

# SWA Induction Session

## Edexcel A Level Drama and Theatre Studies

1st July 2024



Mrs Keen  
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# Objectives

- Practical intro to one of our 2 set text *Woyzeck*
- Intro to the key techniques used by our first practitioner, Bertolt Brecht
- Intro to the whole course
- Understand the Summer Task

# Set Text 1

## *Woyzeck*, by Georg Buchner: The basics

- Woyzeck is the all-purpose servant of a German Captain. The Captain considers him amoral and stupid, largely because Woyzeck is poor. Woyzeck also makes money by allowing the Doctor to experiment on him. He has eaten nothing but peas in order to prove some unstated scientific premise.
- The Doctor and Captain are major characters in the play but they have no proper names. They are meant to be representative of the forces that manipulate humanity while falling short of full human status themselves. The Doctor has no compassion; he experiments merely to see the results, not to do good. At one point, he throws his cat out of the window to watch how it will land.
- The Captain has a strict, unreflective sense of morality that is rooted in his ignorant and bigoted assumption that class and privilege define humans. This prevents him from even considering that Woyzeck's is capable of deeper thinking and indeed a more complex, perceptive morality. Woyzeck himself is one of the first Working Class (anti)-Heroes, sacrificed to powers larger than himself.

## Scene 5

*The CAPTAIN on his chair awaiting a shave, WOYZECK comes over to him*

CAPTAIN: You always look so wrought! A good citizen doesn't look like that, Woyzeck, not a good citizen with a clear conscience. . . Say something, Woyzeck. – How's the weather today?

WOYZECK: Bad, sir, bad. Windy.

CAPTAIN: I'll say. There's a real wind out there, I can feel it. 'Makes my back prickle, as if a mouse w's running up and down it. . . (Slyly.) I should say it was a north-southerly.

WOYZECK: Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN: Ha ha ha! North-southerly. Ha ha ha!! - God, but the man's dense, horribly dense. You're a good fellow, Woyzeck, but (Solemnly) you've no morals. Morals are . . well, observing morality, you understand. That's the way of it. You've got a child without the church's blessing, as our reverend padre calls it - without the church's blessing; that's his expression.

WOYZECK: Sir, God the Father isn't going to worry if nobody said amen at the poor worm's making. The Lord said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me'.

CAPTAIN: What do you mean? What an odd thing to say. What you said, I mean, not what he said. - You're confusing the issue.

WOYZECK: Being poor. . D'you see, sir? Money, money! If you've no money - , Just you try getting one of our sort into the world in a moral way; though we're flesh and blood as well. We never get much luck, here or hereafter. If we went to heaven I expect they'd put us to work on the thunder.

CAPTAIN: Woyzeck, you've no sense of virtue. You're not a virtuous man! Flesh and blood?! When I'm lying by my window, after it's been raining, and I see a pair of white stockings twinkling down the street, hop-skip . . Dammit, Woyzeck, I feel desire then! I'm flesh and blood, too. But my virtue, Woyzeck, my virtue! - So what do I do? I keep saying to myself: You are a virtuous man . . (Maudlin) a good man, a good man.

# Woyzeck, by Georg Buchner: The Doctor and Woyzeck

In Year 12 you will be planning a concept for your own production of Woyzeck, to write about in the written exam in Year 13. You will be using the techniques of Bertolt Brecht as part of your directorial and design concept.

## **Brechtian technique is:**

A technique that creates a distance between the audience and the action on stage, making them more critical observers rather than passive spectators. Brecht often used music and song in his plays to comment on the action and convey ideas.

Direct address – engaging the audience by ‘breaking the fourth wall’ and speaking to them

Spass (using humour to make a serious point)

Gestus – a clear movement or gesture that defines a character

**Apply each of these 3 concepts to Scene 5. Work in 2x2s, or in the event that you are a 3, rotate so that each person is a director for one of the concepts. Choose a short section of the scene to workshop and perform.**

- It is set in a freak show - like the Greatest Showman etc. Direct address, using ridicule to gain laughter, is key
- It is a young children's show, with everything over-pronounced and exaggerated and suggests how patronising those in power are.
- It is a dystopian world in the near future where paranoia, fear and survival instincts are overt amongst the powerless. Brutal and ruthless oppression of those not in power is completely blatant and goes unchallenged.

# The A Level drama course has 3 components, similar to GCSE

## Component 1: Devising 40% of the final mark

Students will be divided into two groups and will be given an extract from a performance text and a theatre practitioner as stimuli.

### Content overview

- Devise an original performance piece.
- Use **one key extract** from a performance text and a theatre practitioner as stimuli.
- Performer or designer routes available.

### Assessment overview

- Internally assessed and externally moderated.
- There are **two parts** to the assessment:
  - a) A portfolio (60 marks)  
2500–3000 words
  - b) The devised performance/design realisation (20 marks).

## Component 2: Text in Performance 20% of the final mark

### Content overview

- A group performance/design realisation of **one key extract** from a performance text.
- A monologue or duologue performance/design realisation from **one key extract** from a different performance text.

### Assessment overview

- Externally assessed by a visiting examiner.
- Group performance/design realisation: worth 36 marks.
- Monologue or duologue/design realisation: worth 24 marks.

## Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice Written examination: 2 hours 30 minutes 40% of the qualification

### Content overview

- Live theatre evaluation – choice of performance.
- Practical exploration and study of an **Equus by Peter Schaffer** – focusing on how this can be realised for performance.
- Practical exploration and interpretation of **Woyzeck by George Buchner** in light of **theatre practitioner Bertolt Brecht** – focusing on how this text could be reimagined for a contemporary audience.

### Section A: Live Theatre Evaluation

- 20 marks
- Students answer one extended response question from a choice of two requiring them to analyse and evaluate a live theatre performance they have seen.
- Students are allowed to bring in theatre evaluation notes of up to a maximum of 500 words.

### Section B: Page to Stage: Realising a Performance Text

- 36 marks.
- Students answer two extended response questions based on an **unseen extract** from the play **Equus** by Peter Schaffer.
- Students will demonstrate how they, as theatre makers, intend to realise the extract in performance.
- Students answer from the perspective of a performer and a designer.
- Performance texts for this section are not allowed in the examination as the extracts will be provided.

### Section C: Interpreting a Performance Text

- 24 marks.
- Students will answer one extended response question from a choice of two using **Woyzeck** by George Buchner.
- Students will demonstrate how their re-imagined production concept will communicate ideas to a contemporary audience.
- Students will also need to outline how the work of Bertolt Brecht has influenced their overall production concept and demonstrate an awareness of the performance text in its original performance conditions.
- Students are allowed to bring clean copies of their performance texts for this section, but no other printed materials.



# Summer Task!

- Attend the theatre trip on July 17<sup>th</sup> to *People, Places and Things* by Duncan Macmillan at the Trafalgar Theatre, London.
- Using the guidance that I will provide, write a Live Theatre Evaluation essay about *People, Places and Things*.
- Research the different productions of *Woyzeck* over the years. Look for reviews and images and create a ppt presentation entitled *Woyzeck in Production*. Include useful details about **the very first production** at the Residenz Theatre, Munich, as well as 2 more recent productions.