

**SECTION C:
LIVE THEATRE
PRODUCTION**

ANSWERING THE QUESTION

THINGS TO KNOW

- This should take half of your exam time **(32 marks)**
- Select one question to answer (at least 3 will come up)
- It will require your focus on certain moments of the play- not a general overview
- You will need to revise and remember key technical terms for the exam
- There is a formula to follow that will help you to improve your work

DRAMA MEDIUM

- You will be asked to discuss the drama medium (focus areas)
- There will be 3 questions and you must choose one of them that you feel the most confident about
- Revise 3 you feel most confident on - there is no need to revise all medium as at least 1 will come up in the question selection

Performance

Lighting

Sound

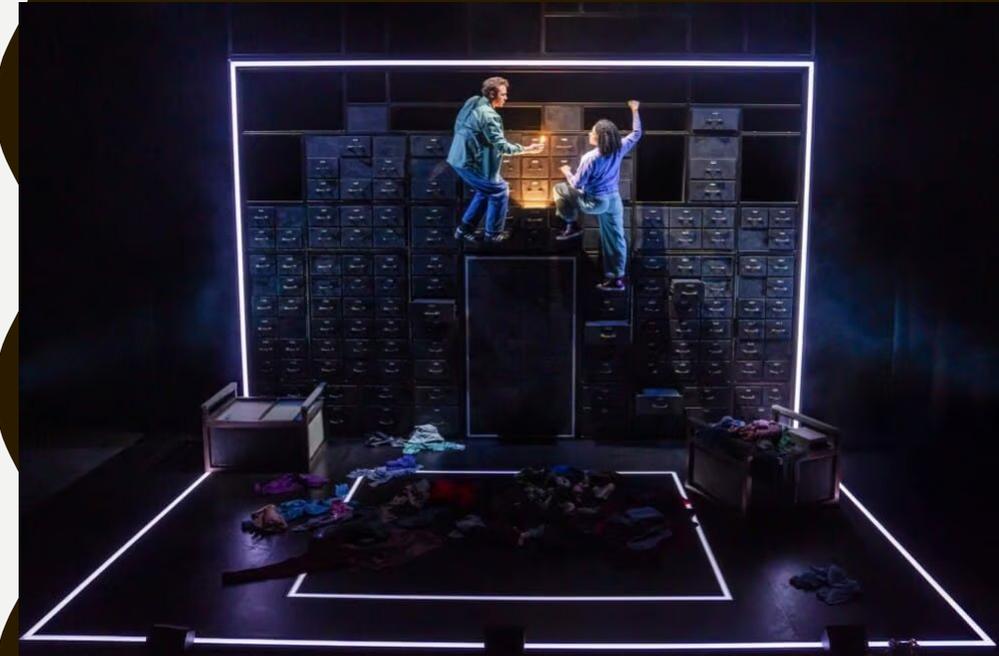
Set

Costume

Always say:

1. Where it is on stage (position - centre stage for eg)
2. The colour of the set piece
3. The state/condition of the set piece
4. Any props that were used
5. How it was used - who by and how?
6. Changes?

SET



Always discuss at least 4/5 of these words per description:

Physical: stance, gait, posture, gesture, eye contact, movement, facial expression and space (don't say proxemics- instead focus on where they are on stage)

Vocal: tone, pitch, volume, pause, accent, emphasis and always use a **QUOTE**

PERFORMANCE



Always say:

1. What the lantern was- **parcan** (hard edge), **fresnel** (soft edge), **flood**, **strobe**, set of parcans/set of fresnels
2. Where it was pointed (stage positioning)
3. Colour (white or use of gels)
4. Intensity (between 40-90%)
5. Any blackout? Gobo (shape) moving (follow spot) Fade
Projection Houselights

LIGHTING



Always say:

1. Where the sound came from
2. Was it made on stage (diegetic) or pre-recorded/off stage (non-diegetic)
3. What was the level (volume)? Did it maintain, increase or fade? (fade in/fade out)
4. Was it reverberated (like echo) or panned (swept across the theatre)
5. Did they use soundscape or silence?
6. Music (underscoring or live on stage)
7. Was there a pitch- high, low

SOUND



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Always say:

1. The **colour** of the costume
2. The **fabric** used
3. The **fit** of the costume
4. The **condition/state** of the outfit
5. **Accessories-** jewellery, shoes etc.
6. **Hair-** condition

COSTUME



OPENING: CONTEXT

WHAT : (Production title) **Lost Atoms**

WHEN: **November 2025**

WHERE: Venue (Live Venue) **The Lowry Theatre, Salford**

WHO: Directed/Produced: **Scott Graham performed by Frantic Assembly**

Context: **Brief and concise synopsis of the plot line**

Opinion: **Linked to the question**

Key names : Search the education pack shared on our GC previously to fill in the blanks here...

