to make and use their own decisions (Courtney) resulting in significant group commitment.

Bray refers to four types of group plays: The Theme Play, an "episodic play on general topic", The Story Play where the "plot needs to be established before scenes are improvised", The Character Play "showing characters in interaction", and The Setting Play, "filling the setting with rich and diverse life" (Bray, 1991, p10). It is fortunate that Bray also adds that "no play will ever fall entirely into just one category" (Bray 1991, p1).

He begins the process of developing the performance piece by discussing ideas and using the four genres mentioned above as a starting point for discussion. He is quick to add that the role of the director is to steer the group and their ideas to "ensure a good quantity of ideas" and then to "gradually improve the quality of the ideas" by group discussion and involvement with each suggestion. He agrees that the "beginning is harder when the group has the whole world to choose from"(Bray, 1991, p14) so the sorting of ideas becomes important, while adding that it is necessary not to rush the process and demand a commitment and agreement on an idea too early.

The final success of a performance of a playbuilt show depends not on the quality of the performances, not on the quality of the theatrical devices, not even on the quality of the play's structure, which is so important, but almost entirely on the quality of the thinking that has gone in the devising of the play. (Bray 1991, p21)

He does not define how one is to judge "quality of thinking". Another contentious and somewhat narrow suggestion he makes is regarding linking of scenes in performance:
Avoid awkward linking of scenes, especially physically awkward links. If a group or prop has to be manoeuvred onto the stage, cover it with a scene out front that will hold the audience's attention. (Bray, 1991 p69)

Perhaps Bray's theatrical sense may be a bit dated but his process of development of group play production is still valid. He is very sure that structure plays a key role in the piece (see Seger, 1987) and that without a tightly paced structure the piece will suffer in performance. His technique for producing group plays, from discussion to improvisation, to writing, back to discussion, to viewing by peers, to critiquing the work of self and others and to final performance is very relevant.

Michaels and Tarlington, in Building Plays (1995), discuss their method of group devised production. They are less reliant on the generation of a written script than this research project. Their methods for devising a final performance maintain the traditional roles within a theatrical context. They assign tasks to a director, a Dramaturge, a writer. They mention the possibility of a collaborative approach where no roles are assigned (Michaels and Tarlington, 1995, p14), but glaze over the possibility that a written text may be produced by the whole group as a result of consultation and collaboration. Mention is made (ibid, p21) of roles being fluid and flexible, but they maintain a conventional code for task setting.

The process they describe for establishing themes/topics bears some similarities to the process of this project, however, the sections on Framing, "selecting and eliminating moments" (ibid, p32) and Rehearsing, which was "much shorter than rehearsing a scripted production" (ibid, p34) differ significantly from the methodology that requires a written script and the 'layering' of that written text during a relatively 'conventional' rehearsal period (see Chapter Four).

Michaels and Tarlington rely heavily on continual improvisations and workshop processes such as 'hot-seating' (Michaels and Tarlington, 1995, p70) and still pictures, both of which Hornbrook refers to as coming from the teaching of an English curriculum, "...where most Drama teachers come from" (Hornbrook, 1991, p10).
In *Theatre in Education: New Objectives for Theatre New Techniques in Education*, (Jeda, 1976), John OTtoole talks of "socialisation" and "interaction in peer groups" (OTtoole, 1976) as being useful aids in teaching. Educational Drama, he maintains, changes the "social conditions of the learning situation" (OTtoole, 1976, p53) and he states that:

> Though motivation and deep involvement do not in themselves constitute learning, they are necessary conditions for the kind of learning theatre and Drama in education offer... (OTtoole, 1976, p34).

OTtoole is interested in empowerment through education. These notions are of particular concern in this project as one of the aims of the group devised process is to give the students power and ownership of their own work.

If Drama played out in an educational environment has merit for the student, it can be seen in the opportunity for self awareness and personal empowerment that the processes of performance and improvisation have to offer. According to OTtoole, this is a primary motivation for all art.

> If indeed art is primarily concerned with 'identity and community- the need to be and the need to belong', then it must be concerned with power and control- the personal power to create and assert identity, and the control over the communal situation that enables people to belong...that it is from interaction in context that humans derive the touchstones which define not only social but personal identity (OTtoole, 1992, p155).

The question of control and power within the process of the group devised piece was of primary concern. The students wanted to be in control of their own work, even though they wanted/needed direction and encouragement, and ultimately they were co-responsible for what appeared on the stage. This process takes time to learn and understand. John Carroll refers to time spent "on the act of learning...time in which the person is orientated to the learning task" (Carroll, 1985, p21). The nature of the group devised process and the corresponding rehearsal period provided that specific time and context for the learning to occur.
2. DIRECTORIAL THEORIES RELATED TO THE GROUP DEvised PERFORMANCE PIECE

Introduction

While the following directors and theorists are noted for their diverse and multiple contributions to theatre and Dramatic art, they are being examined here specifically in relationship to the production of the Group Devised Performance Piece and the aspects of their theories on performance and the nature of theatre that contributed to any 'directorional style' that may have been inherent in the evolution of that piece. The participating students had a working knowledge of the theories of Stanislavsky, Brecht and Artaud and were able to identify and employ these in rehearsal.

Constantin Stanislavsky (1863-1938) and his contribution to the analysis of acting and the training of actors is fundamental in any reference to directorial approaches in performance. The phenomenon of 'realism' in the theatre with the Saxe-Meiningen group (Styan, 1981) and others was instrumental in contributing contemporary methods of working with actors. Stanislavsky is primarily associated with this rise in 'realism' (this term can often be interchanged with 'naturalism') both in terms of verisimilitude of set and staging designs and more particularly in the ability of the actor to become (transformation) his/her character.

The methods Stanislavsky devised to train actors revolved around the concept that they were to contain and transpose into a believable performance two opposing principles: 1. that the stage was unreal, and 2. that they were to convince themselves that it was real (for them). Stanislavsky was looking for the "truth in the imaginary situation on the stage" (Mitter, 1992, p8) and striving for the actor to assimilate himself with the character he was playing.

Most commonly Stanislavsky started rehearsals with his idea of "Given Circumstances" (Stanislavsky, 1978, p51) where a 'history' of a character was to be constructed from what was already established in the
text, and the belief was that this history would enable the actor to better understand the motives and actions of the character. Mitter suggests that while this seemed a good idea, it in fact created too much knowledge and led to the actors becoming self-conscious and inhibited. They were playing an historical development and not motivated and justified human behaviour. However developing a list of 'given circumstances' is particularly effective when working with student actors in the early stages of rehearsal. Creating a character's 'history' is useful when composing a script from improvisation.

Stanislavsky's use of "If" (1978, p46) also adds to this depth of knowledge for the actor. ('If I were playing this role how would I behave?'). Mitter suggests this technique also did not contribute to the relaxed and confident playing that Stanislavsky was hoping for. It would appear however that Mitter takes a round-about route to reach the same conclusion as Stanislavsky: that stage truth equals truth for the actor. If used in isolation, without the introduction of somatic work, "that is from the body to the emotions" (Mitter, 1992, p19) for example, this introspective and psychological approach to characterisation could well lead to self-conscious playing, but as a 'way into' a character, and certainly as a 'way into' a story, it is invaluable.

The use of these techniques is particularly enhanced with the addition of a somatic approach to character. Mitter talks of Stanislavsky's development of acting theories and his later awareness of the significance of working somatically:

In the first stage, as a young actor, Stanislavsky had worked from the body to the mind by copying models of his characters - and he was successful. In the second stage, following the instigation of his System, he reversed the process and began to work from the mind to the body - and the result was a crippling self-consciousness. In the third phase, very late in his career, Stanislavsky attempted to work the somatic imperative back into his method of approaching roles. (Mitter, 1992, p23)

Stanislavsky's desire for the actor to justify his portrayal of his character through the actor's understanding of objectives and units,
"The right name, which crystallises the essence of a unit, discovers its fundamental objective" (Stanislavsky, 1937, p122) is also an invaluable tool for the group devised production. Breaking down the scenes into smaller and smaller "units" enables the actor to closely study the motivation of the character. The breakdown can then be designated to a particular and limited time frame. This is useful if one is constrained by bells ringing to change lessons and move students out of one class and into another often completely unrelated one.

Stanislavsky's insistence on questioning the actors to establish their understanding of their character allows the actor to stay concentrated and focused on the activity at hand. This technique is essential in the rehearsal process and is used by contemporary Drama in Education practitioners, especially Dorothy Heathcote. "Side-coaching" (Spolin, 1985) encourages the students to an analysis of their performance, but it can also assist in finding that somatic quality that is right for the character being played. Questioning from the side-lines also keeps the director in touch with the performers.

The questions are designed to reveal to the actors their ignorance about a way of life so that the answers, when supplied, contain more than the sum of their information. (Mitter, 1992, p11)

While Stanislavsky's search for realism and truth began from analysis, from the intellectual and cognitive study of the motives of the character generated from a detailed historical knowledge (even if it was constructed and fabricated by the actor), he became aware of the importance of the body in the formation of character. Mitter maintains that this knowledge was not carried through. The concept of physicalisation of characters crept into the Stanislavsky system but it was not "empowered to effect the overhaul without which it is unworkable" (Mitter, 1992, p25). The techniques of Stanislavsky were fundamental to the students and their development of character.

In November 1906 Vsevolod Meyerhold emerged as a most controversial director in Russian Theatre. Stanislavsky had invited Meyerhold to return to the Moscow Art Theatre in 1906 to direct, but
Meyerhold believed strongly that realism had served its purpose and that a new theatrical style should be developed (apparently so did Stanislavsky at this time: see Mitter, 1992). Russia was in the grip of a general strike and nearly all theatres were closed.

In the early days Meyerhold had been interested in theatre as a festival, but after joining the Bolsheviks in August 1918 he began to make his most important and vibrant contributions to theatre. He added topical interest to texts, challenged performer/audience relationships and developed a style of working with actors called Biomechanics. Actors were to be rigorously trained as puppets completely controlled by the director, and conventional staging was to be rejected in favour of abstract settings in the form of platforms and ramps which were organically connected to the action of the play, and not mere decoration. Rudnitsky discusses the influence of Constructivism (Rudnitsky 1981, p289) on the designs of Meyerhold's stages, which became free from problems of "representational meaning" (Rudnitsky 1981, p290). The stage was stripped down to its essentials, "all externals were eliminated" (Rudnitsky 1981, p290) and the actors were then able to use the space in whatever way they wanted, with freedom, versatility and flexibility. According to the dissertations of Christina Keibuzinska, 1984, there were to be "no architectural barriers, no proscenium arch and no wings" (Keibuzinska, 1984, p72). The purpose of Meyerhold's theatre was to "bring the audience into mental dialogue between the action on the stage and their own values and beliefs" (Keibuzinska, 1984, p81).

Meyerhold developed the system of practical exercises for actors called Biomechanics and

...there seems little doubt that Meyerhold couched his system in fashionable 'industrial' terminology in order to discredit the rival methods of Stanislavski and Taiov...but...the intrinsic value of Biomechanics [was] as a means of fostering physical discipline and self-awareness in the actor. The system of twenty Dramatised solo and group exercises or 'études', many of them derived from traditional circus and commedia dell'arte stunts...were largely responsible for the introduction of systematised physical training into the curriculum of every Soviet Drama school. (Braun, 1982, p135)
Rudnitsky, in *Meyerhold the Director* (1981), describes Biomechanics as "man viewed as a machine that needed to learn how to control itself" (Rudnitsky, 1981 p24). He remarks that it was part of the art of the actor to

utilise the expressive potential of his body correctly. This means that the root to image and feeling must begin not with experience, not with seeking to plumb the meaning of the role, not with an attempt to assimilate the psychological essence of the phenomenon, in sum, not from within, but from without: it must begin with motion (Rudnitsky, 1981, p295).

Biomechanics trained actors in stage movements that were to

resemble those of jugglers, farce comedians -muscular, elastic, flexible, graceful and musical. These actors always were burdened by and uncomfortable in suit coats, frock coats or morning coats, but felt fine in loose overalls and tights. This is how they remained always, regardless of the form for the development of the actor's action and its main structural element (Rubnitsky, 1981, p304).

The physicalisation of characters, and the general physical fitness of the actor, was of primary concern throughout the rehearsal process of the Group Devised Performance Piece, and remained an area that needed further development and more significant allocation of time. It is, of course, a very difficult area for actors of this particular age who can (and did) come with considerable physical inhibitions and embarrassment.

As expressionism declined, a more militant approach, eventually to be called "Epic Theatre" arose. Its first major practitioner, Erwin Piscator (1893-1966)...sought to create a "proletarian Drama", as opposed to merely producing standard plays for a working-class audience. (Brockett, 1991, p 522)

Erwin Piscator began his career as a student in conventional theatre and as an actor in the army theatre group. After the War he returned to Germany and was introduced to the Marxist core of the Dada Movement. His theatrical style and use of structure initiated the beginnings of the Agitprop movement in Germany.
Agitprop (Agitation and Propaganda) played without costumes, curtains and scenery in a style of satirical caricature, working in a theatrical form called the "living newspaper". A parade would be followed by a lecture-along party lines. There was a close relationship between the actors and the audience, both were "untrained" (Innes, 1972, p23) and the scripts were accessible and easily understood. Piscator's intention was to "give theatre a social function by making it capable of portraying and commenting on the political realities of the age" (Innes, 1972, p195).

The Agitprop group in Germany, like the Expressionists, changed previous notions of structure and narrative. Instead of dividing a text into acts the usual formats were short, semi-independent scenes, named 'pictures'. Music, song, paintings, acrobatics were crucial elements in the Drama:

...each scene was designed to arouse a simple and specific reaction, shared a common message, so that the diversity of techniques was linked by a single theme (Innes, 1972, p44).

There was usually a procession through the crowd followed by the first scene which set the tone, with the bourgeoisie dressed as caricatures. The second scene showed the KPD candidate dressed as a prisoner. Factual scenes extolling the virtues of the Communist Party followed with music and acrobats ending in a "Boxing match Election". For Piscator the medium was more important than the actor.

Believing that social forces, which he described as 'an anonymous fate', had taken the place of personalities in politics, Piscator removed the focus of his productions from the individual, and the actor was in danger of appearing a decorative concession to Dramatic conventions rather than being a theatrical essential (Innes, 1974 p116).

He set about to establish his own actors' collective to make his work fully independent of traditional theatre. He believed that if one was dealing with complex political facts the actors need to be uncomplicated and direct in their characterisation on the stage. He worked extensively
on physical fitness, working with gymnastic techniques and comparing his style to the Biomechanics of Meyerhold.

This politically-based style of theatre was influential in the development of content and theme in the Group Devised Performance Piece. The episodic structure, similar to later Brechtian developments, was crucial in format and design, and in working with different groups at different class times with different degrees of expertise. It enabled the groups to work alone and on small sections, with given themes, which were then tied together in the final stages of rehearsal. The students were also very interested in making political statements about their attitudes to life in general, and their lives in particular. These were reflected in their approach to (and attitudes displayed in writing) all sections of the final performance, but especially in the last section dealing with their contemporary and specific environment. It has been argued that Piscator made his most lasting impression in the area of writing, while Brecht has been primarily adopted by directors, designers and actors.

Bertolt Brecht's (1898-1956) "central concern was the theatre's social and political dimension" (Carlson, 1984, p382). Brecht entered the theatre as a director in Munich and later worked with Max Reinhardt in Berlin. By 1922, at the age of 23, he was gaining recognition as a Dramatist, having created Baal and Drums in the Night. (1979). He was appointed to the Dramaturgical and directing staff of the Kammerspiele, where he earned a reputation as a dictator and an autocrat. By 1927 he was fully immersed in Marxist theory and for nearly a year he joined Piscator's collective and could view his work at close quarters. In his notes on Die Mutter (1972), he likened his style to the Agitprop, group but offered some distinct differences, particularly in the area of political activism:

Whereas the agitprop theatre's task was to stimulate immediate action (eg. a strike against a wage-cut) and was liable to be overtaken by changes in the political situation, Die Mutter was meant to go further and teach the tactics of class war. (Willett, 1957, pp61-62)
In 1933 Brecht went into exile, returning to East Berlin in 1947 when he hoped to encourage audiences to relate what they saw on the stage to the prevailing socio-economic times outside the theatre, and to apply their new perceptions by working for change in their own world.

Brecht took the episodic structure of Piscator and made it his own. Brecht's productions became noted for their use of short, often unrelated scenes that were theme based and connected by an intellectual thread of ideas. What became known as 'epic theatre', a notion inherited from Piscator, was a direct reaction to bourgeois theatre which was 'Dramatic'. He "called his approach 'epic' to indicate its broad sweep and its mixture of narrative and Dramatic" (Brockett, 1991, p 523). In the often quoted table on the differences between Epic and Dramatic Theatre, the first point made is a structural one: plot versus narrative. "He deliberately separated episodes by inserting songs, captions or narrative passages between them" (Willett, 1957, pp61-62). Brecht himself referred to his ideas of Epic theatre in an unpublished essay (c1936):

The Dramatic theatre spectator says: Yes I have felt like that too-just like me-it's only natural-It'll never change- the sufferings of this man appal me, because they are inescapable...

The Epic theatre's spectator says: I'd never have thought it- that's not the way - that's extraordinary, hardly believable- It's got to stop - the sufferings of this man appal me... (Willet, 1978, p71)

It was not until Brecht's Mann ist Mann (1972) that these theories were firmly established. His desire for this structural change was directly related to his need for political expression, by making the audience intellectualise what they were seeing.

The superobjective in Brecht is superstructure, that vision of a just society which is now the final goal that brings purpose to the manner in which each scene is played. (Brook, 1968, p85)

Brecht's 'V-Effekt' or alienation technique (V being Verfremdung, -to make strange) was designed to make all the events on the stage seem unfamiliar in their relationships. This was reflected not only in the
staging techniques such as lighting, signs, placards etc, but also in the acting style. No longer was the actor to identify with the role, as with Stanislavsky, but there was now to be some distance put between the audience and the actor.

...the actor appears on stage in a double role, as Laughton and as Galileo; that the showman Laughton does not disappear in the Galileo whom he is showing; from which this way of acting gets it is name "epic" - comes to mean simply that the tangible, matter-of-fact process is no longer to hide behind a veil;...Just as the actor no longer has to persuade the audience that it is the author's character and not himself that is standing on the stage, so also he need not pretend that the events taking place on the stage have never been rehearsed, and are now happening for the first time (Willet, 1957, p194).

Gray remarks of the V-effect, that it was not simply a series of production techniques, but that the style of acting required considerable metamorphosis from realism to demonstrative, demanding Brecht's actors "maintain the same distance from the characters they were portraying as the audience was expected to adopt" (Gray, 1976, p 68).

In order to produce the V-effects the actor has to discard whatever means he has learnt of getting the audience to identify itself with the characters which he plays. Aiming not to put his audience into a trance, he must not go into a trance himself (Brecht, 1948, p137).

Brecht worked his actors extensively, trying to develop exercises that would stretch their ability to be objective, dispassionate. The 'linen exercise', where the actors are required to fold linen and simultaneously maintain 'pretend' arguments for the benefit of someone else in another room, amply demonstrates the dexterity of concentration required for the development of such techniques. During a performance, Brecht would often suggest that an actor put down a cigar or cigarette when he wanted to enter the role or the character, and to pick it up again to signal to the audience that the actor was speaking as themself. These devices helped to create this distancing effect, hoping to elicit from the audience the desired intellectual response.
Brecht began rehearsals with the techniques of Stanislavsky and extended them one further stage. According to Mitter:

Given the intensity of the Stanislavsky system and the scale of its influence on Brecht, one would expect the actor-training methods developed by Brecht to include, at least in part, an adaptation of Stanislavsky...Thus ...if 'given circumstances' are established in Stanislavsky by a question-and-answer method, the interrogative form is retained by Brecht- but the questions asked now comprehend not the substance of the Drama but the relevance...having found a place for themselves in the world of their characters, the actors must now find a place for that fiction in the real world. (Mitter, 1937, p53)

The use of songs and placards was evident in the final Group Devised Performance Piece. The acting style Brecht tried to encourage was, however, more difficult to achieve. The performance was episodic in structure and the actors often attempted to combine the theories of Stanislavsky and Brecht in performance with the incorporation of songs, a bare and 'unrealistic' set design and a strong political and intellectual basis, especially in the section on *Marat*.

If the set represents a town it must look like a town that has been built to last precisely two hours...Everything must be provisional yet polite. A place need only have the credibility of a place glimpsed in a dream...The set needs to spring from the rehearsal of groupings, so in effect it must be a fellow actor (Willet, 1978, p233).

The layout of the set tended to dictate the structure of the devised play. This is discussed more fully in Chapter Four. However, it is worth noting here that the group worked with the basic set (three black cubic boxes approximately 2 metres square) for most of the rehearsal time. They adapted to the structures and were able to incorporate them and change their function(s) to suit the script they were developing. In this sense, as Brecht encouraged, the set was incorporated into the action and became a "fellow actor" (ibid, p233).

Peter Brook (1925- ) began directing while still in his teens and worked extensively in the West End of London with actors such as Olivier, Paul Scofield and authors like Fry, Anouilh, Durrenmatt and Genet. In 1973
Brook embarked on a search for a "universal theatre language", "a "language of and for our times" (Brook, 1987, p107) and a style of working that incorporated all he had achieved in the West End.

Brook’s strong conviction is that Shakespeare offers what few contemporary plays do: a global vision of theme, a mobility of thought that takes the audience from the ‘high theatre’ of Hughes’ Orghast (1988) to the ‘rough theatre’ of Alfred Jarry’s Ubu (1989) in rapid succession without any authorial comment. He talks of Shakespeare’s multifaceted structure and his ability to be “all things to all men” (Williams, 1988, p144), combined with an intricate webbing of the complex and the simple, the esoteric and the popular, the epic and the public.

Elizabethan Theatre allows the Dramatist space in which to move freely between the outer and the inner world. The strength and the miracle of Shakespearean texts lie in the fact that they present man simultaneously in all aspects. (Brook, 1987, p57)

Brook’s production of King Lear (Shakespeare, 1967) at the RSC in 1968 began with an intellectual approach to the script. His first rehearsals were readings of the texts, looking for justifications and motivations in the characters. He did, however, surprise those established actors at the RSC with the introduction of improvisations, especially working outside the action of the text. It was these improvisations that later gave the actors extra action material that they incorporated into the production. The RSC actors were reticent to accept a new approach and resisted his encouragement to experiment with characters and actions. This method, however, became a hallmark of Brook’s directorial style. From an intellectual approach, owing a considerable amount to Stanislavsky, Brook evolved a method of working that culminated in Midsummer Night’s Dream (Shakespeare, 1967) where the actors no longer sat and read the text in the first rehearsal session, but were encouraged to develop physical aspects of their character from the first rehearsal. They spent time developing circus techniques and gymnastic improvisations (Williams, 1988, p149) well before they were given the written texts. Brook’s development of this somatic approach marked a new beginning.
for him and, when combined with his use of rhythm, music, sound and gesture, led him into experimental territory.

