



Year 12

Summer Transition Work

Drama

Exam Board – OCR

Mr Lund

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A Level Drama and Theatre

Summer Research and Preparation

Well done on choosing this amazing course which I can't wait to teach you! I'm very much looking forward to working with you all, both familiar faces and the new people who will join us in September. The course is very practically based and any written work will spring from this. However, as we're not in the workshop studio together yet, I would like you to complete some tasks which will prepare you brilliantly for the beginning of your learning journey.

We will explore a huge range of different texts whilst you study the course, some of which will link to coursework that you'll complete and others will pertain to the written examination. There will be a real emphasis on studying these plays from a practical perspective in both cases. I would urge you to buy your own copies of all of them, which will allow you to make any notes on them throughout the course.

Task 1

Buy and read the entirely absorbing play, '**Fear and Misery of the Third Reich**' by Bertolt Brecht. Become absorbed by the powerful imagery created, intriguing characters and 'Epic Theatre' inspired structure. Begin to consider the history and context that influenced the conception of the piece and what premise this play might have for performance in society today. As a director, I would like you to construct a series of 5 sensory mood boards and/or mind-maps which illustrate your initial staging ideas for how you would produce this amazing play. The responses should include ideas for Staging (*including spectator positioning*), Lighting, Sound (*Diegetic, Non-Diegetic and Meta-Diegetic*). Set, Costume, Projections/Live Cameras, Acting style (*Naturalistic, Stylised and Ensemble*) and a Semiotic response (*Representation and Symbolism*) which can include any other imagery which you feel is conjured by this amazing piece of writing. If you are unfamiliar with any of the terms mentioned above that is ok, conduct some research and become acquainted with what each one pertains to.

Task 2

There are two other key texts which I would like you to read, familiarise yourself with and conduct some preparatory exploration of prior to starting the course which are studied for the Written Exam. The first is '**The Love of the Nightingale**' by Timberlake Wertenbaker (I play that I starred in when I studied my A Levels!). It is a modern twist and reinterpretation of a Greek myth, which challenges assumptions on gender, power and language, whilst touching on the themes of silence, truth, love, and justice. It is a fantastic play which has so many plot layers and intriguing characters/structures for you to explore.

For your summer work regarding this play, I would simply like you to read the play and consider the following questions in response:

- What does the title suggest?
- What possible meanings can be taken from it?

- What are the main themes emerging from the play?
- What were the most powerful images for you?
- Who was your favourite and least favourite character and why?
- What is the function of the choruses?
- How would you stage a production of this play?
- Why is the play still relevant to modern audiences?
- What is your favourite quote from the play?

The second text, is Shakespeare's '**Othello**' which deals with the destructive power of jealousy. Othello, newly married to Desdemona, is appointed leader of a major military operation. Iago, passed over for promotion by Othello in favour of the young Cassio, is fuelled by rage, envy and betrayal, and persuades Othello that Cassio and Desdemona are having an affair. It is an amazing play and you will learn how to decipher the text and language of Shakespeare in order to make sense of the action therein.

It would be a great idea to familiarise yourself with the plot, characters and themes of the play before September. I would also like you to consider the relevance of the play to a modern audience. If you were a Director, why still produce it? How can we stage the play in such a way so that it captures the imagination of a modern audience?

Forget the Shakespearian language for now, because you will provide meaning to that for the audience through your intonation. Focus on the staging, how can it communicate the themes? What different modern settings could you use? (Consider different locations in the text for this). What types of costume could you use? How can you communicate hierarchy through this? Are there any opportunities for multimedia interventions you might wish to incorporate?

I would suggest using a mind map is the best way to capture this information, but feel free to use whatever format works for you – but come prepared in September with notes on:

1. Plot
2. Characters
3. Themes
4. Staging ideas (relevance to a modern audience)

If you have any questions prior to the course, do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail at i.lund@becketonline.co.uk

Enjoy your summer and I look forward to welcoming you onto a course which will enrich your experience of Drama and the Theatre, and will undoubtedly help shape you as a person too.

Thanks.

Mr Lund