Written by

Lighting designer:

Set designer:

Sound designer:

Costume:

Performers:

THINK ABOUT YOUR ANSWER

WEAKER ANSWERS WILL...

- Tell too much story **YOU CAN ONLY GET A MAXIMUM OF 12 marks for description! 20 is analysis**
- Talk generally about things that happened
- Lack technical detail or knowledge
- Not analyse why the production team made the choices they did
- Answer in general and not look at the words in the question
- Try to shoehorn an answer

STRONGER ANSWERS WILL...

- Focus on a very specific moment in the play
- Give technical details about what happened using theatrical terminology
- Say why this happened and what it showed
- Answer the question directly- ensuring a focus on what you are being asked!

Introduction model answer

In the production you have seen discuss the effectiveness of one or more actors abilities to create convincing characters (32 marks)

Concise introduction

- Production title, when it was streamed, venue.

Context

Opinion

Link to question

On the 19th of October 2023 I watched the spellbinding performance of 'Kathy and Stella solve a murder' written by John Brittain at the Home theatre Manchester. The plotline follows two juxtaposing best friends Kathy and Stella as they face a crossroads in their lives as their murder podcast reaches unforeseen fame.

Protagonists Bronte Barbe (Kathy) and Rebekah Hinds created truly convincing characters, with their ability to have the audience in the palm of their hands. Expert nuanced vocal and physical skills from Barbe and Hinds enabled the audience and I to be truly immersed in the action, a truly spectacular performance!

Introduction model answer

Concise introduction

- Production title, when it was streamed, venue.

Context

Opinion

Link to question

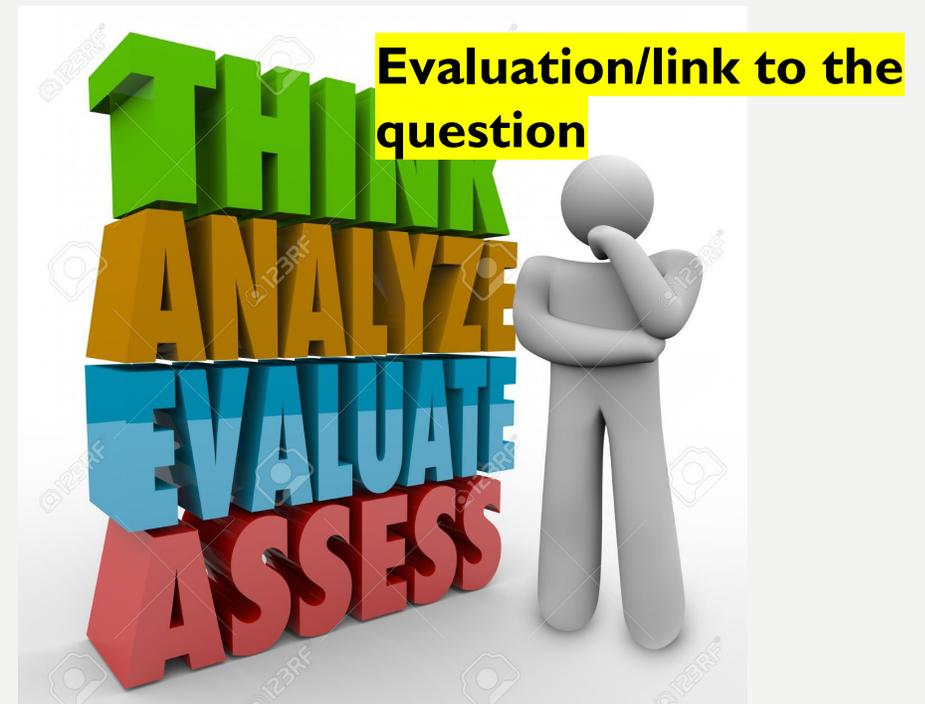
In February 2021 I watched a livestream version of an adaptation of Mary Shelley's novel 'Frankenstein'. The production was performed and filmed in 2012 by the National Theatre. Frankenstein directed by Danny Boyle and adapted by Nick Dear was a mesmerising performance through the ambitious acting of both Benedict Cumberbatch as the creature and Jonny Lee Miller as the troubled Victor Frankenstein. Lived streamed from the National Theatre in London 2011, The play explores the parallels of science and human nature as the creature soon learns about the harsh realities of the world in which he has been born into. Cumberbatch in particular created a 'spell bounding' performance as I was on my edge of my seat. Cumberbatch's expert use of vocal and physical skills to present how the creature dramatically evolved, was truly unforgettable..