Being provided with a substantial grant to establish the Centre de Recherche Internationale in Paris enabled him to experiment without the restrictions and limitations imposed by having to provide for an audience. With the income of the company secure, he was able to create a multi-cultural environment and begin to seek out a new audience, one that had not previously been to the theatre. His work centred on the establishment of this new audience and finding "shared cultural signs" (Williams, 1988, p168), work on the actor as self (reminiscent of Grotowski) and investigation of the actor in relation to the audience.

Brook's ideal was "the actor as storyteller" (Williams, 1988, p295). His ideology is much closer to Stanislavsky's "middle period" (Mitter, 1992, p23) where the emphasis is on working 'somatically' as well as keeping an eye on the emotions and justification.

> Working somatically, that is directly from the body to the emotions, has a number of advantages...it rids the actor of self-consciousness...and...whereas feelings can be elusive, the body is palpable and therefore easier to handle... (Mitter, 1992, p 19)

Brook's search for "communion" (Williams, 1988, p146) with the audience led him to performances at festivals and in outside, site-specific venues where he could directly contact an audience, and where he could test his assumption that in an empty space anything is possible.

> In the theatre the tendency for centuries has been to put the actor at a remote distance, on a platform, framed, decorated, lit, painted, in high shoes- so as to help persuade the ignorant that he is holy, his art is sacred...Today, we have exposed the sham. But we are discovering that a holy theatre is still what we need. So where should we look for it? In the clouds or on the ground? (Brook, 1986, pp71-72)

Like Brecht, Brook believes that theatre can change the world:
If a play confirms anything that we already believe, it is useless to us. Unless of course it confirms the real belief that theatre can help us see better...Social theatre is dead and buried. Society needs changing-urgently. (Brook, 1987, p23)

Brook believes contemporary theatre must use the cultural signs and heritage of every member of an acting company and attempt to amalgamate these into a system of common shared signs. In his endeavour to discover these signs he took his troupe to Africa in 1972. The adventures in Africa have been treated with some suspicion. Stories have been recounted of mis-cues: bread being discarded thoughtlessly, causing concern in a hungry African audience and the African audience finding it hard to differentiate between the 'playing' people and 'real' people. But, as an experiment, it had as much worth as any Piscatorian experiment with actors and gymnastics. Commenting on cultures seeing and reading theatrical 'signs' differently, Heilpern points out:

...the audience in the African village didn't see an actor playing an old man. They were receiving a different message. A young actor stoops: there might be something wrong with his back. He coughs: perhaps he's ill...the actor must stop acting. And if he can find something fresh and extraordinary within him, he will convince any audience in the world of something very rare: a universal emotional truth. And then theatre can become irresistible - a completely truthful, natural event (Heilpern, 1977, p5).

Brook took his productions into the open air. For the productions of Mahabharata (Carriere, 1982) and Conference of the Birds (based on an original poem by Attar) he used a quarry as the theatrical setting. He claimed the amphitheatre shape and hard rock surfaces gave the actors a sense of the natural, allowed for the excellent acoustics and necessitated both actors and audience sharing the elements, which became another dimension of the performance.

...any experimenter is concerned with all aspects of his relationship with an audience. He tries by placing the audience in different positions to bring about new possibilities (Brook, 1987, p 144).
Brook's endeavours to create an environment for "communication, ceremony and involvement: three central words that would recur in Brook's theory and practice, delineating the parameters of his exploratory work since 1970" (Williams, 1991, p3) were influential in establishing an 'atmosphere' in which the Group Devised Performance Piece arose. The emphasis on actors and a relationship with the audience helped to create three diverse pieces of theatre in and that made all the difference, and encouraged the students to develop a style of performance that was relevant to them and what they were attempting to communicate to the audience. Like the techniques of Brook, this performance work was eclectic.

In the development of the Group Devised Performance Piece the students were very mindful of the very specific audience for whom they were catering. The North Shore offered affluence but not necessarily theatre-going experience. The parents of the students came to the performances with very complex sets of feelings, values and attitudes. The role of the audience was a crucial factor in the choice of performance material and 'styles'.


Certainly Brecht's work foregrounds the audience and it is in post-Brechtian oppositional theatre that the audience has taken an increasingly productive role. (Bennett, 1994, p21)

Bennett analyses the political role now played by the audience, Meyerhold's 'fourth-creator' and the ideological status of the theatrical event. She discusses the relationship between perception and reception and the socio-ideological codes that exist in that relationship and maintains that there is a strong correlation between what the audience expects and what it receives from contemporary theatre, even suggesting that "marginalised social groups have found theatrical forms to address their interests and their constituencies," (1994, p7). It is possible to apply the term 'marginalised group' to these students, in the sense that
contemporary mainstream theatre does not generally cater for their specialised areas of interest and they are powerless to impact upon this: they do not represent the mainstream theatre 'paying' audience member. However their parents may well be targets for commercial theatre promoters. The Group Devised Performance Piece needed to reflect both the values and attitudes of the performers, and the perceived values and attitudes of the audience. The theatrical piece was driven by the students' desire to represent themselves, and what they perceived as their own theatrical marginalisation, to their parents and their peers.

In the development of the final section of the play (that section which came to be named *Graham*) which deals with the contemporary and relevant environs of the audience and the performers (and the most light hearted and light weight of the three sections), a proposal of De Marinis' can also be pertinent.

De Marinis dismisses the semiotic search for general "minimal units," as well as for "general theatrical codes." Each production evolves its own segmentation in terms of its individual codes and subcodes, and meaning is created "within the spectacle, not by means of any external systems". (Carlson, 1984, p502)

It is most certainly the case that this production generated its own segments and subsections. Most were originated by the students and their 'natural selection process' where they self-selected fellow performers of similar intellectual ability and the same gender (see Chapter Four). These subgroups produced work that was individual and distinctive from other groups. These different sections had different codes (movement, humour, existentialist ideas) and created different performance styles, but they all contributed to the piece having a shared and understood meaning. It may have been accidental, but it was certainly true, that these codes were recognised in different ways by the audience present. The audience encoding of the piece was sympathetic with the original designs of the performers (Aston and Savona, 1991) and thus agrees with Bennett's proposal:
A critical aspect of audience involvement, is the degree to which performance is accessible through the codes audiences are accustomed to utilising, the conventions they are used to recognising, at a particular theatrical event. Intelligibility and/or success of a particular performance will undoubtedly be determined on this basis (Bennett, 1994, p112).

Contemporary theatre theorist and director, Richard Schechner, Professor of Performance Studies at New York University's Tisch School, whose major preoccupation is with the performance space, aptly describes what he understands by the process of the creation of theatre:

Performance originates in impulses to make things happen and to entertain; to get results and to fool around; to collect meanings and to pass time; to transform into another and to celebrate being oneself; to disappear and to show off; to bring into a special place a transcendent Other who exists then-and-now and later-and-now; to be in a trance and to be conscious; to focus on a select group sharing a secret language and to broadcast to the largest possible audience of strangers; to play in order to satisfy a felt obligation ...an active situation, a continuous turbulent process of transformation (Schechner, 1977, p142).

Certainly the process of development of the Group Devised Performance Piece, and the final public performance of the play, attempted to "focus on a select group sharing a secret language" (Schechner, 1977, p142), and the students involved created a lively and relevant piece of theatre that both they, and their audience, enjoyed.
CHAPTER FOUR

ACTIONS:
Description of the Research Methods for the Creation of a Group Devised Performance Piece

1. OUTLINE OF THE PROCESS
The structure of the process evolved into the following pattern:

The process began with the introduction of a specific idea, *(Individual Perceptions Of Reality)*, which led the students into making their own connections with their own concepts of reality. They were then keen to research their ideas. They worked in a number of locations (libraries, home, etc) and in a variety of formats (computer, books, magazines, Internet, general discussions).

Through improvisation they turned that research into a written script. Considerable time was spent in class working on script structure and developing story lines that were consistent and interwoven.
Periods were then set aside for rehearsing the script and then layering the performances with the introduction of music, symbols, lighting etc. All areas were interconnected and interdependent.

What was crucial to this process was beginning with an initial idea. There are several ways to begin, e.g. through already existing script, or character development (Clements, 1983) or through improvisation (Johnstone, 1981). The progression of the process was from idea-discussion-research-discussion-improvisation-discussion-writing-discussion-improvisation-discussion-rehearsal-discussion-performance-discussion.

2. DOCUMENTATION

Introduction

The above process was documented using a selection of data collection methods including written records, questionnaires, videos and photographs. Data was collected on the following:

2.1 THE REHEARSAL PROCESS:
   2.1.1 Rehearsal Schedule
   2.1.2 Rehearsal Outline
   2.1.3 Daily Log

2.2 THE PERFORMANCE:
   2.2.1 Written Script as Outcome
   2.2.2 Questionnaires
   2.2.3 Annotated Script
   2.2.4 Videotapes
   2.2.5 Supervisor's Report

2.3 ANCILLARY PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION
   2.3.1 Advertising (Public Notices, Posters, Tickets)
   2.3.2 Photographs
   2.3.3 Programs
   2.3.4 Review
   2.3.5 Assessors' Reports
2.1 REHEARSAL DOCUMENTATION

Introduction

Written records were kept of rehearsals. They evolved over the course of the production in three stages:

1. The initial skeletal outline of plan and structure to be followed in each rehearsal which was written up and constructed several weeks before rehearsals began, Rehearsal Plan Schedule, so that the rehearsals could be sequenced and this sequence could be monitored allowing for time to cover each scene.

2. A more detailed outline of rehearsals drawn up one week in advance, Rehearsal Plan Outline, which allowed for a progression through the rehearsal plan if groups were advancing quickly or if they fell behind.

3. A final log of actual rehearsals written up after each session, Daily Rehearsal Log, which acted as a springboard into the next rehearsal by keeping track of the separate classes and their different rates of progression and the outcomes of each sessions and its relative success or failure.

2.1.1 The Rehearsal Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>TIME FRAME</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STAGE ONE</td>
<td>week 1</td>
<td>lessons 1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE TWO</td>
<td>week 2-3</td>
<td>lessons 3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE THREE</td>
<td>week 4</td>
<td>lessons 6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE FOUR</td>
<td>weeks 5-6</td>
<td>lessons 9-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE FIVE</td>
<td>weeks 7-8</td>
<td>lessons 16-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE SIX</td>
<td>week 9</td>
<td>lessons 20-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE SEVEN</td>
<td>week 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Rehearsal Plan Schedule: drawn up several weeks before rehearsals began
### 2.1.2 Rehearsal Outline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>TIME FRAME</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>METHOD</th>
<th>DOCUMENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| STAGE ONE | week 1 lessons 1-2 | IDEAS               | • introduce topic via THEME as a deliberate choice rather than setting or character etc  
• Resources used: newspaper, photographs, personal anecdotes, characters known to students, personal experience and understandings | • daily rehearsal log  
• articles  
• video tapes of early classes |
| STAGE TWO | week 2-3 lessons 3-5 | IMPROVISATION ON A THEME | • working in random small groups with theme  
• different styles of working eg sound/gesture/movement on the same theme  
• small amount of preparation time producing a general improv.  
• students supplying stimulus material | daily log of classes |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>TIME FRAME</th>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>METHOD</th>
<th>DOCUMENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| STAGE THREE | week 4    | CONNECTIONS   | • firming ideas and sections to keep in improvisation  
• making connections between what has evolved and original idea which may have become lost  
• connections with other content areas of the course  
• individuals with ideas  
• groups with ideas | daily log |
|         | lessons 6-8|               |                                                                        |               |
| STAGE FOUR   | weeks 5-6 | WRITING/     | • in small groups and individually writing scenes                      | daily log  
• evolving script  
• rehearsal log |               |
|           | lessons 9-15 | STRUCTURING  |                                                                        |               |
| STAGE FIVE   | weeks 7-8 | REHEARSAL     | • piecing together the assembled pieces from different groups         | rehearsal log|
|           | lessons 16-19 |             |                                                                        |               |
| STAGE SIX   | week 9    | LAYERING      | • adding sfx, music, sound etc                                        | rehearsal log|
|           | lessons 20-22 |             |                                                                        |               |

Table 2: *The Rehearsal Plan Outline:* drawn up weekly in advance of rehearsals
2.1.3 Daily Log

Data on the rehearsal process also involved the keeping of a daily record - *The Rehearsal Log* - of the objectives and outcomes for each session (class). It was a personal, often subjective record of the transactional system that showed the process of change and development of the Group Devised Performance Piece. *The Rehearsal Log* was the method of recording and documenting the actions at the root of the study. This data formed the basis of the research project - the what and the how: the Process, from the researcher's point of view. It detailed the linking sequences of action/interaction by noting any change in conditions and the action/interaction response to change. The *Stages, Time Frame, Content, and Methods* headings remained the same as previous rehearsal plans but with a last column added. That column was titled OUTCOMES and was a record of what transpired during each rehearsal. Each progressive table therefore added a further column taking the schedule from broad plan, to weekly outline, to a detailed record of actual outcomes of specific rehearsals, with a section for contingencies and unexpected results.

*The Daily Log:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage One:</th>
<th>&quot;Ideas&quot;</th>
<th>Lessons 1-2</th>
<th>Week 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Objectives:**
- introduction of possible area(s) of interest
- discussion of themes including: *Individual Choices and their Consequences* (Chapter One)
- introduction of "visual design" concept of the teacher (3 boxes on the floor in front of the stage apron)
- permission sought to use this performance and these students for MA project

**Process:**
- discussion of concepts and themes
- physical warm-ups with music
- initial improvisations 'theme' based around suggestions from students on different perceptions of reality
Outcomes:
- concepts were thought accessible and interesting enough to sustain several weeks work and investigation
- discussion took first half of the lesson
- students interested in and supportive of being included in the MA project and accepted that they may have to answer questionnaires etc.
- a lot of information in a short amount of time meant less focus on specifics
- material was obviously challenging and thought provoking
- stage design was accepted and approved
- physical warm-ups did not achieve desired focus on task: it was early in the year and there was a great deal of information to sort
- improvisations were short and tended to lose momentum
- some character work was introduced, possibly too early

Contingencies:
- had to move location at very short notice which did not facilitate a concentrated attitude

Stage Two: "Improvisation On A Theme"  Lessons 3-4  Week 2

Objectives:
- to begin the process of finding a 'storyline'
- to work on physicalisation and sound
- to encourage student input with ideas on themes/areas of interest

Process:
- physical warm-ups with music
- improvisations working in small groups centred on "setting" (Bray, 1991, p10)
- use of the students' ideas for locations
- exploration of new themes, eg money and ultimately 'power'
- physicalisation of transitions and the connections of scenes via gesture/gibberish rather than spoken text

Outcomes:
- dealing with concepts lead to divergent thinking patterns which in turn generated more ideas and thematic paths to follow: countryside, beach, home etc
- development of a basic 6 plot structure (3 plots/3 locations -an idea which was derived from the initial discussions of the visual image for the set)
- questions about 'reality' were raised again and explored by the students: what is reality? perception overrides reality why do we do the things we do?
- introduction by the students of poetry, Greek mythological figures, nature and the elements
the three boxes of the set became 3 locations in a progressive sequence: for example,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>park</th>
<th>home</th>
<th>office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kindergarten</td>
<td>high school</td>
<td>university</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- seemed that we were fitting the structure of the play to the original set design
- physicalisation of ideas was achieved with the introduction of sound patterns made by students
- used these sound patterns to create rhythms that could be used as scene transitions
- the students working happily in mixed and varied groups

Contingencies:
- language and sound became interesting areas of improvisation
- needed teacher input to keep motivation

Stage Three: "Connections" Lessons 6-8 Week 3

Objectives:
- progress towards a concrete storyline
- connect plot lines to other Content Areas of the Drama syllabus
- tie the production to the 2 Unit syllabus

Process:
- began with Beethoven Ode to Joy as an example of structure: students were asked to lay on the floor and concentrate on the mood/atmospheric changes in the music and the 'narrative' those changes may inspire
- improvisation on themes and progressions across chosen concepts still using the 3 boxes and the original visual concept:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>utopia</th>
<th>dystopia</th>
<th>reality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rural</td>
<td>industrial</td>
<td>urban</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcomes:
- students were able to see the changing rhythms and structure within the Beethoven piece and began to realise that theatrical performance can have similar patterns that create and hold tension and mood
- formulation of 3x3 plot lines and the following structure for narrative
- student offered possible narrative suggestions:
  a) life of a writer
  b) life of a political revolutionary perhaps in a rural environment which
  led directly to connections with content areas in the syllabus
- from these suggestions the writer became Katherine Mansfield from
  Alma de Groen's The Rivers Of China (Syllabus Content Area 4) and the
  political activist became Jean Paul Marat (Syllabus Content Area 5) from
  Peter Weiss' Marat/Sade
- final structure was established: plot one = Marat, plot two = Katherine
  Mansfield, plot three = Graham (contemporary North Shore boy, like
  some of them). At some point these characters have an argument with
  their families and then must choose a path for their future. The idea of
  using poetry had already been mooted. Robert Frost's The Road Less
  Travelled was thought appropriate. The characters options were then
  investigated: utopia, dystopia or the reality. Graham, being
  contemporary, has no known future reality. One class worked on the
  plots until the arguments, the other class took the options after the
  argument.
Contingencies:
- needed teacher input to keep motivation (this is becoming a recurring theme so early in the process)

Stage Four: "Writing/Structuring" Lessons 9-15 Weeks 5-6

Objectives:
- to begin with an initial teacher introduction updating the progress so far to clarify/focus the path ahead
- to commence the work of producing a written script with dialogue and interconnecting scenes
- students to divide into groups on the basis of personal choice to work on an area(s) of interest to them
- to research the historical basis of characters

Process:
- whole class discussion followed by individual small group discussion
- groups worked separately on their specific areas with the teacher visiting each group on request or at will
- individuals and groups opted to visit the school library to research characters and historical events
- individuals and groups undertook research in their own time and at locations other that at school

Outcomes:
- whole class discussion was important for solidifying ideas and keeping everyone on the same track, reflective learning (Boud et al, 1985)
- students divided themselves into specific groups (this division proved extremely interesting: they were largely single gender groups, and also formed with students of similar intellectual ability)
- these groups then researched their specific areas and began writing dialogue
- the dialogue was collected from various sources eg. published texts/stories, encyclopedias etc
- conflict with some students over the 'style' of the production and a seeming disparity between some individual intentions and the group as a whole (this was revealed in small group discussion not when the class was conferring as a whole...perhaps there is some reticence about speaking up in front of the group?)
- became apparent that students needed guidance on theme, structure, style, what others were doing, what specific part of the project they were responsible for. But given guidance, they then took the initiative further.
- a script was eventually produced by the groups working on their individual sections and then each section was collated into a whole
- more classes per week were allocated to the project as time became increasingly pressing.
Contingencies:
- the writing process was time consuming
- teacher pressure was needed on groups that were wasting time, lacking direction, less academically able, more interested in fostering their own ambitions and not collaborating as a team
- conflicts within groups were largely resolved within the group
- once the groups had formed they were generally more motivated and pushed each other along
- those groups who were most active were gender specific. It appeared that the girls were working more consistently and less distractedly than the boys
- the research process advantaged the students in ways not foreseen: it gave them insight into the historical and political contexts of the characters/writers they were researching and because they related to the theoretical content areas of the course this proved invaluable when it came to writing their final examinations
- decision was made to use several students to play the title roles for each section ie. there were to be 3 Marats, 3 Katherines, 3 Grahams. This would give more students more performance possibilities and more students public exposure

Stage Five: "Rehearsing" Lessons 15-19 Weeks 7-8

Objectives:
- to visualise the concept
- physicalisation of the script
- to develop character/role
- to realise the piece on the stage of the performance space

Process:
- return to physical warm-up at the beginning of each lesson and somatic exercises to develop characterisation from the body
- students asked to draw their character on a piece of paper provided, give that character a name (if necessary) and to realise on the page their personal physical interpretation of that character
- students asked to take on the physical characteristics of their role and walk around the room in that physicalisation
- students asked to take on their interpretation of the physical characterisation of roles/characters other than their own (role-swapping)
- working with individual groups in a cyclical fashion on the pieces they had prepared in the performance space

Outcomes:
- colour exercise was focused and a useful tool for concentrated and reflective work
- characterisation was developing especially with the exercise of role-swapping
taking on different roles worked very well for most students and showed them things that they had not previously discovered about their own characters (it also enhanced their connection with other characters)
the physicalisation exercises opened up many characterisation possibilities and helped to create an atmosphere within the group of collaboration and constructive criticism that would endure for the rest of the rehearsal time
working somatically produced much clearer characters and led, as was hoped, to the students having a deeper connection with their role(s)
working with small groups patching the separate pieces together on the stage gave the performers an indication of the 'entirety' instead of working in small sections
this contributed to the growing feeling of ensemble work and building a performance as a team
emergence of a coherent whole

Contingencies:
• beginning to feel pressures of time
• groups inspiring and 'pushing' each other
• more teacher 'directing' required to put all the pieces together but there was considerably more application from all students
• teacher led from student ideas (which were still plentiful and constructive) resulting from their research and private reflection
• intense group feeling of working towards the same common goal

Stage Six: "Layering" Lessons 20-22 Week 9

Objectives:
• to connect scenes with transitions
• to add music, sound
• to concentrate on the visual, vocal, theatrical aspects of the performance
• to hold technical and dress rehearsals

Process:
• physical warm-ups now included physicalisation of characters, walking around the performance space in character and improvising outside of the created text
• use of somatic techniques to enhance characterisation
• teacher introduction of musical instruments

Outcomes:
• scene transitions were accomplished using gesture, movement, sound rhythm in simple response to the question: "how do you get from...to ...using movement and not dialogue?"
• most of the work for these transitions was set in motion several weeks before within the improvisations encouraged in class and this provided a strong foundation for the many transitions that were required
• the introduction of musical instruments provided more stimuli for transition work
• students then took over the musicalisation of the piece by suggesting their own forms of music generation
• this led to some energetic and exciting improvisations and the development of a musical 'style' to the piece which added considerable depth and placed the ownership of the music very squarely with the students
• fewer students actually involved with the production of the music than was first anticipated and hoped for by the director, however the standard and arrangement of the music was very pleasing
• an electronic 'orchestra' evolved which also added sound effects to the piece
• technical and dress rehearsals clarified the structure of the piece, but it was apparent that more rehearsals of this nature would have been beneficial if time had allowed

Contingencies:
• development of student created and driven music was unplanned and a wonderful addition
• while it was always envisaged that there would be student generated music in the final piece the particular style of music was not planned
• this also meant that the students who created the music were not those originally expected to have taken part in this activity
• the by-product of this was that the students who did create the music played a more significant role in the performance than even they thought possible. They were not the best performance students but their contribution to the final product vastly exceeded what they would have originally expected. This was beneficial for them personally, for their individual achievement generally, and for the group.
• it became apparent that long rehearsals with the entire group would have improved overall pace of the performance piece

Stage Seven: "Performance"  Week 10

Objectives:
• to perform to a high standard before an audience and evoke in the audience a range of intellectual and emotional responses
• to show each student's performance ability in the best possible light
• to improve the piece during the performance run
• to use the piece as an HSC Assessment Task in a way that generated above average achievement for individual students

Process:
• students to arrive at venue 1 hour before performance to make-up
• physical and vocal warm-up before the performance
• welcome to and notification of the audience that this was an Assessment Task
• the 50 minute performance ran smoothly with lighting, music
• actors reacted to/with the audience

Outcomes:
• there was a strong air of excitement in the dressing room
• the students were apprehensive but optimistic about the standard of the impending performance
• the physical warm-ups were of great benefit for group cohesion and focus
• the audience was surprisingly large and very receptive to the idea of the performance being an assessment task (telling them that the performance was an assessment task might have made them a little tentative and subdued)
• the performance was remarkably coherent, despite last minute misgivings about the time allowed for technical and dress rehearsals being insufficient
• seems to be the case that students (in particular?) are capable of lifting their performances when placed before an audience
• performance went without major technical or performance related disasters even though the technical aspects were rather 'undercooked'
• extremely favourable audience response (there was much laughter and obvious signs of audience attention for the entire performance)
• the audience did take a little time to 'warm-up' to the performance (this may be related to telling them about the assessment task)
• unexpected large audience turn out
• student performers were enthusiastic and pleased with their work
• the standard of each student improved significantly from the previous rehearsal
• the piece exposed the students to as much performance time as was possible, given the large number of students performing
• some students improved with the second performance: the pressure of assessment was removed, and they were more secure with the piece as a whole (audience feed back and experience of running the piece contributed to this)
• generally however most students did as well as could be hoped on the first night
• the performance overall improved with the second run, but the improvement was marginal
• the students' achievements were above average for a performance assessment (the group was also very capable)
• the assessors found it difficult to differentiate between performers (this was an advantage for them, but made the assessors' task more difficult)
• the lowest mark was around 20/30, and the highest mark was 30/30
• it is very difficult to achieve marks above 24 as there are 3 sections to the marking criteria and these sections are out of 10 (even if a student gets 8/10 for each section they still only score a final mark of 24!)