Main body of the essay; YOU WILL BE ASSESSED ON TWO THINGS...

AO3 (12 MARKS)



AO4 (20 MARKS)



Model answer acting:

Introduction model answer

In the production you have seen discuss the effectiveness of one or more actors abilities to create convincing characters (32 marks)

In act one scene 5, a downtrodden Stella was situated downstage right leaning against a bookshelf of their favourite crime detectives, a nod to the fame they similarly wanted for themselves. **CONTEXT**

Hinds' (Stella) eyeline faced the ground as the timid Kathy held a perplexed facial expression, pondering their next move to gain the trust and admiration of the notoriously savage crime author Felicia Taylor. The tension could have been cut with a knife as Hinds eventually said "Mate you're fucked up if you think you're a fuck up".

TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION

Such moment created a bittersweet moment for the audience, as we recognised the impending feeling of failure Stella felt, yet the colloquial and expletive response allowed the audience to see the juxtaposition of Stella's desire to be accepted, yet the jovial nature she used as her crutch to prevent such vulnerabilities from being exposed. **ANALYSIS**

This moment exemplified Hinds' ability to create a convincing character as we were invested in the contradictions of Stella's character. **LINK TO QUESTION**

During revision : Write an Introduction.

Acting: In the production you saw discuss how the actors on stage used their performance skills to reflect the themes of the production (32 marks)

Costume: In the production you saw discuss how the costume designer used their design skills to support the era/settings of the production (32 marks)

Lights: In the production you saw discuss how the lighting was used to create symbolism within the production (32 marks)

Sounds: In the production you saw discuss how sound design was used to support the mood and atmosphere throughout the production (32 marks)

Set design/props: In the production you saw discuss how set and props design was used to support changing settings and the plot line (32 marks)

Live theatre: KEY SCENES Just remember to tailor your response to what the question is asking you!

<u>Lighting</u>	<u>Set/props</u>	<u>Costume</u>	<u>Sound</u>	<u>Acting</u>
<p><u>Bomb scene: (Dundale shopping centre)</u> A low intensity <u>parcan</u> lighting at approximately 40%, which was deliberately paired with the pyrotechnic of smoke created heightened tension which was also paired with a blackout to create disorientation for the audience and heightened tension as we were unsure of Sephy's fate.</p> <p><u>Beach scene:</u> Designers application of a LED 50% ocean blue gel with the gobo effect of waves projected onto the stage allowed for an effective way to portray setting and allowed the audience to connect the setting to a motif as Callum and Sephy returned to the beach as the play</p>	<p><u>Bomb scene:(Dundale shopping centre)</u> A stage gauze was dimly illuminated with multiple tv sets with pre-recorded news reports of a bomb in the shopping centre, this was a clever way of the designer presenting the theme of destruction.</p> <p><u>School riot scene:</u> The ensemble cast representing the privileged 'cross' pupils entered centre stage campaigning for the noughts to be exiled from the school. The set designer's application of the prop of placards with emblems such as 'no noughts in our school' was a successful motif as the bold black font writing, cleverly contrasted against the application of the red 'no' superbly linked to the colour</p>	<p><u>Sephy (as a teenager)</u> Sephy wore a sunshine yellow pinafore grey plaid pinafore dress, paired with grey tights and black non branded plimsolls which were pristine in condition. This was paired with a fresh faced makeup and hairs in neat playful hair bunches. The designer made a clever use of symbolism through the yellow of Sephy's dress representing her optimism and young care-free nature as a young in love teen. Alongside the use of her hair in playful bunches was a quick yet effective means to present the changing ages of Sephy over the duration of the play. The non branded plimsolls equally supported the dystopian setting effectively.</p>	<p><u>Bomb scene: (Dundale shopping centre)</u>Pre-recorded distorted sounds of crackling tvs were reverberated through the stage speakers, paired with a pre-recorded news report of the bombing at the shopping centre. This was paired with the designer's application of reverb effect on the microphones for Sephy who shouted 'Callum' prior</p> <p><u>School riot scene</u> The ensemble cast representing the privileged 'cross' pupils entered centre stage campaigning for the noughts to be exiled from the school. They entered shouting phrases such as 'no noughts in our schools', the application of reverberation and increased</p>	<p><u>Beach scene</u> First introduced to privileged Cross 'Sephy' performed by Effy Ansah and intelligent yet outcast nought 'Callum'. Ansah presented Sephy's naive and playful nature through her continued physical closeness with 'nought' Callum. Throughout their dialogue in scene one which included their discussions of Callum's impending joining of the once exclusively 'Cross' school, Ansah presented Callum's objections with a nonchalant and carefree vocal tone, paired with several physical gestures to demonstrate her 'puppy love' for Callum. When James Arden delivered the line "Maybe it would be better if we don't talk to each other when we</p>

In the production you have seen, discuss how the actors presented the changing moods of their character effectively	<u>Suitable moments/scenes</u>	<u>Link to 'changing moods'</u>
In the production you have seen, discuss how lighting was used to support tension on stage.	<u>Suitable moments/scenes</u>	
In the production you have seen, discuss how sound was used to represent location effectively.	<u>Suitable moments/scenes</u>	

Use your memories and the live theatre key scenes sheet now to tailor your answer to a set question.

MOMENT...

Start by giving a brief description of the moment you are talking about...

“In the opening act of the play we are presented with the birth of the creature. In this sequence we see the creature break through the circular womb like structure and begin to learn to walk and move with the mannerisms of a newborn animal taking its first steps”

“One scene in which the lighting was particularly effective in building the tension for the audience was moments after the creature is rejected by Felix and Agatha DeLacey and comes to the realisation he is alone again leading to his decision to go back and burn the DeLacey’s cottage”

“One moment in which the set conveyed a sense of time and location was in the transition from the opening to seeing the creature first interact with the changing society.”

“One scene in particular where I felt Cumberbatch was very successful in adapting his performance skills to convey a range of emotion was nearing the end of Act 2 when the creature returns to Frankenstein manner to enact his revenge on Dr Frankenstein through the raping of the Dr’s now wife, Elizabeth”

THEN WE ADD IN A DESCRIPTION... HOW WAS LIGHTING/SOUND/COSTUME/SET/ACTING USED...

The creature's costume in this scene is used to represent the violation of the natural order in his birth, I believe by making him look foetal like but adding some additional gruesome details like his scaring and stitches to really reflect Mary Shelley's original horror intentions in the novel.

As soon as he has been rejected we see a single white parcan spotlight at the rear of the stage, it is a medium intensity and casts a harsh shadow. As we see Cumberbatch, portraying the creature, going to fetch sticks suddenly from centre stage a small fire ignites.