Table 3: Daily Rehearsal Log: Record of individual rehearsal sessions
2.2 PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION

2.2.1 Written Script as Outcome (Including the text)

A written script was produced by the students. They worked in groups of varying sizes and were allocated different scenes to write by members of the group. The 'whole' was broken into smaller and smaller sections so that it was manageable by individuals. Bearing in mind "systems thinking" (Bawden, 1995) the 'wholeness' of the phenomenon was not forgotten. Script structure was based on the model proposed by Linda Seger in *Making a good Script Great* developing "turning points", "an action or event" where "new decisions are made" and the action achieves momentum. (Seger, 1987, p16) The script contained excerpts from the set texts the students were studying in their HSC Drama course, as well as research material they had found with the facilitation of the teacher; eg short stories of Katherine Mansfield. The script was then used in a conventional rehearsal method where scenes were rehearsed and 'blocked'.

The following script is a significant outcome of the collaborative rehearsal process. The writing of a script was always an intention of the process and is largely what differentiates this particular method of Group Devised Performance from other methods. (Bray, Michaels) Several lessons (7 in fact) were devoted to the production of the script. These lessons occurred in the middle of the Group Devised Performance development process, in weeks 5 and 6. (Chapter Three, pp65-67)

The students had already broken into small groups and had decided what scenarios or characters they wanted to work on. Most of these script lessons were freely structured. There were generally no warm-ups or physical activities. Groups began work as soon as they entered the space. They came prepared with work they had privately researched the day or night before, or they requested they be allowed to go to the school's library. The students were self-driven to complete their scripts. Their work was very much collaborative and/or independent learning. The teacher was a resource, not dictating to the class.
Towards the end of the 7 lessons the teacher had a growing fear that the classes had been too inactive; that there was not enough physical activity in each lesson. When asked if they wanted some practical work, the students were insistent that they finish their scripts.

The writing process was influenced by the work of the Hollywood script editor, Linda Seger (1994). Seger sets out to analyse film for structure, plot, character development. Her concept of 'turning points' - where an event changes the action and propels it in another direction- was particularly useful for creating and centering the action of the developing script. Seger refers to Peter Weir’s film *Witness* as an example of clear turning points and strong cohesion. These students had seen that film in Year 11 and had understood the concepts being discussed.

Once the individual sections of the script were complete they were collated and each member of the class was given a final copy. Some sections were computer generated, some were hand-written. The format was incidental. If the script needed connecting scenes then they were added by the teacher. The final script used original dialogue generated by the students' own imaginations, plus extracts from other scripts (eg Weiss' *Marat/Sade*) or short stories that were collected by the students from external sources such as the writings of Katherine Mansfield.

It was as substantial document with a three act structure - *Marat/Mansfield/Graham*. These students already had an understanding of dramatic conventions and devices such as structure, plot development, characterisation, atmosphere, humour, exposition.

Once the script was given back to the students they set about rehearsing their own scenes. Most scenes changed little in terms of dialogue but benefited greatly by the addition of physical action.
and *that* made all the difference

**OPENING SECTION**

*Enter the entire cast to electronically produce alive music and the dejembe African drum. They mill around in the space as if at a subdued social event. From the group come the THREE Narrators who take positions on the black boxes.*

**Narrator #1**

Have you ever thought about...

**Narrator #2**

the sequence
of events
that brought you here tonight?

**Narrator #3**

How different would it be if
you had different parents...
a different nationality: *(NZ accent, French accent, English accent)*
didn't meet your spouse *(sigh)*
didn't have these children *(all)* perish the thought
where would you be?

**Narrator #1**

There are a set of choices you have made...

**Narrator #2**

never to know what alternatives you could have had...

**Narrator #3**

and those choices...

**All together**

made all the difference.

**Narrator Marat**

1780's, pre French Revolution. Jean-Paul Marat, who ended, as we know, a leading figure in the Revolution *(some say a blood-thirsty tyrant)*. But what would have happened to him if he made different decisions? He chose the Revolution, and that made all the difference.
Narrator
Mansfield

1880's. Katherine Mansfield Beauchamp, New Zealand short story writer, dubious sexuality, consumptive, a lost soul, a seeker dying in France. But what if she had decided to stay in New Zealand and marry... that would have made all the difference.

Narrator
Graham

Our North Shore boy - Graham (a rather spoilt brat, luxury etc) a much loved middle class kid in the age of the Internet. The 1990's. But what if Graham doesn't do what his father wants... takes a different path...

(all together)
and that made all the difference
SECTION ONE: MARAT

SCENE 1  THE BIRTH

Narrator  (All these characters are played by males)
Good evening Lords and Ladies. I can see from your
expressions that you don't know this man. Marat.
At the age of 3 he learned to play games.

Young Marat  Un, deux, trois, quartre, cinq (In childish voice as the
children run around the statue of Marat covered by a
sheet)

(Slapstick routine of him being struck on the bottom)

Narrator  He was never the same after that... he could never
have children. At 12 his mother lost him...

Mother  Marat

Marat  Mummy

Mother  Marat

Marat  Mummy

Mother  Marat

Marat  Mummy

Mother  Oh never mind...too bad, run away if you want to...

Narrator  At 14 his parents dragged him to a table full of books.

Father  Learn that.

Mother  (In high female voice) Yeah...learn it.

Narrator  All this lead to the homosexual, introverted,
oedipally resentful, intellectual lad you see before
you. (Slapping the actor)....Not you...HIM (Pointing
to the statue under the sheet. The statue comes alive)

So to medical school at the age of 17.
They grab the Narrator and place him in the middle box. The characters are fools, except for Marat, and use inappropriate words and expressions, that have no meaning, are spelt or pronounced incorrectly, or are used in the wrong contexts.

Narrator

Today students as you can see, we are to examine the body of this deceased Caucasian male. It is your task to locate the illness to which this body has succumbed and document your diagnosis. I don't need to remind you that this autopsy will directly determine whether or not you pass or fail this course—any questions? You have 30 minutes.

The 3 students react, Marat immediately starts to work on the body.

Student 1

OK Shall we begin by drawing back the sheet?

They do so. The stench is overpowering.

Student 2

'Cor. It's a bit smelly

Student 1

Scalpel.

Student 2

No no, first we must establish what we need to cut open. We can't just hack at this man like a turkey.

Student 1

Oh right and just where do you propose to start?

Student 2

I don't know yet, that's the whole point.

Student 1

We should follow the procedure of elimination, so that we can eliminate possible causes of death through examination of the corpses viscera.

Student 2

Oh very clever! Can you be more patronising?

Student 1

Cynic!

Student 2

Oh so I'm the cynic now? Huh, sit under bridges and hurl rocks at unsuspecting travellers do I? You'd better watch you're step because you're about this close. (Gestures with his thumb and forefinger.)

Student 1

This close to what then? Are you threatening me?
Student 2  Shh. Now what's he up to?

Student 1  No, you were threatening me weren't you. Don't try to relocate this discussion. You specifically said that I'm about this close. This close to what?

Student 2  Oh won't you shut up. You're disrupting my examination and if I fail it's going to be because of you!

Student 1  Don't tell me to shut-up.

Student 2  You're insolence is innofocacious.

Student 1  Right. Let's step outside then. *(Leaning across the body)*

Student 2  We are in the middle of an examination. We can't just step outside. Do you want to fail?

Student 1  What I want is to thump your face so hard only your mother will recognise you.

Student 2  Alright, let's go

**SCENE 2**  *MARAT IN ENGLAND. AT A BALL.* *(Remembering that the words these characters utter do not make sense and are not meant to be spelt or used correctly.)*

Mr James  Mr...(coughs pretending to say a name he does not remember) Over here. *(Shakes hands)*

Mr Winchester  Indeed this is a coincidence Mr James, but a very postiferous one at that!

Mr James  Yes ...indeed...It's almost cadaverous wouldn't you agree?

Mr Winchester  MMMMM, mind you my getting here wasn't very easy. Three times Geoffrey my driver had to stop the caboose to open D'Artois' gates.

Mr James  Oh well, best of luck.
Mr Winchester To what?

Mr James Ah splendid then. Over here are they? I had a chat with Mr Eggleton yesterday. His views on Socrates are most interesting.

Mr Winchester Yes, his apotheosis has caused much debate.

Mr James But what fascinates me is the sheer dexterity Socrates shows in imprecating his critics.

Mr Winchester Yes, its like he is somewhere achromatic when questioned by authority, not matter how torturous that may happen to be.

Mr James MMMM. I hear...that it's indeed unfortunate that Mr Governer fails to extend his ability to...how house I put this...psittocsiatee? In fact what is more, is that his lugubriousness works for his disadvantage.

Mr Winchester Who's this?

Mr James Yes that's right...gosh, blasphemy! You appear quite promiscuous this evening.

Mr Winchester Well you know perfectly well why that is (touched his head)...my encephalitis is causing me much discomfort and preoccupation.

Mr James I hear the man Marat, Marat is to attend the ball? Bah! Pith on that! This Marat has caused too much controversy for a man of such early age. He's Jewish no less!

Mr Winchester I can't believe that d'Artois has sent for his company!...That...anthropophagi!!!

Mr James Yes that wouldn't surprise me.

Mr Winchester Proposterous. That vulgar consecration of that...so cannibal harlot infuse my...ignominious prodigalities...idiosyncrasy!

Enter Mr Governer

Mr Governer Well, good evening gentlemen!
Mr James  *(Played as a downbeat)* Hello Mr Governor.

Mr Governor I must say I am thrilled that the man Marat is to attend this very ball! I am eager to engage him in a political conversation, perhaps on his thesis - The Essay on Man. Absolutely a riveting read. Have either of you two read it? Mind you there's not too many of them around. Hope I don't make a fool of myself in front of him. I am absolutely in awe of his talent...At the age of 16 he was avidly studying medicine, a point rather well made mind you. His political motives proved to be the basis for much dispute and he was only just allowed to graduate.

Mr James Yes yes yes! Thank you Mr Governor but that's really quite enough.

Mr Winchester Not a very piquant synopsis at all.

Mr Governor But don't you agree that Marat's talent is absolutely phenomenal?

Mr Winchester I disapprove of the man and everything he stands for.

Mr Governor *(Points to Marat)* Look for here he comes.

Enter Marat

Narrator Already seated in his place, here is Marat, observe his face.

Mr Governor Look at the way he commands the room without even a word. Incredible!

Mr Winchester Not a very well built man, but obviously aesthetic.

Mr James His father was a country doctor, obviously his rurality has rubbed off on his condition. Not a very sophisticated sight at all.

Mr Winchester His face is mundane.

Mr James His clothes are too drab.
Marat

If I am extreme I am not as extreme in the same way as you. Against nature's silence I use action. In the vast indifference I invent a meaning. I don't watch unmoved I intervene and say that this and this are wrong and I work to alter them and improve them. The important thing is to pull yourself up by your own hair to turn yourself inside out and see the world with fresh eyes. These people...vultures of human dignity...know not what I am...I am the Revolution!

Narrator

And such was the plight of Jean-Paul Marat. His passion for truth had bore him much persecution. This man was not a god, so I ask you...the people of truth, why was this man so persecuted? His journey through school must be marked, for this man Marat would his name be harked.

SCENE 3

MARAT AND HIS PARENTS

Narrator

Marat returns to his family for the last time.

Marat

Mother. Father.

Mother

Where are you going?

Marat

To pick up the last of my belongings.

Father

We threw them out.

Marat

What?

Mother

We burnt them.

Marat

But that's everything I wrote.

Father

Good riddance I say. A load of old rubbish.

Mother

Yes. Don't go in there. We have a boarder in that room. We don't want to disturb him.

Marat

I was going to have them published.

Father

Oh we took them to a publisher, see if we could make a few dollars for you. He said it was poppycock, utter drivel.
Marat starts to itch.

Mother
Beans for dinner darling?

Father
Wonderful.

Pause as all three ignore each other.

SCENE 4

THE BOOK LAUNCH

Narrator
For every one of us there are choices, options, roads to travel... so Marat is 17. He fights with his family, not so unusual. So what happens next? What if he chooses to stay in Switzerland, make friends with his parents and try to launch his writing career? Ladies and gentleman, silence I pray, let's here what these people are dying to say about this man and his neat little plan. A book launch...Marat's Essay on Man. Those in the know find his work less than impressive. Monsieur Louis, well known literary critic...

#1
We have received from the man Marat a book, an Essay on Man. It's a small, thin volume, and deals with philosophy, existentialism and bull...

#2
He claims in a roundabout way, that the soul lives in the brain - a radical, but unsubstantiated idea. His supporting evidence is shoddy. His writing is poor, his ideas weak. He doesn't belong.

#3
As a scientist I find the work beyond belief. Well Marat's mind is set, he shall have his final word. Science is a pond with stepping stones and Marat has obviously slipped. Will you challenge the Academy of Science Marat? If you're a friend of the people Marat, if you're a doctor to the world, turn this water into wine.

Marat
Oh putin ce me demage.
Suffer. Suffer as he did on the cross for it is the will of God. Je suis le docteur de la monde.

(applause)

SCENE 5  MARAT IN OBSCURITY

Some parts of the following script have been taken from the set text for Content Area 5: Peter Weiss' Marat/Sade. They frequently contain no punctuation.

Marat  They are coming
       Listen to them
       and look carefully at these gathering figures
       Listen closely watch. Yes I hear you, all the voices I ever heard. Yes I see you all the old faces.

Mother  Wouldn't eat his food.
Father  So I bit the little bastard.
Mother  Lay around for hours saying nothing.
Father  Turned his back on me 'e did.
Marat  I see you, I hear you. Why laugh like executioners?
Father  I am not laughing.
Mother  Locked him up in the cellar of course, but nothing helped.
Father  But nor am I crying.
Mother  When I spat on him he lay there stiff as a poker, cold as ice.
Marat  Bas, fetch Bas.
Mother  Tu ete un enfant detestant.
Marat  Bas fetch Bas.
Father  Tout le monde.
Marat  Bas fetch Bas.
Mother  Je jeux vomir sur tu.
Marat  Bas fetch bas.
Father       Cava spittic du.

Marat       Bas fetch Bas.
            Bas fetch Bas.
            This pain beats in my head.

Mother      I know that you would give up you love for us for a few days of health.

Father      In this place where you spent the best years of your life...and now you are sick. You stupid fat monkey.

Mother      Once we spoke a single tongue we sweetly sang of family love, but love meant one thing to you I see and something quite different to me.

Marat       I live your monk's habit, but wait I have an idea for you.

Mother      Your eyes are always black, the pupil opens to seize the object of vision.

Father      Not to lie under the earth but to walk upon it.

Mother      Separate, purify, reunite break the temple.

Father      You must become the incubator.

Mother      You must become the cadaver.

Father      You must become demonic.

Mother      You Marat...were never wanted.

Father      You must abandon.

Mother      Exterminate all rational thought.

Marat       Mad animals you are both mad animals. The earth is spread thick with squashed human guts. I, the survivor, walk over a quaking bog of corpses. Every step we take under our feet. I am a mad animal.

Mother      Alligators crawling around broken bottles and tin cans.

Father      Neon Arabesques of homes.
Mother  Marooned pimps scream obscenities at passing carriages from islands of rubbish.

Father  Followers of obsolete unthinkable trades dealing in Etruscan artefacts.

Mother  Black marketeers of revolts.

Father  Osteopaths of the spirit.

Mother  Investigations of infractions denounced by bland paranoid chess players.

Marat  I can feel the here closing in.

Mother  Survivors of the mind.

Father  Charging unspeakable mutilations of the spirit.

Marat  Flesh dead...toneless...*(yelling)* let there be no holes barred.

Narrator  But Marat did leave for Paris and the Revolution, and death by Charlotte Corday.

SCENE 6  MARAT AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Marat  And the children repeated the lesson
As anyone believes what they hear
over and over again
And over and over again the priests said
Our love embraces all mankind
of every colour race and creed.
Our love is international, universal.
We are all brothers, every one of us.
And the priests looked down into the pit of injustice
And they turned their faces away and said
Our kingdom is not as the kingdom of this world
Our life on earth is but a pilgrimage
the soul lives on humility and patience.

Narrator  Corday approaches Marat.
Corday  I have come to deliver this letter
   In which I ask again to be received by Marat
   I am unhappy
   And therefore have a night to his aid
   I have a right to his aid.
   Now I know what it is like
   When the head is cut off the body
   hands tied behind the back
   feet bound together
   neck bared, hair cut off
   knees on the boards
   the head already laid in the metal slot
   looking down into the dripping basket
   the sound of the blade rising
   and from its slanting edge
   the blood still drops
   and then the downward slide
   to split us in two
   they say that the head held high in the executioners
   hand still lives
   that the eyes still see
   that the tongue still writhes
   and down below the arms and legs
   still shudder.

Narrator  Charlotte Corday came to our town, heard the people
   talking,
   saw the banners wave.
   Weariness had almost dragged her town
   weariness had dragged her down,

Corday  What kind of town is this
   What sort of people are these
   who invented this
   who profits by it
   What kind of children are these
   and who is judging
   who is judging.

Narrator  Marat takes on Parliament.
Marat

Fellow citizens, members of the National Assembly
Our country is in danger
from every corner European armies
invade us and strangle us
They already quarrel over the spoils
and what are we doing
Our minister of war
whose identity you never doubted
has sold the corn meant for our armies
for his own profit to foreign powers
and now it feed the troops who are invading us.
Fellow citizens
did we fight for the freedom of those who now
exploit us?

Narrator

Corday visits Marat for the last time

Corday

What I have to say cannot be said in writing
I want to stand in front of him and look at him
I want to see his body tremble and his forehead
bubble with sweat
I want to thrust right between his ribs the dagger
which I carry between my breasts
I shall take the dagger in both hands
and push it through his flesh
and then I will hear what he has to say to me.

Holding the dagger high she kills Marat to the
sounds of the dejembe drum. Music transition to the
next section: Katherine
SECTION TWO  KATHERINE

SCENE 1  BIRTH AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

Actors in this section were mainly female, by choice.

The actors come onto the stage to musical accompaniment. A final tableau for the opening of Katherine with students playing imaginary cello. Rising crescendo of noise from the actors leads into the dialogue.

Narrator  1888 in a small house in a deep bush ravine...Katherine Beauchamp was born and she became Katherine Mansfield...female writer extraordinaire.

Katherine  Why can't I wear my blue satin ribbon on Wednesday afternoon?

Mother #1  No Kathleen.

Mother #2  No.

Mother #1  You may wear the pinafore.

Mother #2  But you may not.

Mother #1  Not.

Mother #2  Wear your blue satin ribbon.

Mother #1  Your ordinary brown one is perfectly suitable.

Mother #2  Suitable.

Mother #1  Suitable.

Mother #2  Unobtrusive.

Mother #1  Unobtrusive.

Katherine  Mother loves sentences like these...Why can't I do what other girls do?

Mother #2  Have you brought your thimble?
Katherine  Yes mother, in my pocket.

Mother #2  Show it to me.

Mother #1  Show it to me dear so I can be perfectly clear...

Katherine  Why do you treat me like such a baby...none of the other girl's mothers ...I'll take my blue satin ribbon in my pocket and change when I get to school. I don't want to deceive her...she only wants to show her power...

Girl #1  Tip...

Girl #2  You're it...

Katherine  *(Slowly)  1 -2 -3-4- That's my spot.*

Girl #2  We could share it...we should hide here together.

Katherine  7-8-9-10...**DADDY!**

*(Narrator lifts her on the stage from the centre box...leads on to...)*

Narrator  Katherine in her teens writes in her diary...

Katherine  Somehow, suddenly she woke and came over to me, took me again into the shelter of her arms. We lay down together. Still. Silently her hands around my body, stroking me, warming me, moving to give me more life. And then her voice whispering. "Alright now darling". I could not answer in words. I drew close to her warm sweet body. I felt happier than I had ever been before. Than I could ever imagine. The past once more buried and wishing this darkness might last forever.

**SCENE 2  **

**GRANDMOTHER’S FUNERAL**

Narrator  It is a sad occasion that has brought us here. We must mourn the end of a great life. Elizabeth Mansfield...
Katherine  My grandmother died on New year's Eve. My first experience of personal loss. It horrified me...the whole thing...Death never seemed revolting before. This place. It steals your youth. That's what it does. I feel years and years older and sadder.

Narrator  Welcome friends to the garden party...

#1  Saw Minnie last week.

#2  Gorgeous Dress.

#3  Gorgeous hair.

#4  Gorgeous scarf.

#5  Gorgeous shoes.

#6  Gorgeous man.

All  GORGEOUS.

Narrator  Kathleen, don't stay there. Come over here and eat with us.

Katherine  Yes Daddy. I shall never be able to live at home. I can see that now. There would be constant friction. After a quarter of an hour they are quite unbearable.

Narrator  I have decided that NZ is neither culturally or intellectually stimulating enough for my daughters. They shall move to Queen's College England with their cousins.

Tableau of cello playing.

Katherine  If we changed our names we would sound more professional.

Leslie  Yes of course...

Katherine  And pretend we are sisters. We could be famous everywhere.

Leslie  I choose the name Katherine Moore.
Katherine: You can't have that name. That's the name I chose. We can't possibly have the same name. How about Leslie. That sounds just as perfect.

Leslie: I just like Katherine.

Katherine: After all, Leslie is my brother’s name, and you do want to stay close don't you?

Leslie: *(eagerly)* Yes of course...

Katherine: Then it's settled. You shall have the name Leslie Moore and I will be Katherine Mansfield. LM and KM for short. We can use it at the ball tomorrow night.

*They dance...1-2-3 1-2-3 ...flute music.*
*Katherine swaps partners to dance with the Narrator.*
*The other actors are waltzing together.*

Katherine: When I'm with you a preposterous desire seizes me. I want to be badly hurt by him. I should like to be strangled by him.

Leslie: I need you and I rely on you.

Katherine: His looks are inflaming, like the scent of a gardenia.

Girl #1: How could Katherine get a man like Adonis...

Katherine: I want to push it as far as it will go, but somehow that will not suffice. Experience consists not merely of one man but the whole octave of men. I want to...

Narrator: *(Angrily)* What are you doing Katherine?

Katherine: *(Frightened)* Nothing that concerns you...

Narrator: You need to settle down. You need to be more responsible for your education...

Katherine: How do you know what I need...

Narrator: I will hear no more of these dalliances with young men and young women. You are a disgrace to our family. You will return to NZ immediately.
Katherine  You can't do that to me. These hands are cruel hands... I shall never be able to live at home... Can you tell me which way to go from here?

Narrator  Katherine had her past. Katherine has her choices. The first choice: NZ and marriage...a great social event that ends in tragedy.

SCENE 3  KATHERINE MARRIES INTO SOCIETY

Sections of dialogue have been taken from Mansfield's short story "The Garden Party"

Katherine  And the weather was ideal. We could not have asked for a more perfect day for a wedding if we had ordered it. Windless, warm the sky without a cloud, only the blue was veiled with a haze of light gold as it is sometimes in early summer. The gardener had been up till dawn mowing and sweeping the lawns until the grass and the dark flat rosettes where the daisy plants had been seen to shine. Where do you want the marquee mother?

Mother  My dear child, it's no use asking me. I am determined to leave everything to you children this year. Forget that I am your mother and treat me as an honoured guest.

Katherine  The front door bell rang and there sounded the rustle of Sadie's print skirt on the stairs. A man's voice murmured. Sadie answered.

Sadie  I'm sure I don't know. Wait and I'll ask Mrs Mansfield.

Katherine  What is it Sadie?

Sadie  It's the florist Miss Katherine.

Katherine  There, just inside the door, stood a wide shallow tray full of pots of pink lilies. No other kind but pink lilies- canna lilies, big pink flowers, wide open and almost frighteningly alive on bright crimson stems.

Oh Sadie there must be some mistake. Nobody ever ordered so many. Sadie go and find mother.
Mother: It's quite alright, I ordered them. Aren't they lovely? I was suddenly passing the shop yesterday and I saw them in the window and I suddenly thought for once in my life I shall have enough canna lilies. The wedding will be a good excuse.

Katherine: I thought you said you didn't mean to interfere?

Mother: Why darling child you wouldn't want a logical mother would you? Sadie, bank them up inside the door, on both sides of the porch will you? Don't you agree Katherine?

Katherine: Yes mother I do.

Mother: What is it Sadie?

Sadie: Cook says if you please madam, have you got the flags for the sandwiches?

Mother: The flags for the sandwiches. Tell cook I'll let her have them in 10 minutes. Now Katherine, come with me into the smoking room. I've got the names somewhere on the back of an envelope. You'll have to help me finalise the table settings. Meg go upstairs this minute and take that wet thing from your head. Sarah run and finish dressing this instant. Do you hear me children or do I have to tell your father when he comes down? And Jessica pacify cook if you go onto the kitchen, will you, I'm terrified of her this morning.

SCENE 4

KATHERINE IS DRESSING WHEN HER MOTHER WALKS IN WITH HER JOURNAL.

Mother: Looking as fat as ever Katherine. It's a wonder your getting married at all.

Katherine: Why mother it's not like you to be so nasty.

Mother: I found something Katherine. (She reads) All that day the heat was terrible. The wind blew close to the ground. It rooted among the tt.t tus..tus..

Katherine: Tussock grass mother.
Mother  Don't interrupt you rude child. When will you be rid of this pathetic childhood dream of writing?

Katherine  Mother I...

Mother  Honestly it is a wonder you're getting married at all. I hope for your sake Matthew doesn't know this other side of you, or he won't want you either and all our efforts will be...will be...

Katherine  Spoiled?

Mother  I suppose you think you're clever answering back to your own mother you horrible lumpy thing. I hope you get pregnant quickly so that you can have an excuse for being so fat. And for your sake I hope the children aren't as horrible to you as mine are to me. You are ungrateful, all of you. All the efforts your father and I make and now you still continue this diary book all full of daydreams and rubbishy writing.

Katherine  I wish you would just let me explain.

Mother  I'm sick of your excuses. Your duty as a woman is to stay at home and help the family, not flit around with this writing nonsense. You are a woman Katherine. You have to do woman's work. I just think back to my wasted childhood...nobody saw it as I did. Is it pity you want Katherine? Today is your wedding and tomorrow we will be rid of you and this (holding up the diary) I will keep.

SCENE 5  KATHERINE IS ON TOP OF A CLIFF

Narrator  The diversity of life and how we try to fit everything in. Death included. That is bewildering to a person of Katherine's age. She feels things ought to happen differently. First one way then the other. We all do...but life isn't like that, we haven't the ordering of it.
Katherine

Here is a little summary of what I need - power, wealth and freedom. It is a hopelessly insipid doctrine that love is the only thing in the world, taught, hammered into women...From generation to generation, which hampers so cruelly...We must get rid of that ...and then comes the opportunity of happiness and freedom.

Movement sequence of Katherine jumping from the cliff top to the sea below, treading over the backs of actors who become a rocky path to the sea where she finally falls in and is caught by other performers in a stage dive.

Narrator

Or Katherine could marry into obscurity...

SCENE 6

KATHERINE MARRIES INTO OBSCURITY

Katherine

(Writing in her diary. Sections taken from Mansfield’s short stories.)

As the morning lengthened whole parties appeared over the sand hills and came down on to the beach to bathe. It was understood that at 11 o'clock the women and children of the summer colony had the sea to themselves. The women would undress, pull on their bathing dresses and cover their heads in hideous caps like sponge-bags. These people fascinated me. Especially one lady. Mrs Harry Kember, or Beryl, as her friends would call her. She was the only woman at the bay who smoked, and she smoked incessantly, keeping the cigarette between her lips while she talked. Mrs Kember's husband was at least 10 years younger than she was, and so incredibly handsome that he looked like...(Mrs Kember interrupts Katherine and sits down next to her and begins to talk. Katherine hides the journal immediately.)

Mrs Kember

(As if showing her around her house.)

Come on through Katherine, we shall play our game of bridge out back if you don't mind.

Katherine

Of course not, that shall be lovely.

Mrs Kember

I invited Shirley and Gertrude to make the other pair. I hope you don't mind?
Katherine  Not at all. I haven't seen either of them for some time now.

Mrs Kember  Would you like a drink while we wait?

Katherine  No thank you Mrs Kember. I don't drink.

Mrs Kember  Please call me Beryl. Now what about that drink?

Katherine  Well I shouldn't. Richard says its bad for my health, and he doesn't like to see me drinking.

Mrs Kember  Who says HE has to see you drinking. I'm sure one little drink wouldn't hurt.

Katherine  You seem to like the sun an awful lot. Aren't you worried about the colour of your skin.

Mrs Kember  Excuse me for one minute..it sounds like Shirley and Gertrude...

As soon as she has gone, Katherine takes the bottle and has a large gulp. The ladies enter and greet each other.

Gertrude  Katherine...and how's your son?

Katherine  He seems alright. Mother takes care of him most of the time. (Uninterested.) She says he's moving along nicely.

Gertrude  What's his name?

Shirley  Shall we begin to play?

Katherine moves on to the middle of the box and everybody moves around repeating "play, play, play" and gradually getting louder.

SCENE 7  KATHERINE AND CHILDREN

Katherine  I don't want to play with you. (Everyone stops and is quiet.) It is useless pretending. I don't like babies. Why do you keep on smiling? If you knew what I was thinking about you wouldn't.
There is the sound of someone knocking on the door.

Mrs Kember  Hello Katherine are you there?

Katherine  (To the baby) I wish mother would hurry up and come and take you away...

Mrs Kember  Katherine are you alright? Look what you've done to yourself. This must be your son.

Katherine  He's not my son. I don't like babies. He's mother's...or anybody's...I don't like babies.

Mrs Kember  Calm down child. Of course he's your son.

Katherine  I don't want him. I never wanted him. Richard wanted him. I married Richard because my mother said he would be good for me. I don't love him...I never did.

Mrs Kember  There, there Katherine...everything will be alright

Movement sequence: Mrs Kember begins to stand and without actually touching Katherine helps her up. They stand face to face very close together and intimate but never actually touching.

Narrator  But Katherine really left for England, a marriage with John Middleton Murry, short stories and death at 33 in Gurdjieff's clinic.

SCENE 8  THE END OF THE WRITER
Sections of the following dialogue have been taken from the set text for Content Area 4: Alma de Groen's The Rivers of China

Gurdjieff  Katherine.

Katherine  There was a list of things that you told me to write about myself. Don't you want to read it?

Gurdjieff  List was for you. I already know Katherine Mansfield. Some day I'll introduce you.
Katherine  I've been at Fontainebleau for more than a week and I don't seem to be doing anything. I thought I came here to find out who I am.

Gurdjieff  Perhaps nothing to find out.

Katherine  Then why am I here?

Gurdjieff  That is good question. Must keep asking yourself.

Katherine  I'm asking you.

Gurdjieff  But it is you who must find answer.

Katherine  How?

Gurdjieff  First must wake up. When you get up from bed in the morning you think you wake up?

Katherine  Of course, I know the difference between sleeping and waking.

Gurdjieff  For you, no difference. Have never been awake.

Katherine  Then what are you? A dream...a nightmare?

Gurdjieff  You will know when you wake what I am. This husband?

Katherine  Yes, that's Murry.

Gurdjieff  You lonely without him.

Katherine  Yes I'm lonely without him... I'm lonely with him. It's funny. I feel older than Murry now. As if I'd somehow skipped decades, become very old and everyone I knew had died, and I think of them, remember them as they are now, but I've utterly changed.

Gurdjieff  Where is he?
Katherine  Now? Reading Jacques le Fataliste, tramping through the English countryside, probably with Elizabeth. Looking for the farm I'll never live on, putting pen to paper with the sole intention of killing me. Have you ever hypnotised me? I've heard you do that. In any case I'm here to remove the masks, am I not. Normally he sends me novels to read. Why am I here?

Gurdjieff  Perhaps he think it help you.

Katherine  He thought it would help his magazine. Or rather he didn't think. Not about me. Not for one instant. Christ! His suffering, his nerves. He's not made of whipcord and steel. When I got ill it was a punishment for him.

Gurdjieff  You're on a different path now. Impossible husband understand.

Katherine  Why?

Gurdjieff  Most people believe have aim in life and going somewhere. Americans talk of going places. But man who is asleep has no aim and is not going anywhere. First sign of waking up is when realise thousand does not now where to go. But you know Katherine. You here now, with me. You pass first lamppost. Enough now. Time is breath. Don't waste.

Katherine  What?...I'm scared.

Gurdjieff  It is good for you to show this fear. This using emotional centre properly, not mixing with intellectual centre, which is a bad habit for you.

Katherine  I don't understand...Who are you?

Gurdjieff  Perhaps I am your worst nightmare.
Katherine

I must tell you a dream. The first night I was here I went to sleep. And suddenly I felt my whole body breaking up. It broke with a violent shock and earthquake and it broke like glass. A terrible shiver and the spinal chord and the bones and every bit and particle was quaking. It sounded in my ears: a low confused din, and there was a sense of flashing greenish brilliance, like broken glass. When I woke up I thought there had been a violent earthquake. But all was still. It slowly dawned on me that in that dream I had died. I was no longer afraid. The spirit that is the enemy of death and quakes and is so tenuous was shaken out of me.

Time is not. I am, January 9, 1923, a dead woman.

*Transition with music to the final section: Graham*
SECTION THREE

SCENE 1

BIRTH

Narrator  But Katherine and Marat are history. What about us? What options are there for us?

Narrator  On a otherwise unimportant day, 17 years ago I was presented to the world. Graham Malcolm Mackenzie. Born with a silver spoon in my mouth...my cultural awareness was limited... My parents...ma and pa...

Mother  My, my what a treat. Can you believe he's been inside here for 9 months?

Father  It was a long time to worry, but now he's here.

Mother  Our little Graham, and you know what...he has your eyes...DAD.

Father  He also has the fortune to have your dashing good looks.

Mother  If he grows up to be half the man you are he will be the most...
   (Graham stands)

Narrator  My brother.

   Graham's brother walks in on Graham who is having much trouble squeezing a pimple on his face. He hurriedly picks up a comb to hide what he is doing. As Graham's brother enters all of the other actors fall on the floor as if in fear.

Brother  What, are you pampering yourself again?

Graham  What do you mean...

Brother  You trying to impress one of the wuzzas after you?

Graham  Yeah!

Brother  Must be one of the boys then. I admit that David is rather an impressive young man...
Graham: You shut up about Davo. He's a great bloke.

Brother: I guess that if anyone worshipped me I would consider them a great bloke as well. But worshipping me would be understandable.

Graham: At least I've got friends.

Brother: And I don't...

Graham: I didn't mean it like that...

*The brother has completely confused Graham and exits, happy.*


Davo: *(To narrator)* Hi Graham.

Graham: Hi Davo.

Davo: *(To Graham)* Hi Graham.

Graham: So we still on for Saturday night?

Davo: Yeah, yeah they said I could but...it's kinda tricky with my parents. You know how they are not wanting me to go out during the term and all.

Graham: Yeah well we bloody better be on. I've been planning this meeting for ages. It's our only chance to meet chicks.

Davo: I know, I know. Year righto.

*Graham looks about the audience and selects a suitably attractive girl.*

Graham: Check her out.

Davo: Yeah. I'd pash with her. *(Graham looks incredulous)*

You know, pash, smooch. *(Graham shakes his head.)*

Graham: Yeah well I gotta go. OK see ya Davo.

Davo: Bye Graz.
SCENE 2

AT SCHOOL

Vinnie
I'm gunna get you Mackenzie (Vinnie knocks him to the ground)

Ben
Come on Graz don't just sit there, get up and fight him.

Graham
That was a bit unnecessary wasn't it.

Vinnie
You're dead Mackenzie.

Hilly
Yeah, you're dead.

Ben
(As if refereeing a boxing match)
In the red corner we have the defending champion, weighing in at 228 pounds...Vinnie Fatty Bombsticks Malone. And in the blue corner weighing in at 122 pounds, Graham always doing his homework Mackenzie.
(They circle each other seriously and end by playing a game of thumb wrestling)
I, 2, 3 You're outta here.

Vinnie
No one liked you anyway Grazza.

Jane
(Who has been watching)
Don't worry Graham, I like you.

Cast
Ahhh

SCENE 3

DINNER AT HOME

Slow build up of pre dinner 'clinking' sequence where the actors mime the noises of glasses and cutlery.

Brother
Shh. Ah hem...Quiet.

Mother
(Character is played by a male) Dinner's ready.

Graham
Everyone ...this is Jane.

Dad
So what are you doing when you leave school Jane?

Graham
Um Dad!
Dad  What do your parents do for a living.
Mum  Frank!
Dad  How much do they earn a year?
Jane I was actually...
Dad  Yes?
Mum  Frank!
Dad  What? *(angrily)*
Mum  How's your steak?
Dad  Fine. What is your religious background?
Graham  Dad!
Dad  What?
Brother  Pass the peas. *(Slapstick sequence of passing peas around the table.)*
Graham  What in the hell was that all about?
Dad  She's got to be good enough for you Graz.
Graham  Dad I'll decide who I will and won't go out with. For years you've said that I need a girlfriend and finally I get one and all you can do is nag her. Maybe I'm not good enough for you?
Dad  Come on son, don't be stupid...
Graham  Honestly Frank! You thought that I would just sit back and take it forever. You never wanted me. Finally I don't need you Dad. Maybe I'm just starting out in life but at least I'll be starting out happy rather than finishing off an angry old bastard like you are!
Jane  It's a lovely room Mrs Mackenzie. You must be happy here.
Mother  I'm just happy you've made our son happy. We're all happy because of you.
Jane: Oh Mrs Mackenzie you're making me blush.

Mother: Nonsense. You're an angel. I'm sorry things didn't go smoothly.

Jane: No, no I enjoyed tonight. Perhaps another night will see us on better terms.

Mother: So Jane...How's Graham?

Jane: That day of the fight I really felt helpless...

Davo: Yeah, I was there with bells on. *(Reference to the boxing match)*

Jane: Such a stupid fight, but I realised I cared for him in such a special way.

Mother: That's so sweet. Come and give me a hug.

Dad: Your mother told me what happened at school. You're not too big to be bent over my knee you know.

Brother: Go to you room.

Mum: Discipline your son.

Davo: Umm can I ring my mum?

Jane: I really should wait outside.

Mother: I'll show you the door.

Dad: Graham get over here.

Graham: Before you yell at me put yourself in my position.

Dad: Don't start with me Graham. I've had enough of your attitude tonight. The second we do something for you, it's thrown back in our faces.

Graham: You've got to be kidding. You did it to embarrass me in front of my friends.
Dad: This is unfair. You have no idea what I do for you. There are plenty of kids with parents not half as understanding...

Graham: What? If you're understanding anything it's your malfunctioning ego.

Dad: My ego. Don't bring my personal traits into this. It's you were talking about here. When I was a kid if I said something like that to my father I would have been slapped in the chops quicker than flies on sh...pooh

Graham: Go on say it. Shit...shit shit shit.

Dad: Don't swear at me. Don't you dare bring your toilet mouth home, you little guttersnipe. You're in my house now, you little shit. There are you happy now??!!

Graham: Yes I'm happy. I'm damn happy. In fact I'm pretty fuckin' Hoo Ha.

Dad: Well enjoy it while it lasts...

Graham: Look Jane's waiting.

Dad: If you're not going to obey in my house then get out. Go on ...Git.

Narrator: So for Graham just another domestic dispute. His parents don't understand him. Which road will Graham travel?

The first option:
and both that morning equally lay
in leaves no step had trodden black
one I kept the first for another day
yet knowing how leads onto way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

SCENE 4

THE SOCIAL GRAHAM

Narrator: What if Graham takes another road, makes a different decision that has different consequences.
Priest

Dearly beloved we are gathered her today to commemorate the life...death...life of Graham. Graham was a man with many friends...

At 17 Graham decided to leave home. He walked very jauntily. But as the days got longer he got slower and slower...

There follows an improvised sequence of Graham buying a lottery ticket the eventually wins $10 million. He buys a house and has a party...He drinks too much and passes out. He dies and we revert back to the funeral scene at the beginning.

Narrator

Or Graham could have made another choice...and been locked up for it...

SCENE 5

GRAHAM GOES MAD

Graham storms onto the stage after a fight with his parents. This scene was originally written to be morbid and depressing, but in the context of the other pieces in this section it was made comical. It worked as an over exaggeration of teenage angst.

Graham

(Shouting) They don't understand me, they can't open their minds to understand. I cannot resuscitate their dead minds. If I could control every particle of my body...I could...yes...gibberish

Graham ends the scene in a gibbering mess in foetal position on the ground

SCENE 6

GRAHAM ENDS IN HOSPITAL WHERE HE MEETS ANOTHER PATIENT WHO TRIES TO COMMUNICATE WITH HIM.

Adam

So you're a philosopher?

Graham

(Stuttering) Yyyeess...I think very deeply.

Adam

Hmmmm, yyyesss, soooo, ahhh. Alright then. Ha ho hum...
Graham
You understand me.

Adam
Well yes of course. We all understand you. Your new family understands you, yet some of us don't know it. For you if your mind does not think deeply, you die. Humanity is mostly dead. We have machines to think for us.

Graham
Well yes. Technology has take over humanity. We will become what Giger has envisaged - a satellite society, biomechanoidal, macabre, hell. We must de-evolutionise through revolution...I am happy I belong.

Voice Over
I am so depressed.

Graham
I feel so good.

Voice Over
I feel so sad.

Graham
I am now understood.

Voice Over
I am in deep melancholy.

Graham
Happy.

Voice Over
Depression.

Graham
Happy.

Voice Over
Depression...

This sequence leads on to a movement piece enacted by all the other members of the asylum. The piece is interrupted by a Voice Over announcing Graham's parents have arrived. Just when he thought he was getting better, the news of his parents arriving sends him back into foetal position on the floor.

There is an abrupt change of scene into...

Narrator
Or perhaps Graham choses another path
SCENE 7  GRAHAM IS FAMOUS

University secretary  Student number? Student number?  (Repeated as the line of students are stamped upon entry to university. There was a movement sequence created here that involved mechanical sounds and conveyor belt action of the students.)
Graham Mackenzie

Graham  Yes that's right, but...

Secretary  Please check this form is correct and sign at the bottom and date it.

Graham  Well, see I want to change my course...

Secretary  Sign the form please Mr Mackenzie.

Graham  I can't... see... that's the problem...I want to change from computing to fine arts...

Secretary  I can't do that Mr Mackenzie.

Graham  (Yelling) I don't think you understand. I have to change from computing to fine...

Secretary  No need to yell Mr Mackenzie...please sign the bottom
(end movement sequence)

SCENE 8  ART SCHOOL

Teacher  (with accent) Now Geoffrey how are we going today?

Geoffrey  Well actually I'm having trouble with the...What do you suggest?

Teacher  I think you need to feel the mood of the fruit Geoffrey. Become involved with each of the fruits, the smells, the temperature, and colour. Let it effect you Geoffrey. I don't think you are painting from the heart now are you Geoffrey?

Geoffrey  I see, you're absolutely right.
Teacher  Adam this is very interesting interpretation of the bowl of fruit. I like the way you've obviously examined the interplay of the shapes and spaces. You've created a successfully dense studied close-up. Created harmony in your design.

Adam  Yes ...I've used...

Teacher  Very good Adam. Vladimir what seems to be the problem?

Vladimir  I don't understand.

Teacher  I think perhaps you should try using some paint!!

Vladimir  Oh...

Teacher  Jerome you're analysis of the symbolism of the fruit is just wonderfully communicated, well done... Graham! What are you doing? You have no qualities and relationships of shapes, size, texture, line...Where os you're direct experience with the fruit? Haven't you listened to anything I've said. this is absolutely CRAP!!!(

*The class join in the chant...*

Crap!!

Graham  *(Yelling)*  I'll be famous you'll see...

**SCENE 9  THE OPENING**

Teacher  Did you see Graham's last exhibition. It was absolutely fabulous. He was in my class you know. Always the star pupil. I taught that boy everything he knows. Yes I must admit from the first day I recognised his talent, knew he'd make it to the top.

Guest  You must be so proud...

Teacher  Oh yes,...
We cannot tell Graham's future, for it is just that...

I shall be telling this with a sigh
somewhere ages and ages hence
two roads diverged in a wood and I
I took the one less travelled by
and the made all the difference.

*Ends with entire cast and music.*
2.2.2 Questionnaires

a) Student Questionnaires
   - Questionnaire One was given early in the rehearsal period, (Lesson 6, 12 March 1996) and dealt with questions of the process and development of the Group Devised Performance Piece from the performers' viewpoint (see Appendix).

   - Questionnaire Two was administered after the final performance and sought to obtain information about the performance as well as some details on the backgrounds of the subjects (See Appendix).

b) Audience Questionnaire
   Members of the audience were asked to complete a questionnaire the morning after they viewed the performance. Most of those participating in this questionnaire were students, as they constituted the majority of the audience. There were, however, some adult audience members questioned. The audience was asked about their expectations, whether they had seen other productions at the college, what they found satisfactory or less than satisfactory, and what they perceived to be the general audience response (see Appendix).

c) Assessor Questionnaire
   There were two internal assessors who marked the students according to specific criteria set out in the syllabus from the Board of Studies relating to assessment of Group Performance. The two assessors were members of the school's teaching staff: one teaches in the Drama Department, one in the Music Department. Both have Masters Degrees in Creative Arts, and both have marked Internal Assessments Tasks for 2 Unit Drama for the past four years. The questions asked of them related to the Group Devised Performance Piece as a vehicle for assessment of individual performance.
2.2.3 Annotated Script
Before the night of the final Dress Rehearsal an annotated script was produced for the technical crew (lighting, sound, props, orchestra). It was largely a list of scenes in running order with lighting and sound cues listed in appropriate places. Although the production was continually evolving and dialogue was subject to change, it was thought that a 'running order' of scenes with closely approximating dialogue was necessary for the crew to be aware of their cues. It did demand a good deal of close attention and intelligent improvisation from the technical crew at times, however.

2.2.4 Videotapes
A videotape was produced of an early rehearsal as well as the first night's performance. The early tape was from a fixed camera position with a wide shot of the proscenium stage, where most of the action took place. It was intrusive and was not used again as a means of recording rehearsal. For the performance there was one camera, which also remained in a fixed position on a wide shot of the stage. This documentation method proved very disruptive. Its value rests in the fact that it recorded a static shot (point of view) of the production but did little to capture any live performance 'atmosphere'. The camera had focus problems resulting from changes in stage lighting states. The video however does represent evidence that the performance took place and was viewed by an audience as well as the assessors. Video also provides a visual map of the performance 'style' which was constituted by music, movement, characterisation, actor/audience relationship, timing, mood (generated with lighting etc), use of space, props, costuming and the reception of the audience (laughter etc). It remains an archival product of the project.

2.2.5 Supervisor's Report
Ms Anne Marshall came to rehearsals and offered constructive advice on her perceptions of the production. In the week before the production opened she attended a final
rehearsal and was also present on the opening night. Her remarks centred on theatrical issues such as pace and rhythm. She also made particular mention of meaning and physicalisation. Ms Marshall appeared more enthusiastic about the process rather than the product, which after all was a school production with limited rehearsal time and mixed ability groups. The report was an important record of an outsider's viewpoint of the final stages of rehearsal. A copy of the written report is to be found in the Appendix.

2.3 ANCILLARY PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION (SEE APPENDICES)

2.3.1 Advertising

There were two public performances of the Group Devised Performance Piece. The target audience was family, friends and school members, both staff and students. The event was advertised in the school Bulletin, published on Fridays and sent home with each student. There were also posters placed around the school buildings for two weeks before the performances. The most significant form of advertising came from the student performers and word of mouth.

A record of public performances was also kept by visual signs such as posters. On the night of the performances the audience was supplied with a detailed program explaining the event, the nature of the performance, the students involved, the cast and crew. The public were also provided with free admittance tickets so that we would have some indication of actual audience numbers.

2.3.2 Photographs

Still photographs were taken on the first performance night by the Publications Officer at the school and have been used in school publications. The photographs were less than satisfactory and were largely close-ups of individuals. These suited the purposes of the photographer but not the researcher. There was not enough prior attention given to
the potential use of the photographer so that when he
arrived at the performance there were too many other
distractions to brief him. It is worth remembering that such
a resource could be very beneficial and should be prepared
for adequately.

2.3.3 Review
A senior member of the English staff offered to review the
production on the first performance night. That review
appeared, with the photographs, in a quarterly school
publication titled The Barker (See Appendix).

3. KEY TURNING POINTS
Here the term 'turning points' is used following the definition by Linda
Seger in Making a Good Script Great when she talks of turning points as
being events (ie actions) that change the course of the action and propel the
story forward (Seger, 1988). There were several key turning points in the
process of developing the Group Devised Performance Piece. These points
came at different times for
1. The Process
2. The Students

3.1 THE PROCESS
Key Turning Points in the process were:
• the acceptance of the visual design by the students (crucial
  from the beginning)
• the connection between the three-plot structure and the
  material that was taken from the 2 Unit Drama syllabus
• the division of classes into sections that became "before" and
  "after" sequences
• the decision to use more than one person to play the 'named'
  role, ie. there were several students who played Marat
  throughout the performance of that section and likewise with
  the other sections
• the introduction of the poetry of Robert Frost
• the development of strong characterisations which included
  and resulted from somatic work
the writing and orchestration of music
the collating of pieces together for the first time so that the section, Graham, (the comedy section), was placed at the end of the piece
the evolution of peer/self evaluation of the work and comparisons with others

3.2 THE STUDENTS
The students broke themselves into groups. The breakdown of those groups was crucial to the final product. The breakdown was as follows:

The ratio of all boy/all girl groups was:

Key Turning Points for the students appeared to be:
- the grouping of students and the resultant pieces of performance matched their intellectual abilities. (The "techs"-a term the students use to describe someone who is intellectually and academically clever, chose Marat, the girls chose Katherine, the less able students developed a more accessible piece with slapstick and adolescent jokes in a contemporary setting called Graham.
- the research process which led to the students developing and writing their own material
• the writing process itself that crystallised their ideas
• the improvisations that worked and were rewarded by appreciation of their peers
• the time pressures that caused more concentrated effort
• the viewing of the work of other students in the class
• the sense of 'healthy competition' that then developed
• the resolution of conflicts themselves
• the appreciation of the audience who attended the performance

Chapter Six discusses the conclusions reached by investigating and analysing the results of the documentation of the Rehearsal Method and its Key Turning Points.

4. THE PERFORMANCE

Introduction
Following is an outline of the story line of the finished performance and also an attempt to diagrammatically display the chronological development of the story line superimposed over the set design, which was a significant feature of the developmental process of the project.

The set design appeared to predetermine the three-part structure of the finished piece. This may have constituted a premature decision in the process, nonetheless it provided structural impetus.

4.1 BREAKDOWN OF THE STORY
The first section of the performance was called Marat (taken from Jean-Paul Marat, a leading French Revolutionary figure and protagonist in a set text that was being studied by these students in their 2 Unit Drama Syllabus for Content Area 5 entitled: The Persecution and Assassination of Jean Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of Charenton Asylum under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade (Weiss, 1965).

The second section was called Katherine, and was a series of adaptations of short stories, some supposedly autobiographical, of the New Zealand short story writer Katherine Mansfield (1890-
1958). The third section was devoted to the life of a fictitious character called Graham.

Each of these three characters faced a crisis generated by a family dispute and had a choice to make regarding their future path. The story explored three options with the object being to show the consequences of making different choices.

4.2 THE STORY LINE SEQUENCE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE SET:
The diagrammatic representation below is displayed as the boxes were laid out in the performance space and the action is described within this framework. The arrows indicate the progressive and chronological development of the story line.
The story line of **MARAT**:

**CENTRE BOX**

**MARAT'S CHILDHOOD**

- Marat #1
- performance began with cacophony of sounds
- still life of 5 boys
- introduction of Marat as a character including brief historical facts
- no music at this point as the musicians are all in this piece
- action started on the centre box and spread to the stage area
- although some performances were static and could well have used more energy the use of space was interesting

**STAGE RIGHT**

**OPTION A**

**MARAT JOINS THE ARISTOCRACY**

- Marat #2
- introduction of music as the musicians have been freed from the action
- music makes a considerable difference to the pace and rhythm of the piece which is picked up by the actors
- Marat decides to become a part of the aristocracy, but this ends in disaster
- use of another student to play Marat was a relatively easy transition for the audience using narrator and music as cues

**STAGE LEFT**

**OPTION B**

**MARAT FORCED INTO MADNESS**

- Marat #3
- transition with the music was fast and exciting
- this section became very symbolic and abstract using actors as trees orchestrated with music and electronic beats
- ended with slow moving minuet to flute melody
- this worked particularly well after a fairly loud and brutal domestic violence scene between Marat and his parents

**CENTRE BOX**

"REALITY"

- final scene of Charlotte Corday as she comes to kill Marat
- use of music and "dejembe" African drum was very effective
- the transition to the Katherine scenes involved the entire cast and provided some fast movement after what was a reasonably static piece

Return to...
The story line of **KATHERINE**:

**CENTRE BOX**

KATHERINE'S CHILDHOOD
Katherine #1
- upbeat sounds and music to signify the change of scene
- still life image of 9 girls and 1 boy (who acts as narrator)
- introduction of the story of Katherine's childhood in New Zealand and her relationship with her parents
- dialogue taken in part from a selection of Mansfield's short stories
- led onto another scene with a change of player for Katherine, showing her life at school

**STAGE RIGHT**

OPTION A
KATHERINE MARRIES FOR THE SAKE OF HER FAMILY
Katherine #2
- Katherine decides to stay in New Zealand and marry to save her family embarrassment over her bisexuality
- story taken from "The Garden Party"
- as in the above short story the wedding ends in tragedy, but this time it is Katherine's death
- female students are very physical with each other
- they use their bodies well and mould themselves into shapes and scenes

**STAGE LEFT**

OPTION B
KATHERINE HAS CHILDREN
Katherine #3
- Katherine marries for love but ends with children she does not want
- an attempt to became a wife and mother that denies her bisexuality
- female students in this scene were finding it more difficult to cope with characterisation
- scenes became very long, but the music and the movement pieces were very strong and lyrical and used the stage space particularly well

Return to...

**CENTRE BOX**

"REALITY"
- as a short story writer using some of the pieces from her time with Gurdjieff the healer
- the final section was based on Mansfield's short story "Bliss" a lyrical and moving piece about marital betrayal
- final movement scenes were very good
The story line of **GRAHAM**: The configuration of the boxes changed for this final section

**CENTRE BOX**
GRAHAM'S CHILDHOOD
Graham #1
- musical intro with the entire company
- birth of boy to North Shore parents
- the overly exaggerated "chummy" relationship of the parents was very amusing to the local North Shore audience of parents
- took some time for the audience to realise that this section was amusing as it came after material that was perhaps more sophisticated and serious
- audience started to recognise that they could identify with the characters in this piece
- scenes of school life and boy/girl relationship worked well
- ended with a fight with his parents that was a highlight and great fun

**STAGE RIGHT**
OPTION A
GRAHAM WINS THE LOTTERY
AND PARTIES TILL HE DROPS
Graham #2

- after the fight with his parents Graham loses direction and wanders aimlessly for a while
- by chance he wins a lottery
- he buys a house and has parties until he drinks himself to death
- very humorous scene with a minister at the grave site
- the student audience identified very much with this section and found the sight gags and the characterisation very funny

**STAGE LEFT**
OPTION B PLUS FINALE
Graham #3
GRAHAM DRIVEN TO MADNESS BY HIS PARENTS
- this section was too long and lost momentum
- even though the actors wanted it to be serious it was decided to make it funny in the last few days of rehearsal
- this was quite a battle with the actors but proved to be the right decision as the audience would probably have laughed even if the section was meant to be serious
- the movement sequence in this section was quite clever and worked well with the music

FINALE
- because Graham is/ was contemporary, his history was waiting to happen... dependent on what decision he was going to make... which would make all the difference
- this final section involved all the cast and ended with a musical celebration and a philosophical 'hanging moment'
4.3 THE SET

There were three black boxes placed on the floor immediately in front of the apron of the proscenium arch stage. It was possible to step from the stage to these boxes. Suspended on the stage, starting from a fixed point on the centre of the back wall, were three long stretches of fabric, red, white, blue, that extended from this central back point through black hoops equally spaced across the middle of the stage and approximately 2 metres above it. These colours radiated out from the back wall and ended at the foot of a black box: Stage Right was red, Centre Stage was white and Stage Left was blue. The three colours were chosen initially to represent the French tricolours, but also came to represent red for danger (everything that happened on the Stage Right box ended in tragedy), blue for sadness (Stage Left) and white for 'reality' and truth (what happened historically to the characters).

4.4 THE BOXES

The play was broken into three sections, Marat, Katherine, Graham. Each of the sections was further broken into Childhood, Option A, Option B, Reality. The boxes visually represented these areas. The centre box became the Childhood, Stage Right was Option A, Stage Left was Option B and the action returned to the centre for what was the real ending for these characters. This format was modified for Graham, and the boxes were placed in a single line in the centre of the floor space. The boxes were both a useful tool and a liability. The students became very used to their presence and were able to incorporate them into the action of the play. However the presence of the boxes largely defined the playing space and its separate segments and therefore contained an element of rigidity.

In outlining the performance it has proven valuable to describe each section in a box format that shows the stage layout as well as the scene progression.
5. WHAT WORKED IN THE PERFORMANCE?

5.1 THE NARRATIVE

The structure of the narrative was successful for the following reasons:

- the variety of pieces kept the audience and performers interested
- the structure was efficient and logical
- the audience was left in high spirits because the last section was comic
- the piece catered for different tastes and experiences
- the changing pace and tone allowed for varying levels of audience involvement

The narrative itself was successful because:

- there was a vast amount of historical information contained in the story even though it had the potential to be very serious
- the characters were interesting
- the performances were strong and entertaining
- the different sections of the piece were of different time periods
- the piece was informative and surprising
- the final section struck a familiar chord with the audience and encouraged them to laugh at themselves

5.2 THE CAST

The breakdown and allocation of roles in performance proved advantageous because:

- nine people were able to share the main character roles
- collaboration between classes and groups built a firm ensemble base
- rehearsal processes helped to establish an excellent working team
- students were able to play a variety of roles and therefore improve (and display) their performance skills for the assessors
5.3 **THE SET**

The benefits of the set were:

- it was bare but effective and the use of colours was suggestive and striking
- its configuration and use of the performance space allowed for a large and varied performing area
- it encouraged the audience to be seated close to performing area
- it provided varied levels within the performance space which gave height and depth

5.4 **THE PRODUCTION STYLE**

While 'style' is a difficult term to define the following could be said of the final performance:

- the music was an excellent addition adding pace, rhythm, variety, mood, symbol
- the movement sequences created atmosphere
- the different rhythms within the piece created varying moods
- the limited but purposeful use of lighting and SFX was effective and unobtrusive
- the language and text was varied and complex
- the symbolic elements such as tri-coloured clothes were effective and suggestive
- the limited but specific use of symbolic props, such as the cloths that doubled as tablecloths or other objects, was effective
- the ensemble performance of the actors was apparent
- the incorporation of ideas from Brook, Brecht and Stanislavski in particular provided opportunities for the students to discover first hand how these theories could be put into practice

6. **WHAT Didn’T WORK:**

6.1 **THE NARRATIVE**

- the pace was too slow in some sections, particularly in the middle section of *Katherine* where the movement sequences were thought too lyrical and too long
• some aspects of the intellectualisation of the dialogue were complex and difficult to understand

• the association of ideas was too esoteric for the specific audience with the historical content at times being long winded and too broad in its coverage

6.2 THE CAST

• the mixed and varied standards of the performers created problems for the audience’s willing suspension of disbelief at times

• having so many performers who had to be allowed equal exposure made the piece quite long

6.3 THE SET

The set may have dictated (predetermined) more than just the playing space. The three box structure may have determined the three plot structure of the narrative. While this plot structure worked fairly effectively it is possible that the narrative would have developed differently if the boxes were not suggested at the first rehearsal stage. (The 1997 Group Devised Performance did not begin with an already established concept of the set. In fact the set was the last element of the production to be finalised and this was not entirely successful either. Somewhere there is a happy medium, probably around the middle of the rehearsal process!)

6.4 THE PRODUCTION STYLE

The advantages of incorporating different performance theories were outlined above. However, the most complicating element of the production was that it had to incorporate so many performers in a small amount of time. The length of the performance was dictated by the number of players who needed the same amount of performance exposure. This was rather an arbitrary and artificial restriction to place on a performance. As well as this rehearsal method providing opportunities to the students, it also came with its own rules that disadvantaged the final piece because it artificially extended the playing time and flattened the potential for dramatic action.
7. COVERING THE CONTENT AREAS OF THE 2 UNIT DRAMA SYLLABUS

INTRODUCTION
As well as serving as an assessment task for the students this Group Devised performance was required to cover other Content Areas of the syllabus.

The 2 Unit Drama Syllabus lists the following content areas:
Content Area 1 Improvisation, Playbuilding and Acting
Content Area 2 Elements of Production
Content Area 3 Performance
Content Area 4 Drama and Theatre in Australian Societies and Cultures
Content Area 5 Drama and Theatre in Societies and Cultures other than Australian

Under each of these major headings are listed specific items to be covered while studying the course. In analysing the success of the Group Devised Performance Piece as a method of covering these items the following table may be useful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Headings</th>
<th>Function in the Group Devised Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing and sustaining a role</td>
<td>• writing of individual roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• improvisation of roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• role-sharing (3 Marats etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>developing the voice and the body as flexible instruments of expression through: physical and vocal warm-ups, breathing, control of pitch and modulation, projection and enunciation, spatial awareness, timing and rhythm, movement dynamics</td>
<td>• improvisations with pitch and projection of voice were used in the early stages of rehearsal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• warm-up exercises using voice as a tool for characterisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• somatic exercises for character development (Stage 6 of Rehearsal Process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• developing the performance space from proscenium arch stage to include floor space and moving the audience seating (The initial set design)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 7.1 Content Area 1 (cont)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Headings</th>
<th>Function in the Group Devised Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| developing a character from a published script through: analysis of script for character clues, exploring motives and emotions, use of voice and movement, sustaining the character in relationship with others, responding through improvisation to ideas suggested by the script | • the script was not 'professionally' written and this may have been a drawback as the material may not have provided a strong enough base for fully developed performances  
• on the other hand the script used a great deal of published material collected from various sources and collated by the students  
• the writing of the script meant the students could better understand the development of their characters' emotions and motives |
| managing and responding to the elements of drama such as: tension, focus, rhythm, space, movement, sound, time, symbol, mood | • movement, time, symbol, mood were explored (Stage 6: Layering)  
• focus seemed a direct result of the individual performer's ability to concentrate and lose themselves in performance, and this ability varied with each student (It related to the breakdown and student self selection of groups -see Chapter 5: 3.2, group breakdown)  
• sound became a key aspect of the performance and one that came under the direction of the students. It proved a very successful product of the process (Development of music at Stage 6 of Rehearsal Process) |
| shaping improvisation into the form of a play through: developing and refining dramatic action, role and/or character development, scenic linkages, sequencing, script writing | • the development of dramatic action was involved in the process of writing the script and improvising on and around the scenes until the dramatic structure worked (evident in the early stages of rehearsal)  
• scenic linkages gave scope for the development of movement or music pieces and added moments of entire group involvement in the piece (developed in Stage 6: Layering) |
| developing an actor-audience relationship by: responding to performance space, exploring the significance of social and cultural factors | • the response to the performance space was dictated by the original set design  
• this may have been a limiting factor as the piece was driven by the set layout  
• it remains an unresolved question in the piece: Did the set design (and the actors' relationship to that design) drive the structure of the piece? Does that matter? Did it make a difference? |
7.2 CONTENT AREA 2: ELEMENTS OF PRODUCTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Headings</th>
<th>Function in the Group Devised Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directing and Dramaturgy</td>
<td>• this area was especially well covered by this Rehearsal Method which allowed and encouraged research, interpretation, and adaptation (Stages 1 and 2 of Rehearsal Process)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• background research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• text interpretation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• rehearsal process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• adapting a text to a particular time frame</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and technical operation:</td>
<td>• the students were given a basic set conception and, as stated above, this may have been a limiting factor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• set</td>
<td>• however the performers were responsible for their costumes, make-up and props</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• properties</td>
<td>• they devised music and vocal sounds that accompanied the performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• costume</td>
<td>• lighting was designed in consultation with the performers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• lighting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• sound</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Management</td>
<td>• the performers were not involved in the calling of cues and no prompt book was devised for the production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• devising and using a prompt book</td>
<td>• junior drama students were however involved in stage management, lighting and the organising of cues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• planning and executing scene changes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• organising and calling cues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>• any financial transactions involved the purchasing of props or fabric for the set and the students were not involved in this process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• financial planning</td>
<td>• the front-of-house activities involved the students in the distribution of tickets but not the collection of monies as admission was free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• front of house</td>
<td>• the posters and tickets were devised by the students and they were involved in the promotion of the production by word of mouth and special announcements eg senior assemblies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• publicity and promotion</td>
<td>• they were not involved in any industrial issues or production management as such</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• industrial issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• production management</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### 7.3 CONTENT AREA 3: PERFORMANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Headings</th>
<th>Function in the Group Devised Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>actor-audience relationship</td>
<td>• this was a very important consideration in the production and drove such issues as placing elements of the set on the floor in front of the proscenium arch, re-organising the seating of the audience to allow for a closer and more intimate atmosphere, and devising a section of the piece that was extremely pertinent to the specific audience that was expected to attend (<em>Graham</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social and cultural contexts of performance</td>
<td>• these were covered by the different social/historical/political time frames and cultures within the scripting of the performance: Marat was French Revolution, Mansfield was early 20th century New Zealand and Graham was contemporary North Shore Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presentational techniques</td>
<td>• the students also used performance techniques that crossed time and cultural boundaries and were influenced by the work of theatre theorist such as Brecht, Stanislavski, Brook (see Chapter Three)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>production styles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.4 CONTENT AREA 4: DRAMA AND THEATRE IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETIES AND CULTURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Headings</th>
<th>Function in the Group Devised Performance Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alma De Groen</td>
<td>• this topic area was covered by using the plays of Alma de Groen, especially <em>The Rivers of China</em> and the character of Katherine Mansfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• the research done into the character and writings of Mansfield was particularly useful. In the final written examination the students sat in November one of the questions on De Groen revolved around Mansfield &quot;as a writer&quot;. This was a fortunate and unpredicted/ unpredicatable by-product.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 7.5 CONTENT AREA 5: DRAMA AND THEATRE IN SOCIETIES AND CULTURES OTHER THAN AUSTRALIAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Headings</th>
<th>Function in the Group Devised Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Peter Brook     | - the final script used one of the set texts for this topic as the basis for the first section on *Marat*  
                 | - the theories and directing styles and techniques of Brook heavily influenced the director, the Rehearsal Method used for this study and naturally the final performance (see Chapter Three) |

Table 4: Comparison of Syllabus Content Area specifications and areas covered by the Group Devised Rehearsal Method
CHAPTER FIVE

THE DOCUMENTATION

1 EVALUATION OF THE REHEARSAL DOCUMENTATION

1.1 THE REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

The broad Rehearsal Schedule that was established weeks before production began proved crucial in providing an early outline of the rehearsal schedule. The outline that was developed changed very little over the course of the production and remained a valid structural overview.

1.2 THE REHEARSAL OUTLINE

The Rehearsal Outline Plan gave a more detailed advance plan of what was to happen in rehearsal. It accrued weekly and built on what experience(s) had occurred in the rehearsals immediately before it. While the basic structure changed little, there were additions and modifications that took account of reflections and decisions made in previous rehearsals (eg. the development of a three plot structure). It was crucial to remain flexible and allow for changes in the direction brought about by input from the students, which was encouraged, and new ideas which arose during the process.

1.3 DAILY LOG

This was the most valuable record of the rehearsal process. It documented the key turning points in the process, the times when leaps were made that may not have been planned or foreseen. These are discussed further in Chapter Six: Conclusions.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION

The questionnaires were distributed to those involved in the production: the students, the assessors and the audience to ascertain information on their varied and differing opinions and perceptions of the performance. The students were also given the opportunity to remark on the process of the rehearsal method. The purpose of the questionnaires was also for statistical validation (or not, as the case may be) of theories and hypotheses
surrounding the rehearsal method under investigation. As mentioned previously, student journals were not asked for or kept for two reasons: the study was not centred around a student evaluation of the process, and secondly, journals can be a very personal account of processes that cannot be made public.

2.1 WRITTEN SCRIPT

The resultant written script (contained in Chapter Four) seemed to anchor the performers. It appeared that improvisation and continual change kept the work from pushing forward. The written script formed a secure platform from which to leap into more detailed work. Once the text was scripted, the group could move forward to the next scene based on the assumed knowledge of the preceding one. When it came to rehearsal this was an advantage because it provided a concrete base that could be improved upon, rather than constantly re-inventing the wheel, as can happen in continual states of improvisation. (See Chapter Two, Chapter Six: script as outcome)

Some of the dialogue written into the script was taken from the original literary works of the characters being depicted. This method provided strong lines for the characters to say which had two clear benefits: it gave the students experience at recognising what was 'good' dialogue for performance (because the material was written by experienced and very capable writers), and secondly it kept the dialogue from becoming turgid 'teenage angst', which can be the common starting block for adolescent writing/writers.

The lines of dialogue spoken by Katherine Mansfield were taken from her various writings and autobiography, and the words spoken by Jean Paul Marat were taken from Peter Weiss's play Marat/Sade. (1966).

The written script was a significant outcome of the rehearsal process and differentiated the process from some forms of playbuilding where continual improvisation builds the scenarios to performance. The writing of a 'text' is a crucial part of the process of this Group Devised Performance method. The research that contributes to that writing enhances the quality of the final text.
2.2 QUESTIONNAIRES

2.2.1 Student Questionnaire One

The first questionnaire to students dealt with the process and development of the Group Devised Performance Piece. The questionnaire was handed to the students before a scheduled rehearsal without their prior knowledge. They did, however, realise that they would be asked to undergo the process of answering the questionnaires, and they were quite relaxed about that possibility.

The following is a breakdown and analysis of the date collected in each question from each respective questionnaire.

Question 1: Why are you involved in this production?

Student responses:
- 50% said because they wanted to complete their HSC
- 45% said for enjoyment
- 5% for skills/experience

While it was a fact that this Group Devised Performance Piece was a compulsory Internal Assessment Task nearly half of the students were interested in working on the performance piece for their own enjoyment. This may well be one of the by-products of this rehearsal method: it seemed to be an enjoyable process for the students involved.
Question 2: What do you believe this play to be about?

- 63% believed the theme of the play was 'choice'
- 30% thought 'fate'
- 7% thought 'life'

While there were three very distinct words suggested by the students the chosen words are arguably very close in meaning. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that they seemed to be working from a common understanding of the theme of the performance piece.
Question 3: How did you arrive at the story?

- 78% of students mentioned that they arrived at the story by "general agreement" of the group
- 12% believed the teacher had provided the story line
- 10% suggested the narrative was derived from their own research

The answers varied, but each was accurate. The narrative had been developed during the rehearsal process by all three methods suggested. However the research component was based on an already established narrative outline. Certainly there was a large amount of detail that was added through research.
Question 4: What was the process of development?

13% suggested writing
45% suggested research
40% suggested discussion
40% suggested practical
4% were not clear of the process of development

The most interesting result of this question is that it seemed to indicate that roughly the same numbers of students suggested three processes of development that were of equal value: research, discussion, practical work. They did not believe that writing the script was the most important contributor. This may be because the question was poorly worded or because they did not see the written script as part of the process but more a product of the process.
Question 5: What were the problems associated with this (ie Group Devised Performance Piece rehearsal method) way of working?

20% suggested time as a major factor
28% suggested role size was a problem
17% suggested that keeping the performance consistent was difficult
35% mentioned that conflict was the biggest problem in the group

The answers to this question revealed information about the process and its faults from the point of view of the students, not forgetting that they were coming to the project with their own preconceptions and 'baggage'. The answers were consequently varied, like their personalities, but they mentioned time constraints, equality of roles, consistency of characterisation while 35% noted the largest problem was personalities within the group, and conflict therein. This problem certainly affected most groups at some time in the development process.
Question 6: What were the advantages of working in this way?

- 94% of students thought the most significant advantage of the rehearsal process was the fact the product was the result of their own work
- 4% suggested that there were advantages because the material on which the production was based was of high quality
- 2% gave other and more vague advantages

This proved a very important question and showed that all but two of the 32 students were pleased with the process because it allowed them to investigate and to put forward and follow "their own ideas". (See Heathcote on ownership, Chapter Three). The question of ownership of the performance piece was paramount in the decision to develop this method of rehearsal. The development of music within the piece is a good example of students taking control of their work and making it their own, and the enormous differences in intensity and commitment that it makes to the final product.
Question 7: What would you do differently?

- 40% stated they would do not do anything differently
- 60% said they would work harder if given another chance
- 20% would have changed their group

A large percentage of students were pleased with the way they had worked, which is not surprising as most of them worked extremely well and very consistently. An even greater percentage said they would work harder in retrospect. This would probably be a very common response to many questions about commitment and work ethics, in adults as well as in young students.
### 2.2.2 Student Questionnaire 2:

Students were asked to complete a second questionnaire, Student Questionnaire 2, towards the end of the rehearsal period.

This second questionnaire contained a first section called "General Questions" which sought information about the individual's background, and a larger section titled "Performance Questions" that asked the students for their views on how they believed the performance was perceived by others and by themselves.

The first questionnaire looked at the processes of the rehearsal method and the second questionnaire dealt with the student's response to the final performance product.

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**Question 1: Why are you at Barker?**

- 30% said because they wanted to do their HSC
- 20% because it was considered a 'better school' (academically, variety of subjects, facilities and opportunities were all cited)
- 7% said they were there as a result of parental pressure
There were other responses that made it clear the students were unsure of their response to this question, and the question's relevance. They had reason to be unclear, it was perhaps an unnecessary question that provided very little relevant data.

Question 2: Why do you do HSC Drama?

75% said they took the subject because it was "fun"
15% because they thought they were good at it
5% because they thought they might make a career of drama or a related area
5% said they found the subject interesting/creative

The answers to this question were surprising. The large number of students who said they took HSC Drama because they thought the subject would be "fun", and who actually used that word in their description was an interesting result. This attitude could well be tested in other context/locations as it would be valuable data to have for the subject in general. Is it the case that most (that is, 76%) of students take 2 Unit Drama because they think it will be fun? And does it prove to be fun for them? If so, why? If not, why not? Are there any other reasons?
Question 3: Do you study Drama outside of school?

75% of the students do not do any drama related activities outside of the school environment. The few students who did proffer information about their drama activities outside of the school environment listed roles with local musical societies and attending Nida Summer Classes.

The question showed that the students were not currently taking on any other drama related activity other than their course at HSC level. It should/could have asked if they had done so in the past, or if they intended to in the future. These general questions were not entirely relevant to the research topic, however they did provide some interesting material, and did allude to the fact that there could be a great deal more interesting information that could be collected about the students and the subject for future research work.

Question 4: Can you describe your background?

50% of students said they were from Sydney originally
30% were from interstate
20% were from overseas

PLACE OF BIRTH

Parental situation:
• 57% mentioned their parents
• 43% said their parents were still married
• 15% mentioned divorced parents
This question was very vague and therefore solicited varied and unexpected results. Most students mentioned their place of birth, their parental situation (some even discussing their perception of their parents' financial situation). They were very prepared to discuss (and reveal) private information, as well as make rather large assumptions about their parental environment. These responses add weight to the argument that student journals may inadvertently provide too much personal and revealing information about the writer.

Question 4: What do you think was the audience response to the production?

- 80% said they believed the audience response to the performance to be very "good" and gave specific examples of where the audience had shown keen interest
- 20% used the word "funny" (presumably meaning humorous) in their response, and viewed this as a favourable outcome
- 20% mentioned "enjoyable" in their responses
- 5% said they thought the audience was unable to understand the story/theme
While the terms used by the students to describe the reaction of the audience were vague and generalised: eg "good", "enjoyable" it can be assumed that the students believed quite strongly that the audience response was favourable. The ways in which they came to judge that audience response were very revealing, however. The actors were not aware of much that was happening for or to the audience during the performance, but formed their opinions from the remarks made to them after the performance. A comparison between the way the audience judged their own response and the way the actors judged the audience response was one of the most interesting and surprising outcomes of this research (see Audience Questionnaire).

Question 5: How could you tell the nature of that response?

- 80% of the students identified "audience feedback" after the performance as the clearest indicator of positive audience response
- 10% cited laughter during the performance
- 10% mentioned clapping during the performance
The answers to this question revealed that the majority of students assessed audience response from "what was said to them afterwards". This was a very interesting and unexpected discovery especially when compared with the audience response to the same question. The audience did not seem to place the same emphasis on "what was said to them after" but relied more heavily on responses at the time of the performance. (Refer to Audience Questionnaire following) This aspect of audience/actor perception differences encourages and requires further study.

**Question 6: What did you think of the performance?**
- 93% of students stated they were very positive about the performance
- 5% said they were not positive about the performance
- 2% said they thought the performance was "average"
The reasons for the students thinking the performance was very positive are not identified by this question. It would have been appropriate to place another question in a form that asked for exact examples of how they believed the performance worked well: were there personal reasons, was it because their own performance was pleasing, was it because their friends/family enjoyed and appreciated their performance, or was it because the feeling of working in a/the group was very special? This data was not available from this question, but it would have been valuable information to have obtained.

2.2.3 The Audience Questionnaire

The Opening Questions

The Audience Questionnaire was given to those who attended the morning after the performance. The first section of asked them which night they attended and why they came to see the production.

As the audience was predominantly student based their responses to why they had come included "supporting friends", "seeing what Drama was like", "getting an idea of what they might have to do in drama next year", or if they were adults, they were usually related to a member of the class or were teachers/staff at the school.

The next set of questions asked for information relating to Barker and whether a particular audience member had seen any other productions at the school. There was also a question which asked if the respondent was a Drama Student. The vast majority of the audience (82%) answered "yes" to this question.

On average the audience attended Barker productions regularly. Most had seen at least one other production but 85% had seen two or more productions previously. This is important as it indicates that they are prepared to revisit the productions staged at the school, but also that the audience base may need to be extended to include those not previously theatre goers.
What is also significant is that the nature of this performance was dissimilar from any other performance offered at the College. This was an assessment task, not a musical or a production of a 'classic' text, like Shakespeare or Stoppard. As mentioned, it was surprising that there was such a large audience for a production that was very audience specific and not published as broadly as a large scale musical.

(As a footnote: the same assessment task performance in 1997 drew an even bigger audience!)

Question 7: What do you think the production was trying to say?

- 58% answered that they believed the play was about "choices"
- 28% said it was about "different realities"
- 8% mentioned "changes"
- 8% were undecided

The majority of the audience understood that the play was about "choices". They also suggested related and similar expressions such as "different realities" and "changes". The play was arguably about all of these. It is very important to know that there were some shared meanings with the audience and that the theme of the play was clearly conveyed to them.
Question 8: What do you think was the general audience response to the production?

Most people mentioned concepts like "surprising", "beyond expectations", "well-done". There were no harsh responses to this question that indicated audience disappointment/disapproval (discussed in Chapter Six).

Question 9: How could you tell the nature of this response?

When the answer to this question is compared with the student performers' answers to the same question in Student Questionnaire Two it revealed a fundamental difference in the way performers and audience gauge the audience response to this production.

The audience claimed they determined the response during the performance by the amount of clapping and, to a lesser extent, the laughing. They were less reliant on discussion amongst themselves for verification of their opinion, and no-one mentioned that they gauge the audience response from talking with the actors after the performance.

The actors however needed to have feedback from their audience to validate their opinion that the performance was a success. Is this true of all performers? Bennett offers a mechanism for further examination of audience response:

If we consider theatre's role in any given cultural system, and then the audience's relationship both to the generally held concept of theatre and to specific theatre products, we are more likely to obtain a fuller comprehension of the production/reception relationship. Bennett, 1990, p100

Barker audiences do not represent a random 'general public' audience. Their reactions may well prove Bennett's theory, and this may be the basis of another study.

A comparison of audience and performer response to this specific theatrical event follows:
2.2.4 Assessors Questionnaire

Questions 1 and 2 of The Assessors Questionnaire asked why "you were asked to assess the students" and "why did you accept". The universal response indicated "colleague support".

Question 3: Did you find the production a satisfactory vehicle for assessment of individual students? Why?

Each student was reported to have enough exposure as well as challenging material "to demonstrate their ability". One assessor found difficulty in the "evenness of parts" and this made it more difficult to mark "across a range of marks". He suggested that this may have meant that individual students did not perform to their highest ability. It was thought that because the students wrote their own material that this may also have contributed to this "levelling" effect. (The dialogue itself, however, often came from a primary literary source other than the students themselves. So the comment probably does not apply.)

The nature of the task meant that each group of students gave themselves, and demanded of each other, equal amounts of playing time. This was a part of the fundamental design of the project: equal role and equal exposure thus relying on each individual's talents. The role of the teacher/director could be
important here to help develop the written material so that it reflects the capacities and capabilities of the students. The marks given by both assessors reflected this evenness of performances.

Question 4: Do you think the production satisfied the guidelines for performance assessment for 2 Unit Drama?

The assessors found this a difficult question to answer, even though one of them had taught 2 Unit Drama at Year 12 level. It would appear that there needs to be a great deal of familiarity with the syllabus in order to give an accurate and effective answer to this question. Or perhaps there is some difficulty with the way the syllabus is framed. Using the assessment criteria provided to them, however, the assessors were able to evaluate each student.

Question 11: What were the good things about the production?

One assessor strongly believed that the production allowed the students to reveal their "talents and skills in terms of role/play and characterisation, style of performance and expression". The evenness of the parts could also be seen as a positive aspect here, particularly for the weaker students. When the students came to put their disparate pieces together they inevitably compared their work to that of their fellow students. This tended to raise the standard of playing. The weaker students tended to 'play up to' the more sophisticated playing of the stronger performers.

Question 12: What were the less than satisfactory aspects of the production?

The assessors commented that there were a lot of students to mark at the same time. It was suggested that perhaps the students could be marked over two performances for more consistency. When the students are assessed for their HSC performance they are assessed by Board of Studies examiners on one occasion and not over a period of time. The students
only get one chance. At the Board of Studies performances they do, however, appear in smaller groups (between 3-6 players), but for a much shorter period of time (7-10 minutes). This performance with 32 students ran for 50 minutes, so each student’s exposure was greater and should therefore have provided more time for the assessors to view each performer.

2.3 ANNOTATED SCRIPT

This was valuable as a record for the crew. It was basic in its layout and specifications, but provided a quick guide with which to 'call' the show.

The document was divided into five sections: Scene Number, Scene Title, Dialogue, Cast, Sound Cues, Lighting Cues. It was crucial that the crew were present for the final three rehearsals because familiarity with the performance piece was the only reliable way of remembering the cues as the piece was still evolving up to and including the performances.

It was also very important to keep the cues to a minimum and to control the technical equipment from the edge of the performance space. This proximity made it possible for quick reactions and contact with the musicians who were also integral in the cueing of scene changes.

The annotated script was useful during technical and dress rehearsals and also during the performances, largely as a 'security blanket' in the event that crew concentration waned.

As a record of the event the annotated script gave only indications of when, and not necessarily what, occurred. A more substantial record could have been kept, particularly if there was a stage manager to help with the technical requirements of the performance.

2.4 VIDEOS

Some sections of the resultant performance video had focus problems. This was caused by the change in lighting states in the performing space. Otherwise it provided an adequate record of the
event from a static position that gave good coverage of the space and
the performers.

As a form of documentation videoing can have a distancing effect
on the viewer because it is static and contains no shift of visual
interest of the event, as a documentary film may, where the shots are
directed and edited.

There is very little 'live atmosphere' conveyed in a videotape. As
theatre is a live medium this is important.

3. ANCILLARY DOCUMENTATION
3.1 ADVERTISING
The advertising for the event, even though it was on a small scale,
was effective and provided a strong audience base. The best form of
advertising proved to be 'word of mouth'. The Drama students
talked with their friends and family and their enthusiasm for the
production encouraged others to come and see it.

The posters and tickets were designed by the students, giving them
another theatre-related experience to explore.

The program gave the audience information that assisted them in
their understanding of the nature of the performance as well as
information about the performers.

It has been a recent and deliberate decision, with this and other
performances staged at the College, to include notes in the programs.
These notes have included information about the styles used in a
production, the theories and ideas that inspired aspects of the
performance or rehearsal process or historical, social or political
descriptions of relevant aspects of theatre history. Audiences have
commented that they have enjoyed the information and this has
helped in their appreciation of the performance.

3.2 PHOTOGRAPHS
As a form of documentation the 'still' record of the production
provided a limited recording of the event. It did little to capture the
atmosphere of the live performance, one of the key aspects of theatre. As previously noted, the photographer was interested in tight shots of personalities that would be useful for the school magazine, but were of little value as a recording device for the performance. This situation should be addressed for further productions and could easily be made a valuable resource.

It may also be a good idea to give the students the opportunity to take photographs during the rehearsal process. This might help to encourage an atmosphere and expectation within the group. It also gives them an opportunity to see the visual aspects of their performance so they can make decisions about what works and what doesn’t and acclimatises them to documentation processes.

3.3 REVIEW

The review of the production was very favourable and a record of an audience member’s perceptions and bias.

The format the review followed was typical for its genre: an introductory paragraph with historical references (Robert Frost’s poem), a description of the plot, then mention of individual performers, comments on the themes and ending with statements on the general effect the production created for the audience and the response(s) that generated.

The review mentioned the rehearsal process that was outlined in the program notes:

...the two classes worked separately for six weeks with one class devising scenes for the choices faced by the characters before the turning point of the family argument while the other worked on the choices faced by the characters after the argument. Then came two weeks of interaction when the students had to ‘tease the story’ out of their devised scenes. (Wilkinson, 1996, p1)

There was also mention of the audience response: “It was the Graham narrative the audiences most enjoyed, probably because of the obvious parody of life in the raw for an adolescent living in the
nineties on the North Shore" (Wilkinson, 1996, p2). There is a strong correlation between this statement and the responses of the audience during and after the performance.

The review favourably regarded the music generated by the students:

"Technically this production broke new ground at Barker, with its use of analogue (sic) sonic manipulation to produce a range of sound effects and an on-going sound track for the scenes which heightened dramatic tension effectively" (ibid, p2).
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

This study has detailed the process of a specific Group Devised Performance method and the products of that process: the written script and the final performance. Both the written script and the video of the final performances can be seen as outcomes in their own right. The written script provided a tangible record of the performance before it was staged while the video provided evidence of the Group Devised Process in production, visually detailing the dramatic elements of time, space, characterisation and movement that could not be recorded by the written script alone. (See Chapter Two)

The context of the study has involved discussion of broad issues related to the teaching of Drama in a High School environment, the teaching of HSC Drama, and the restrictions and implications of Internal Assessment programs on the nature of Internal Assessment Tasks.

Other, possibly even broader, issues related to the study have included some intrinsic advantages in the study of Drama for the individual student in terms of their personal development and/or as a means of developing/enhancing employment skills and key competencies outlined by the Board of Studies (see Chapter Three).

This final chapter will look at the purpose of the specific Group Devised Performance method, its aims (as part of the HSC context and 2 Unit Drama syllabus and as an Internal Assessment Task, and its desire to give as much performance exposure and scope to each individual as possible) and the outcomes (of the rehearsal method and the performance) and endeavour to establish whether this method has met those aims in the rehearsal process and the final product. It attempts to answer the following questions:
1. DOES THE GROUP DEvised PERFORMANCE METHOD PROVIDE A BASIS FOR COVERING THE CONTENT AREAS OF THE 2 UNIT DRAMA SYLLABUS?

1.1 Does the process of this rehearsal method cover all Content Areas of the syllabus?
1.2 What aspects of the Drama syllabus are excluded by this process?

2. IS THE GROUP DEvised PERFORMANCE METHOD USEFUL FOR DEVELOPING THE SKILLS (PERFORMANCE AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS) OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT?

2.1 What are the key performance skills that are specifically benefited by this work?
2.2 Did this rehearsal method benefit the individual and/or the group in any ways other than as a vehicle for delivery of the 2 Unit Drama Syllabus?

3. IS THE GROUP DEvised PERFORMANCE PIECE VALID AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING AN INTERNAL HSC ASSESSMENT TASK?

3.1 Did the process and the final product fulfil the guidelines prescribed by the Board of Studies for an Internal Assessment Task?
3.2 Did the process achieve adequate coverage of the assessment criteria for Group Presentation?
3.3 Did this specific rehearsal method adequately prepare the students for performance?
3.4 Did it provide each student with a reasonable amount of character/performance scope and exposure?
3.5 What were the drawbacks of the process in relation to its use as an Assessment Task?
4. WHAT WERE THE CONTINGENCIES THAT WERE BY-
PRODUCTS OF THE REHEARSAL METHOD?
4.1 Were there any surprising findings generated by this process
and what were the benefits or downfalls of these by-products?
4.2 What would/could be done differently in the future?

1. DOES THE GROUP DEvised PERFORMANCE PIECE PROVIDE A
BASIS FOR COVERING THE CONTENT AREAS OF THE 2 UNIT
DRAMA SYLLABUS?

1.1 Does the process of this rehearsal method cover all Content
Areas of the syllabus?

The rehearsal method involved in the Group Devised
Performance Piece contained five distinct procedures:
discussion, improvisation, writing, rehearsal, performance.
These processes were interwoven and did not always follow the
same sequence or patterns.

The rehearsal process exposed the students to Content Area 1:
Playbuilding, Content Area 3: Performance, and incorporated
Content Areas 4 and 5 as required by the Board of Studies
guidelines.

The process of developing the group performance relied
extensively on playbuilding and improvisation (Content Area
1). Warm-ups were part of each rehearsal and improvisations
on sound, pitch, voice and music were extremely valuable. The
improvisations and rehearsals that used somatic work as a
means of developing character were very rewarding and led to
richer, more fully established characters. Role-sharing (several
students sharing the same character at different stages of the
text) was a by-product of this work and began with exercises
where the students took on the physical characteristics of their
also meant that there were more students actively involved in major parts of the script writing process and not left on the edges of the performance piece with little to do.

The production of a written script also meant the students had a better understanding of the development of their roles. Although the script was produced by the students in collaboration with the teacher, a great deal of the material in the text was gathered from historical or pre-existing documents. This was valuable in that it gave the students high quality dialogue with which to work. Adapting the short stories of Katherine Mansfield, for example, provided rich and lyric material and this translated into the nature of the piece the students created for Mansfield. The research into Mansfield's life strengthened student knowledge of this Content Area. This was also true in the work done on Marat. The historical context of the French Revolution and the rich Brechtian influenced text by Weiss, helped to drive the style of this section of the performance. This knowledge reflected back on Content Area 1 and helped develop different styles of improvisation and Dramatic structure.

The script was a significant outcome of the collaborative group devised process. It covered all Content Areas of the syllabus including playbuilding, elements of production and performance. It provided a link between the theoretical Content Areas of the course by including Mansfield and Marat and their respective texts. It was an excellent device for developing analytical skills as well as allowing the students to refine their performance material before they began rehearsal. The writing process gave them the opportunity to develop a sound text that could then be expanded in the practical rehearsal process. It also provided them with a solid and concrete platform from which to build performance. Instead of approaching each class with a movable feast of ideas, the students constructed a text that was solid, yet flexible and malleable during rehearsal.
The syllabus specifies that students be exposed to all the processes that lead to performance, and stresses their interconnection. The script provided another avenue for knowledge: writing the text and turning that text into performance. The students experienced the drama process from conception of idea, through formalisation and editing of that conception in a written form, to performance and the practical realisation of that process.

The syllabus suggests very strongly that Drama is a collaborative art form, not only in terms of working with a team of people, but also in working with different art forms.

Drama is a unique fusion of many art forms and expressive skills, including writing, acting, movement, music, design and dance. (BOS 1993, p1)

The content of the script provided students with a research tool that allowed for a more complex analysis of the "social, political and economic environments" (BOS, 1993, p7) of the people and events they were involving in their text. This is a primary objective of the syllabus.

The skills students are encouraged to foster in the study of Drama include communication through "a variety of dramatic techniques...and appropriate to a variety of media". (BOS, 1993, p8) The syllabus also requires students to develop characters from a published script, looking at directing and dramaturgical studies of texts, and to recognise the contribution of the individual to the artistic effectiveness of the whole. The script was a valid and tangible product of processes that involved each student collaboratively and individually contributing to the whole while experimenting with research, writing and editing skills that need to be transformed into a live performance.

As part of Content Area 3: Performance, the actors considered their audience seating and set design and endeavoured to establish a more intimate feel in a very large auditorium. The
actor-audience relationship was explored extensively in the rehearsal process. There were also sections of the play where the actors chose to direct their performances out to the audience, and they used this as a specifically humorous device to great effect. The proximity of the audience allowed for significant interplay between with the performers. It also meant that there was no room to hide, and as the performers were on the stage for most of the running time of the play. The performances they were able to sustain became very important. While this gave the audience much to watch at all times, in the tradition of Schechner, the performers had to be very conscious of others on stage and give and take the focus when required. This developed a strong ensemble feeling on the stage and in the dressing rooms.

The students explored "production styles" (Board of Studies, 1993, p15) across time and cultural boundaries and incorporated directing and theoretical techniques developed by Brecht (songs, declamatory acting), Brook (multi-cultural aspects, theatre language, empty space) and Stanislavski (characterisation). They gained knowledge of social, historical and political frameworks previously unknown to them.

The students explored movement, time manipulation, symbol, focus, concentration. These elements are part of Content Area 1. The scene linkages through movement and sound were some of the best aspects of the final performance.

1.2 What aspects of the Drama syllabus are excluded by this process?

There were some areas of the syllabus that were not adequately represented by the process of Group Devised Performance used in this case. That is not to say that they could not have been incorporated into the process and, with more time, they may well have been an adjunct to the learning experience of the students.
The areas most neglected in this rehearsal method were contained in Content Area 2: Elements of Production. They included production aspects such as front of house, publicity and promotion, production management, set design and lighting design as well as industrial issues relating to actors' equity or health and safety. These areas could have been addressed by assigning tasks to small groups during the rehearsal process, by discussion with the entire group at relevant times or by improvisations involving imagined personnel or situations where these issues were central. However, they were not necessarily part of this rehearsal method.

These areas could also have been covered more satisfactorily if the tickets for the performance had a financial value that had to be collected by the students (a process which happens for other productions in the school and where the students do staff the box office).

More avenues for publicity could have been explored: e.g. radio interviews, excerpts from the production performed in designated spaces as a 'teaser' for the production.

The students could also have been involved in the budget process (minimal though that may have been) and any purchases that resulted. The set design could have been originated by one or more students. All these were possibilities not exploited, due mostly to time constraints.
2. IS THE GROUP DEVISED PERFORMANCE PIECE A USEFUL METHOD FOR DEVELOPING THE SKILLS (PERFORMANCE AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS) OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT?

2.1 What are the key performance skills that are specifically benefited by this work?

The term 'performance skills' is used here to describe attributes used by the performer in the realisation of a character in a specific context, time frame and stylistic form: skills such as "managing and responding to elements of Drama such as: tension, focus, rhythm, space, movement, mood...use of voice and movement skills, sustaining a character..." (Board of Studies, 1993, p12).

Students had a strong idea of their own character and were able to hold a consistent line throughout the piece. They showed a complex knowledge of their characters which meant they were able to see/use/understand their role in relationship to other characters in performance. This was largely developed through their research into the social, political and historical contexts of the characters as well as the lives and personalities of the characters themselves, their reflective learning (Boud et al, 1985).

The ability to take direction, that is, to hear what is being said as helpful and encouraging and not personal criticism, and then to make changes (or not, as the case may be) in one's performance as a result of consideration of the opinion of others, makes a considerable difference in/to a performer. Also the training techniques, similar to the principles of Stanislavsky, were valuable for helping the students associate with personalities and character types, facts and experiences, they themselves had not known.

The Group Devised process encouraged such open criticism from the entire group, as well as the director. It established an
air of co-operation and collaboration, and a desire to do as well as everyone else in the group. Gentle and supportive peer pressure was often more effective than a teacher directive. When the time came for students to watch the work of their peers in rehearsal there developed a healthy air of competition. Some of the weaker performers were able to see what they considered to be work of a higher standard and set about trying to re-create that level of performance for themselves.

The Group Devised process provided the students with the opportunity to experiment with theatrical styles, performance techniques, theatrical devices such as costume and make-up. The three different 'styles' the evolved, the intellectual Marat, the lyrical Mansfield and the satirical Graham, allowed for considerable performance and presentational scope. It allowed them to develop characterisation, relationships with other performers, relationship with an audience. During the process the students were encouraged and supported with the aim of giving them confidence in the ideas of conceptualisation, characterisations and individual performances.

The students agreed that they all shared a common understanding of the theme of the performance piece (Student Questionnaire 1, Question 2 What do you believe this play to be about?) This belief would have assisted their sense of working as a team towards a common goal and therefore being able to springboard off each other. The shared understanding was imparted to the audiences, who in turn were clear about the content and theme of the piece (Audience Questionnaire, Question 7).

The students also came to understand the value of research in the process of developing a character (Student Questionnaire 1, Question 4: What was the process of development (of the Group Devised Performance piece)? This aided their ability to focus and concentrate on characters and story line. Their own processes of reflection (Boud et al, 1993), during the writing of
the script, as well as the class discussions used for revisiting previous experiences gained during the rehearsal process (see chapter Four), strengthened the students' comprehension of their work.

The obvious audience appreciation on the first night's performance encouraged the students to have more confidence and their performances improved as a result. Talking with the audience after the event, (Student Questionnaire 2, Question 5 How could you tell the nature of that response?), confirmed the sense of audience appreciation.

The guidelines for Content Area 3: Performance, also call for an exploration of the use of space. By using the stage apron as well as the floor space below it, the students could explore the space close to the audience. The proscenium stage space gave depth and more conventional staging experiences while the three boxes gave height and flexibility. There were many areas of playing space within the one performance. It was possible to suggest a location or space and for the audience to accept that suggestion and suspend their disbelief.

The process endeavoured to prepare them for performance by giving them opportunities to develop script and characterisation, to improve individual work with continual rehearsal, to provide opportunities to view the work of others and to receive continual feedback in a spirit of constructive criticism.

2.2 Did this rehearsal method benefit the individual and/or the group in any ways other than as a vehicle for delivery of the 2 Unit Drama Syllabus?

There were personal skills of communication and conflict resolution that were enhanced by this process of rehearsal. Students also developed critical and analytical skills by having to be ruthlessly honest with themselves and their fellow performers about the success or otherwise of a particular
section. This became apparent when pieces were performed for their peers. Most students actively sought to produce a performance of quality and insisted that others collaborate to this end.

In terms of the Key Competencies outlined in Chapter Three, the process proved a vehicle for developing language and communication skills, particularly listening and speaking, reading and writing. It necessitated an increase in the use of problem solving skills involving analysis, critical thinking and decision making. Students had to cull the research material they gathered, find and include appropriate sections of texts and short stories into their scripts, and adapt those chosen sections to the 'performance style' that was evolving in their section of the final script. The nature of the process and the responsibility it gave to the students for the standard of the final production meant that students had to work on improving their performance/writing/structuring, etc. and make decisions that were taxing and difficult.

It also provided a basis for exploration of cultures and cultural understanding by looking at global issues such as 'revolution' and 'bi-sexuality', and personal issues such as an individual's choice and the consequences of that choice (Heathcote's sociological approach).

3. **IS THE GROUP DEvised PERFORMANCE PIECE VALID AS A MEANS OF DEVELOPING AN INTERNAL HSC ASSESSMENT TASK?**

3.1 Did the process and the final product fulfil the guidelines prescribed by the Board of Studies for an Internal Assessment Task?

The exact nature of each Internal Assessment Task is left to the individual school and teacher to design. The weightings and general nature of the tasks are specified by the Board of Studies. Each school has its own internal policy on the number of assessment tasks allowed for each subject. This regulation
has a bearing on the nature and number of tasks an individual Head of Department can request. Each subject must work in collaboration with other subjects to ensure that the students are not placed under undue pressure by having too many tasks in one particular week, or even day. If a school offers a range of subjects to its students this will also effect the number of tasks that can occur at any one time. These factors are particularly evident at a school like Barker where student welfare is paramount, as well as work commitments that are placed on staff for marking etc.

When designing assessment tasks for 2 Unit Drama students at Barker these restrictions mean that there must be a minimum number of tasks, therefore increasing the individual weightings of each task. (It is not uncommon for other schools to have several assessment tasks worth minor marks, perhaps even as low as 2%). It is not possible for departments at Barker to design a myriad of tasks with low weightings and have them approved by the Studies Department. Consequently each task is significant in the amount of allocated marks it attracts and the amount of syllabus and assessment material that needs to be covered by that task.

The Group Devised Performance fell within the area of "Workshop Activities" (Board of Studies, 1993, p39) which are designed to develop skills such as students being able to initiate a Dramatic situation in response to a given stimulus and their ability to use creative initiative to solve problems and to work independently, co-operatively and productively while demonstrating self-discipline and self-direction.

The guidelines for a workshop Internal Assessment Task are described as:

Workshop Activities - Content Areas 4 and 5
(Workshop Activities...draw on assumed knowledge from Content Areas 1,2,3) Board of studies, 1993, p39.
Workshop Activities are primarily practical in nature. There is scope in other assessment areas for written responses. Therefore this assessment task had to be practical, ie performance based, and had to draw on assumed knowledge from the Content Areas covered in the Preliminary Course (Year 11). These Content Areas of playbuilding, improvisation and performance, have already been discussed. To satisfy the guidelines for an HSC assessment task the activity had to draw on knowledge and content of the remaining Content Areas 4 & 5.

One of the Key Turning Points (Chapter Four) of the Group Devised method was the connections made, during the rehearsal process, between these final Content Areas and the narrative and thematic concerns of the performance piece. The initial idea suggested at the first class/rehearsal had to allow scope for these areas to be suggested and incorporated. Having a broad based theme, such as Individual Choices and their Consequences (Chapter One) allowed latitude for students to see connections between their own ideas and those of the individuals portrayed in their set texts. However, the way these connections were made could not have been predicted, and proved to be an exciting aspect of the process.

3.2 Did the process achieve adequate coverage of the assessment criteria for Group Presentation?

The Board of Studies uses criteria for performance assessment that were confidential to performance examiners for some time. However the basis of these criteria can be found in the syllabus. The performer's individual attributes are examined, such as voice, movement, control, energy, use of space. Also their ability to realise and sustain a role with conviction, clarity and commitment. The students use of the elements of Drama is also part of the examination criteria: such elements as tension, symbol, atmosphere, audience relationship.
This Group Devised Performance Piece was designed to satisfy those criteria by providing for the individual, and for the individual in the context of the group. Working on a performance of significant length with technical theatrical equipment in a variable performance space, using techniques from different directorial theories and practices was designed to advantage the students as much as possible. Warm-ups using voice, music, movement sequences and somatic techniques for character development were all designed to broaden the performance skills of the students in relation to the assessment criteria.

The assessors found difficulty in answering the question of meeting assessment criteria as outlined in their responses to the Assessor Questionnaire, Question 4 Do you think the production satisfied the guidelines for performance assessment for 2 Unit Drama? Perhaps that is because the criteria for assessment are not specifically laid out in the syllabus and remain the domain of the privileged few who have acted as HSC examiners.

The piece was long, running at 55 minutes, and asked a lot from the audience and from the assessors. There was no interval, and although this was the correct decision for this piece, it added to the strain on performers and audience. It is doubtful that this disadvantaged the performers or was reflected in the marks gained by the students.

The Assessors believed that because the students had equal playing time and size of roles it was difficult to separate the students and allocate marks (Assessors Questionnaire, Question 3). The students remarked that they would not have changed the process, except to work harder themselves.
3.3 Did this specific rehearsal method adequately prepare the students for performance?

The process involved students in many aspects of theatre production: writing, directing, designing, producing, performing. Time was the enemy, as it is for many performance activities. The time involved in script development was a cause for concern. There were several days where it appeared that very little was being achieved. Students were not actually performing or practising their performance skills. Did this mean they would lose those skills or not be able to translate the information they were gathering into a final performance? They were Drama students, and they were in the library. If this was a practical, experiential course, were they spending too much time in sedentary, intellectually based tasks?

This question has caused the researcher concern every time this Group Devised method has been used. The answer seems to be that if there is not a firm basis for script development then the performance piece lacks substance. That is not to say that there may not be other ways of developing that substance. For some, the material gathered in improvisations may be enough to generate a complex and demanding piece of performance. For others, following the work of Mike Leigh, development of characters first and story line after may be a successful way to work. This particular performance method required the production of a script. The script required knowledge that the students did not have. Their research added to their knowledge and the complexity of their ideas.

It has become a basic premise of this technique that improvisation stimulates ideas, research expands and solidifies those ideas, then a script is developed that becomes the foundation for performance. Once the script is coherent and substantial, the rehearsal and "layering" (Chapter Four) of that script builds to a performance, relying on performance skills taught in the Preliminary year of the course.
The students' performances did not seem to suffer from several days in the library and several more days spent in groups working on writing for the theatre. There is an argument that could be mounted to suggest that this period of research added to the complexity and richness of the character developments for each student (Boud et al, 1993). Certainly the Daily Log (Chapter Four) suggested that the students were enthusiastic about gaining more knowledge on the characters and their lives and relished the challenge of turning that into their own material for performance.

3.4 Did it provide each student with a reasonable amount of character/performance scope and exposure?

Students were responsible for developing their own roles and time exposure. If it were thought that an individual was suffering from a lack of exposure then either the teacher adjusted the piece, or more likely the students themselves sought, or were provided with by the other group members, more exposure.

The students valued this rehearsal process because they were able to put forward and follow their own ideas, giving them a sense of ownership. (See Heathcote and Tarlinton, Chapter Three). It was this ownership that inspired them to do their best work, for they realised that they were 'on display' and were responsible for what they produced. They found it difficult to complain about an inadequate script, or inadequate roles, for they invented them themselves.

3.5 What were the drawbacks of the process in relation to its use as an Internal Assessment Task?

The Group Devised Performance was a very specific Internal Assessment Task designed to meet the criteria for one assessment activity. Given the context of developing this task, as outlined above, and the restrictions that context imposed, the Group Devised method did not cover all possible alternatives of the definition of "Workshop Activities". There was no scope,
for example, given to "Oral Reflection" (Board of Studies, 1993, p39) within the method devised. It would have been possible for this, and other specific criteria, to have been included in the assessment process. There could have been assessment days set aside, where students reflected back to the class their progress and findings in their specific research areas. The progress of the making of the performance could have been designed to be a cumulative assessment task made up of different elements, oral reflection, journal keeping, design etc, that amounted to a weighting of 20%.

There would be advantages and disadvantages of this new procedure. Firstly, each element would need to be clearly defined, with advance warning given to students stipulating the assessment criteria for each smaller task. The rehearsal process would need to be interrupted to allow for such presentations. Would this then mean that the students would gear their work for the smaller assessment task and not for the final performance product? What effect would that have on the final performance? Is it true that the tunnel vision required to produce the performance was a benefit for the students personally and in terms of the performance assessment marks they gained? These questions may well form another area of study.

One advantage of including different and smaller tasks within the process may be that some students, perhaps those not particularly good at performance, may have been given an opportunity to excel in a different area. Whether the school would have allowed for the development of several small tasks is unknown, even though experience would make it appear unlikely.
4. **WHAT WERE THE CONTINGENCIES THAT WERE BY-PRODUCTS OF THE REHEARSAL METHOD?**

4.1 Were there any surprising findings generated by this process and what were the benefits or downfalls of these by-products?

The most surprising events generated by the process centred on the breakdown of groups on intellectual and gender lines and the work that these groups developed that reflected that gender and intellectual bias. Given that there was a relatively even distribution of gender within each class, the reasons for the break along gender lines were complex and not fully investigated. Some determining criteria may have been: the boys were familiar with each other having been at the same school for a longer period of time, the boys may also have been more set in their ideas and concepts and may have been closer friends and more sure of each other’s responses and attitudes. The girls may have been threatened by the bravado of the boys and found working together to be a 'safer' environment.

These are mere suppositions and not proven fact, and here again could be another area for further study. There are also questions here about basic gender differences: why was the boys' piece more physical and threatening, why was the girls' piece lyrical and movement orientated? The teacher made no suggestion along those lines, so the choice was made by the students themselves.

Another surprising development in the rehearsal process was the evolution of the format of three sections and the fact that these three sections became three different historical time frames. This led to the connections being made to the syllabus Content Areas and the resultant extra research information the students gathered on these topics. This benefited their final written examination results. The three-stage structural breakdown of the piece also made it easier to be divided amongst the two classes.
The use of several actors playing the same character in different situations enabled more students to have significant performance exposure and freed them up for other roles, such as musicians and even stage crew.

The experimentation with words and language in each section of the final play broadened the students' experience and expertise with speaking and added to their general knowledge of theatrical communication.

One of the most rewarding by-products was the development of student ownership of the music that was created for the piece. The electronic nature of that music also added a previously unexpected dimension that allowed for exciting scene transitions as well sound effects.

The large audience turn-out for the production was very unexpected. Their enthusiasm and appreciation was very encouraging for the performers.

One of the most interesting results from the data collected for research was the realisation that audiences and performers may generate their perceptions of a performance from very different criteria (Chapter Five).

The confidence that the actors gained by audience appreciation and admiration for their work was encouraging for them for their future work in the subject leading to their final HSC performances.

Importantly, nearly all the students achieved high performance marks for this assessment, thus enhancing their confidence in their own process. The students stated clearly in their questionnaire answers that they enjoyed the process and the final product.
4.2 What would/could be done differently in the future?

There are two areas of interest here: the rehearsal method and the research methodology used to document that method. With the benefit of hindsight, the rehearsal method may have contained more use of multi-media, projection, computer technology, film etc. There could (should?) have been more time allocated to rehearsals with the entire student body. This may have improved the pace and rhythm of the piece.

The research methodology could also have included more independent student recording. This may have verified the findings in a more objective way. Some research methods were not exploited, such as photographs, student journals, written reports of the observations of others.

5. BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

5.1 FOR DRAMA TEACHERS

Teachers of senior Drama students need to find ways of covering the significant amount of material contained within the HSC 2 Unit Drama Syllabus, often under pressured time constraints, with rehearsal and performance space in short supply, dated technical equipment and limited expertise in the use of that equipment, minimal experience in teaching Drama and probably no experience in performance themselves. This rehearsal method might provide assistance to these teachers in covering aspects of the syllabus (as well as areas not listed in the syllabus) while exposing students to a range of practical and technical elements involved in live theatre production.

Improvisation, playbuilding and performance are key areas of the current HSC syllabus. The Group Devised Performance method travels progressively through all three areas. Working from improvisation encourages strong reliance on actor involvement and physicalisation rather than extensive technical equipment and rigid 'blocking' by a director. Playbuilding, and in this case the production
of a written script, provides students with knowledge and first hand experience of Dramatic structure. The final performance of this collaborative process is often greater than the 'sum of the parts' - greater than the vision of a single director. The process is not solely teacher driven.

This specific Group Devised process necessitates the production of a written 'text' that can then be broken into small sections to be worked on in 40 or 50 minute lesson times. Building a public performance of considerable length in short sessions each day, in the context of other commitments and demands placed on students and teachers, poses certain problems. Devising a rehearsal method that can be practiced within the confines of a school timetable and with a variety of non-selected students (there is no audition or selection process for the particular students used in this study) is of paramount importance in trying to achieve a collaborative learning environment as well as producing a public performance that satisfies the criteria of excellence a school may set.

5.2 FOR THE SCHOOL

It is an aim of this particular school to produce work of a high standard in all aspects of school life: academic, sporting, and the arts. The Group Devised Performance method requires students to build roles and Dramatic structures from scratch and allows them to mould their characterisations to suit their personal performance strengths. The research component of the process encourages independent learning and may have an effect on the quality of the end product. These steps may have a corresponding effect on the students' final HSC marks. The Drama students at Barker achieve very high HSC marks, and this is in keeping with the philosophy and aims of the school.

Public displays do not happen in non-performance subjects and they can often be a draw-card for enrolment in Drama as a subject as well as generally attracting new students to the school. The opportunity to view a public performance by its students and witness an HSC assessment task in progress can raise the public profile of the school
and demonstrate public accountability. It can also be entertaining. Students sometimes choose this particular school because of the possibility of appearing in the high quality theatre productions consistently staged at Barker.

5.3 FOR THE GROUP

The significance for the group of students devising the performance piece rests with the context and content of the phenomenon and its process of action/interaction. Each person is required to act and interact with all others. The nature of HSC assessment marking means the students are ranked against each other, but while they are marked individually, their interdependence is of primary concern and the success (or failure) of that relationship can be reflected in the final performance. A group that works well together tends to produce more cohesive work of a higher standard than a group which is plagued by infighting and members who are reluctant to cooperate or contribute to the 'team'. There is also the experience of performance and the sense of achievement that goes with that activity.

5.4 FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

Drama can develop interpersonal communication skills, self expression, concentration, imagination, initiative, leadership, public speaking, team management, self-esteem and problem solving. (Drama Syllabus, pp 7-10). Working as a team on a 'level playing field' can bring participants into conflict with others. However, the resolution of this conflict can assist in the personal development of the students and provide them with skills that will assist them in other areas of their lives.

...sharing a common meaning in improvisation breeds social motivation because mutual discovery is co-existence; and imaginative transformation of materials brings the recreation of a world structure which deeply affects their inner being. (Courtney, 1989, p103)
6. FURTHER STUDY

Grounded theory and action research methods have wide implications in the development of Group Devised Performance in that they articulate the process by which this occurs. It would be interesting to see if this rehearsal method has wider implications for other environments and situations which never lead to public performance. The techniques could be adopted for tertiary performing arts courses especially in the early years of performance training. As a directorial process, it could also be adopted for a course in teaching theatre/film directing skills, or for training Drama teachers.

The methods also encourage many different performance styles. The resultant product can have integrity and diversity that could not be generated by a single artist with a single (or even complex) concept.

The methods could also be used to advantage in professional performance companies: dance, Drama, opera and theatre where directorial dictatorships are the norm. The by-product of involvement, commitment and the sharing of common goals is invaluable for the culture and spirit of a performance organisation.

There is the potential to use the collaborative process and research methods of this study in corporate institutions for training in verbal and non-verbal communication between employees and management. Some of the techniques of discussion, research, improvisation and role-playing are already being used in corporate team-building sessions where identification with the situations of others is sought. (Nida run a Corporate Program, for example.)

Many contemporary management theorists, such as Dunford, discuss "group think" (Dunford, 1992) and the effect group behaviour has on meetings and decision making processes. Dunford includes theories about the relationship of people and their seating positions around a meeting table, and how people convey meaning through gesture. There is also a great deal of management discussion about the culture of a organisation and the way individual members build and relate to that culture (Dunford,
1992, Mintzberg, 1989). These may all be exploited in Drama exercises. Heathcote was already using her version of these methods with large multi-national corporations in the 1980's.

Role-playing is already being used as an effective device for developing communication skills in diverse organisations, even across language and cultural barriers because it forces people to listen, accept and help others. The ability to assist in solving interpersonal conflicts could be of great value to counselling institutions, rehabilitation centres and language schools.

Other issues that emerged from the research and which could be followed in further studies were centred on the actor/audience/student-teacher/director roles. How do these roles interact and change during the course of the rehearsal period? Do they have any bearing on the final product? How much of a contributing force are these relationships to the process and the product? What happens when change is introduced into the process?

The area of perceptions and assumptions also proved to be full of possible points of investigation. How do the audience perceptions of a production differ from the actor's? How can this be measured? Does it have any relevance to general theories of perception? How can it be relevant to contemporary society as a whole? Could this methodology be used to explore such ideas? These areas all warrant further research.

The rehearsal method outlined and analysed in this study has several advantages, especially when used in the specific context of the Higher School Certificate and students studying 2 Unit Drama. It was a very effective method of covering the syllabus, experiencing and improving the skills of the students and providing an arena for the display of their abilities. The method involved the sharing of directorial responsibilities and an increase in the 'pool' of ideas that could only benefit the performers, the director, the performance and the audience.
APPENDICES
## 1: SELECTED REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

OUTLINE

and *that* made all the difference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>Costume/Set /Lighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>MON</td>
<td>group</td>
<td>finish writing scene 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TUES</td>
<td>group</td>
<td>finish scene 1</td>
<td>use the black box from back stage</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WED</td>
<td>GROUP PERF</td>
<td>individual projects</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>THUR</td>
<td>GROUP PERF</td>
<td>write scene 2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>FRI</td>
<td>GROUP PERF</td>
<td>perform in class</td>
<td>use black box material</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>put scene 1 &amp; 2 together</td>
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<td>Day</td>
<td>Task Details</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **MON** | Group Perf | run scenes 1 & 2  
ckm to put together over w/e  
publish a completed script of 1/2 |
| **TUES** | Group Perf | write scene 3 |
| **WED** | Group Perf | finish writing scene 3  
perform to class |
| **THUR** | Group Perf | run scenes 1, 2, 3  
music  
sfx  
sound |
| **FRI** | Group Perf | add music  
evening rehearsal:  
run adding music, setting, entire cast  
3.30-5.30 first act  
6.30-9.00 second act |
### MARCH PERFORMANCE REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
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<th>OUTCOMES</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
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<td>WED</td>
<td>GROUP</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9.20-10.10</td>
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<td>1.40-2.30</td>
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<td>THUR</td>
<td>GROUP</td>
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<td>11.25</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.35-2.25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2: WEEKLY REHEARSAL SCHEDULE
and *that* made all the difference

3: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE #1

1. Why are you involved in this production?

2. What do you believe this play to be about?

3. How did you arrive at the story?

4. Can you describe the process of development of the scenes you have worked on?

5. What were the problems associated with this way of working?

6. What were the advantages of working in this way?

7. What would you do differently now?

8. How do you feel you are progressing?
and that made all the difference

4: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE #2

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. Why are you at Barker?

2. Why do you do drama?

3. Do you undertake any drama activities outside of Barker? Can you list them?

4. Can you describe your background?

PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS:

1. What role(s) did you play in the production?

2. How do you believe you came to play that role?
Do you think there were any advantages or disadvantages in working with members of the opposite sex?

What do you think was the audience response to the production?

How could you tell the nature of this response?

How do you think the performance went?

Do you have any other comments to make about the process of developing the performance, the performance "style" or your role in the performance?
5: ASSESSORS QUESTIONNAIRE #1

1. Why were you asked to assess the students in the above production?

2. Why did you accept the request?

3. Did you find the production a satisfactory vehicle for assessment of individual students? Why?

4. Do you think the production satisfied the guidelines for performance assessment for 2Unit HSC Drama?

5. What do you think was the general audience response to the production?
1. How do you think the performance went?

2. What were the good things about the production?

3. What were the less than satisfactory aspects of the production?

13. Any other comments?
and that made all the difference

6: AUDIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE #1

1. On what night did you come and see the above production?

2. Why did you decide to come to see the production?

3. Did you come alone to see the production?

4. How long have you been at Barker?

5. Have you seen any other productions here?

6. Are you a drama student?

7. What did you think the production was trying to say?
1. What do you think was the general audience response to the production?

2. How could you tell the nature of this response?

3. How do you think the performance went?

4. What were the good things about the production?

5. What were the less than satisfactory aspects of the production?

6. Any other comments?
and that made all the difference

ASSSESSMENT INFORMATION

As part of their Y12 HSC 2Unit Drama syllabus students are required to participate in live theatre performance. Visiting the theatre is one thing... performing oneself is different again. Not all of these students wish to pursue an acting career, but all of them gain "life skills" by forcing themselves to undertake the rigours of rehearsal, performance, and self-exploration.

This performance assessment task is based on concepts, themes and theatrical "styles" explored in our study of Content Area 4 (Theatre in Australian society, Alma De Groen) and Content Area 5 (Theatre is societies other than Australian, Peter Brook). De Groen was originally from New Zealand and is noted for her feminist plays, like The Rivers of China and The Girl Who Saw Everything. Peter Brook is arguably the most influential director in 20th century theatre. He began at 20 years of age directing in the West End in London, but left the commercial theatre scene to begin his own multi-cultural company in Paris in 1972. His productions have toured the world and performed at several Adelaide Festivals.

The Rivers of China details two different worlds: the 1890's world of New Zealand short story writer Katherine Mansfield, and a fictitious contemporary world referred to as a female dystopia, where the power roles are reversed and women hold key positions, as well as the ability to turn a man to stone if he causes any trouble (The Medusa Look). De Groen juxtaposes these two time frames, one detailing the life of Mansfield at the Institute of Harmonious Development of Man run by G.I Gurdjieff, and the other the story of "The Man" and his recovery from attempted suicide in Sydney 1996, where he is hypnotised into believing he has the soul and character of Mansfield.

REHEARSAL PROCESS:

This piece has been devised by the students. There are two classes of Year 12 with 16 students in each class. They have employed some processes of "playbuilding" to construct, from an original theme/idea, a piece of live theatre. We arrived at an idea we wished to explore and worked in small groups of 4-5 for 6 weeks, breaking the story into small sections, and scripting those sections. Each class has had very specific areas to work on. One class devised the scenes of all characters before they were 18 years old, the other class worked on the three options that were presented to the characters around the age of 18, and explored what might have happened to them if they had chosen different paths.

Two weeks before the performance date we put both classes together for the first time and discovered the confusion that was before us. We then had to tease the story out from what was a lot of cryptic short unconnected scenes.
It is a very interesting way to work, and one which gives the students ownership and control over the product, as well as allowing them extensive creative involvement, honing performance, directing, scripting and staging skills. As well as forcing them to compromise and work as a collaborative team.

STORY OUTLINE

THE THREE NARRATIVES:

JEAN -PAUL MARAT
Marat was born May 24, 1743 in Switzerland. His father, Monsieur Mara, was forced into exile from Sardinia because of his conversion to Protestantism. Jean Paul was to become a leading Revolutionary figure. At the age of 16 he went to Paris to study medicine, like his father, and in 1762 he left for England in the hope of pursuing a career in English political circles. He passionately wanted to be a writer, and published "An Essay on Man" while he was in London. He personally outlaid the cost of publication, and the book was a failure. Marat returned to Paris in 1776 and was posted as physician to the bodyguards of Comte d'Artois. Marat was said to have an acrimonious nature and in 1783 he was asked to resign from d'Artois. On the eve of the French Revolution he was poor and unemployed. He dreamt of becoming an editor and published a magazine called L'Ami du Peuple. He was elected (controversially) to the National Convention and was President of the Jacobin Society. He was renowned for his lucid and implacable criticism of leaders of the Revolution, and also for his brutal and bloodthirsty acts.

We have based our adaptation of Marat on excerpts from The Persecution And Assassination Of Jean-Paul Marat As Performed By The Inmates Of Charenton Asylum Under The Direction Of The Marquis De Sade (Peter Weiss, Marion Boyars, New York 1965). This 'play within a play' is a political debate between the French Revolutionary figure, Marat, and the sadist and self-professed individualist The Marquis De Sade. Marat was believed by some to be a blood thirsty tyrant, a megalomaniac. He died in his bath tub, suffering from an incurable skin disease, murdered by the Girondist, Charlotte Corday.

Cast List:
Hugh Hassey
James Moore
Lachlan Milne
Duncan McDuie
James Lygo
KATHERINE MANSFIELD:
Born in New Zealand of wealthy cultured parents, Katherine travelled with her family to England at the age of 9. She loved the "homeland" and vowed to return. She had several love affairs, with man and women. Finally she returned to England and married John Middleton Murry, a literary critic, and together they had a very tumultuous relationship until her death from TB at the age of 33. She always regretted that she never wrote a novel or poem, but her short stories are poetic, delicate and ironic. They are characterised by a subtle sensitivity to mood and emotion, revealing inner conflicts her characters face and resolve. Her style was much influenced by that of Russian playwright Anton Chekhov. We have used exerts from the following stories: Bliss, A Garden Party, An Indiscreet Journey.

Cast list
Anika Burgess
Jana McQueen
Genevieve Norrie
Jeffrey Waugh
Alicia Swallow
Shelley Hill
Denise Laird
Rebecca Wards
Danae Blundell-Wignall
Penny Packard
Lauren Charlwood

GRAHAM MACKENZIE
Graham is a typical North Shore boy, born to an average middle class family, with middle class values. He lives through a predictable childhood, bothersome older brother, fights at school etc. At the age of 17 he has a significant dispute with his family (just like the other characters in the play) and has three options open to him: the social path of fun and lack of responsibility, the road to madness and obscurity, or fame and life as an artist. But for Graham his future is just that...the future.

Cast list
Benjamin Bathgate
James Grellman
Matthew Henricks
Andrew Hill
Andrew Springer
Alexander Dechnicz
Monika Meldrum
Geoffrey Thomas
Adam Grace
Emma Ramsay
David Whittingham
Mark Drew

We have tried to explore the questions of CHOICE. Every decision has consequences. If we take one path it leads to...if we take another it has a totally different sequence of consequences. And we may never know what would have happened if...
AND THAT MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

So reads the final stanza of Robert Frost's famous poem, The Road Not Taken (1916). Andrew Springer's recitation of these lines at the close of the Year 12 ensemble's performance focused audience attention on the production's central concern: individuals make choices in life and they must then face the consequences of these choices.

The dramatic context in which the ensemble explored the nature of choice involved a pastiche of three narratives. The first, set in the late eighteenth century, was an adaptation of excerpts from Peter Weiss's play, The Persecution and Assassination of Jean-Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of Clarendon Asylum Under the direction of The Marquis De Sade. The second used excerpts from three stories by the New Zealand writer, Katherine Mansfield, with the time frame being early this century, whilst the final narrative explored the choices faced in the present time by fictional North Shore boy, Graham Mackenzie.

Though each narrative incorporated a vastly different social milieu, the production linked the three by a common structure. The first half of each piece looked at the characters' lives up to the age of 17 when a family argument took place and the second half explored the choices the characters then faced. Jean-Paul Marat and Katherine Mansfield make choices which bring them fame whilst Graham Mackenzie tries several options imaginatively but at the end of the play still has his life before him.

Incorporating this framework into such an eclectic production cannot have been easy. The program explains the nature of the rehearsal process: the two Year 12 drama classes worked separately for six weeks with one class devising scenes for the three characters before the turning point of the family argument while the other worked on the choices faced by the characters after the argument. Then came two weeks of interaction prior to the performance dates when students had to 'tease the story' out of their devised scenes.
The result was extraordinary, with moments of intense theatrical poignancy and some exceptional individual performances. Thirty-two students were being assessed on the first night. In each piece the central character was played by a number of students. In Marat, Tamara Salamacha's Coppelia-like rendition of the murderess, Charlotte Corday, was outstanding whilst the at times nonsensical, stylized dialogue of Lachlan Milne and Duncan McDuie in a cameo scene delighted the audience. Jeff Waugh seems to have a happy knack of scoring plum roles: who else would be able to make-up as Aladin Sane and be the sole male (and father-figure) in the Katherine Mansfield piece, having no less than ten girls in tow?

There were some very good performances by those playing Katherine, and as her mother, Anika Burgess was well suited.

It was the Graham Mackenzie narrative that audiences most enjoyed, probably because of the obvious parody of life in the raw for an adolescent living in the nineties on the North Shore. James Grellman was popular as Graham’s bully-boy older brother (I wonder why?) as was Ben Bathgate’s delightful rendition of the super-nerd. Mark Drew swapped his tutu for an apron and played Graham’s mum while Alex Dechnicz replete with Split Enz hairstyle gave a memorable, if slightly irreverent, performance as the minister.

Technically this production broke new ground at Barker, with its use of analogue sonic manipulation to produce a range of sound effects and an on-going sound track for the scenes which heightened dramatic tension effectively. Nic Littlemore, Lachlan Milne and Andrew Christie are to be congratulated for their innovative composition and operating. As Marat, Andrew Christie also sang unaccompanied and Adam Grace did similarly in the Graham Mackenzie piece. In both cases, the singing added another theatrical dimension to the performances.

Over five hundred students, parents and teachers watched this production. Whilst many found the material difficult, the audience reacted strongly to the range of life experiences being presented, whether these involved the murder of Marat in his bath, the risque bi-sexual loves of Katherine Mansfield or the inimitable Graham, daring to be different from the rest. For nearly two hours we were held, watching the choices made and consequences faced, wondering about our own lives and the path we are taking.

ALISTER WILKINSON

The Barker June 1996
SUPERVISOR'S REPORT
Notes for Lucy

Lighting Suggestions

You need 2 towers - scaffolding will do - with wheels for either side - to carry alternative lighting. They can also give extra attachment area by extending with booms on the inside edge.

Multiple casting a good idea - but the MARAT needs to be FAR more dangerous.

Your  Voice levels / working voice / directional voice
       Ability to convey meaning - not good. All one level.

Physical warm-up  -  aerobic / stretch
       breath / vocal warm-up /
       reflective memory exercise
       based on previous reh.

Some general improvement after w/u. I'd take it further and get them to talk about their last rehearsal and what they felt about it or something.

Overall - pretty organized but not everyone on time.

Who wrote the script? Why are they reading?  
Student interest level quite high.

Student input invited on regular basis throughout. Helped student maintain focus.
A substitute was no prob. for an absent student. Students coped with impro.
situations well.

But students might benefit from some voice consult. Do you do any?

Good side coaching: What do you mean?
What is your intention?  
Why doesn't it work?  

Masking / talking to the floor /

Awareness of the whole stage / all other actors not bad.

Composition for set or action.  Piquant

Movement quality defined.

Q/A process good. Gave students a lot of input. Productive.

L. quite talented. Any aspirations?

Voice level. Highest in room. Destructive but how's the strain? / Could hear you better when you used a softer lower tone.

Verbal impetus throughout rather than physical. Even the students know this - often the discussion was about how to 'move' it. What is their 'common knowledge' in movement?

Did you do a series of w/shops or classes to explore the body semiotics of the piece? They seem to have no overall understanding of the physicalization of their characters or a common range of 'physicalizations' to draw on.

The young gay guy is great but affected. Some lovely voice quality.

Sometimes the discussion is very focused.

Adding the music in was an organic approach.

Check the French pronunciations.  
The distorted body scene - it's only the upper body (ARMS and faces) that are involved. The reactions to the 'extractions' aren't clear.

Some nice ideas with the music and its integration as comment.

Dance needs to be in time.

How was the script arrived at?

What are the other students doing?

? Piece which only uses 1 female reason

? Piece which only uses 1 man?

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This second piece - Kathryn Mansfield

Multiple casting a good idea.

Generally more organized than the last one. Aren't girls wonderful?
Focus good. Concentration / discussion.

Sue (blonde) a bit of a lass. Bit dull. Glasses. Bit of a critic?
The restaurant scene not precise enough.
Deprecation
Sense of occasion.

Clear - choice context
Use of image / physicality / non-verbal
Theatrically engrossing
Use of 'real' language - Stoppard / James
Good storytelling techniques.
LIGHTING - CHAT BETWEEN ARISTOS?
Use of big words wrongly pronounced or unclear.
Foreign words ditto
piquant / anthropophagy

The students who could do it were doing it well - some sense of meaning, thought, and feeling. They could also handle the irony.

Clearly what is needed is more time - not available?
Direction clear
Process clear

Controlled / flexible.

Throat voices - eliminating that
that would help

They are all a bit 'British'. Is this seen as a 'desirable'? We are in Australia, not London. It sounds as though they are putting on the accent. Also muffled creativity in expression and clarity by torturing the vowels. French accent ditto. Any help from staff?

Script well constructed and written.

Physicalizations good - however:
Pace. Something I noticed in rehearsal.

All the same throughout - very measured.
Lack of variety in speed and dynamics.
A dream - but you’ve been in one and so have we / all the play.

There’s a reluctance to deal with the ideas in the dialogue in terms of tension and conflict and rhythm.

Use of music good throughout.

The ‘common man’? and a ‘silver spoon’?

There is something odd about the parallels being drawn. What are you trying to say?

Is this related to the audience.

Somehow, the issues don’t stack up?

We slipped from the heroic and mythic to the ordinary and silly. Was this intentional? It seemed to me that you sent the issues up. Does it change?

Or was this 'light' finish intentional?

Where was the choice?

On no level did this equate. It was really trite and played for the laughs. I love comedy but I can’t really cope with this “Rinse the Blood Off my Toga” stuff.

This one had the last directorial spirit. Camp and over the top. Derivative of TV comedy shows.


* The good thing was the use of pace and dynamics! Why not in the other bits?
Too long. The process works but selectively is everything.

Looney bin. Hmmm. A sending again.

Extremely self-indulgent.

Some clever moments throughout this piece - this creativity. Could have fed into the last 2.

Problem: how to make the levels between TEXT & PERFORMANCE. It’s much easier in material which is not TEXT BASED. The idea is to give value to the idea, not the printed word.

Light / low dance irrelevant. Poor directional choice. Wind down. Tedium. Too late for this stuff. Went nowhere.

University? An option? For these kids?
All the shouting in the world won't help if the overall pace isn't indicative of the dynamic change of the arena.

Narrator: great vocal range
Charlotte: great vocal range

Good register shift to K. Mansfield.
Those kinds of dynamics are essential.

Beauchamp? (Bucham?)
pron.

Imagery a lot clearer with the girls.
They also were more flexible physically.

But again: the repetitive pace is very dull. It betrays a lack of thought, feeling, and involvement with the ideas.

The Katherines don't talk to us, they only say words. The Narrator was v. good at times. I believed him - but not the K's.

Pace? Repetitive vocal rhythms.
Remembering lines.

There must be a way in this excellent process to improve the meaning output.

The strong messages in Katherine were muffled by the girls' lack of ability (?) to identify with the emotional content.

I don't think it was the direction unless you failed to take the water jump. The issues were made explicit in the dialogue but not the performance.

The Mother raised the ante, but the action in the scene remained slow paced in contrast.

Matching up the dynamics is part of the trick.

Katherine in the 'Mother' scene dropped it.

Sequence not strong. By the beach. NVG. Beryl, etc. Oh dear! A tedious scene. What did it achieve?
Lack of definition. Baby scene OK.

Meal scenes v. poor in general. Indefinite physicalization in all of them.

Fontanbleau scene interesting.

Again - Pace repetitive.

Poor use of pause and pace - it's a trap easy to fall into. The background patterns are good but the counterpoint needs to be more acutely defined, i.e. dialogue needs to be twice the pace and quite animated to make the point.

Psychiatrist not convincing. NO IDEA.
American accent? Why?

Art class? I don't know about this. Doesn't ring true with the rest of this section.

However - here is an actual issue. Comparable with the rest. The problem was he said, "It is only a fruit bowl", i.e. he denigrated his own art and therefore undermined his achievement. Why are the 'heavies' foreign?
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