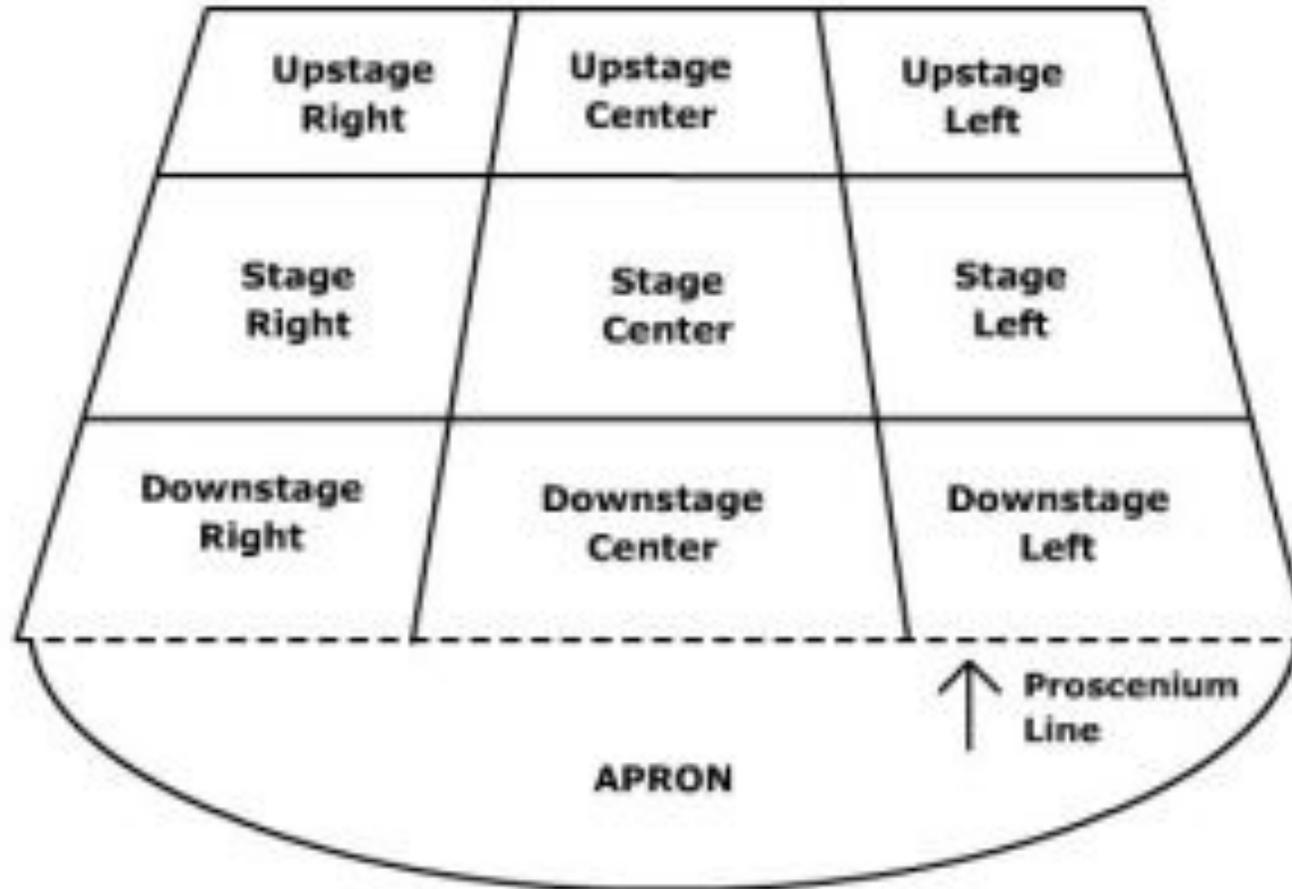
In this scene we are presented with a change of set into the city and the railways reflecting the industrial revolution and the atmosphere in changing Europe. As we watched the back of the stage opened up and as it did a vehicle, which represented a steam train through the use of a platform on wheels, emerged.

Cumberbatch does multiple things to convey the nervousness and anticipation of the creature for example, In the scene after stating 'surely he desires you on your wedding night', Cumberbatch, in a childlike nervous manner, holds his hands out in front of him and pushes them down as if to show ,through this distracting motion, that he is trying to calm himself down through this movement, it also made me very tense and nervous as an audience member

SO, HOW DO WE DEVELOP OUR DESCRIPTION?

ALL ABOUT BEING 'PRECISE'

The layout of the theatre we are visiting looks like this...





HOW TO ADD ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

DEVELOPING YOUR ANSWER

ANALYSIS- EXPLAINING WHAT THE TECHNICAL DETAILS MEANT FOR THE PRODUCTION

Analysis should always explain what your description meant for the production in terms of character or mood in the piece

E.g.

One moment in which the set conveyed a sense of time and location was in the transition from the opening to seeing the creature first interact with the changing society. In this scene we are presented with a change of set into the city and the railways reflecting the industrial revolution and the atmosphere in changing Europe. As we watched the back of the stage opened up and as it did a vehicle, which represented a steam train through the use of a platform on wheels, emerged. On the front of the train structure was a grill with white light inside and steam rising from it to reflect the engine or the power source of the train. Further back the sections of the platform are separated by enlarged cogs/gears/levers with lanterns attached on the left and right sides of these levers. People on the 'train' were carrying metal funnels to project their voices and every so often there was a release of flames and smoke to reflect the industrial setting. The use of the steam train made me as an audience member feel more connected to the current setting of the play as it was alien to me much like it was the creature As stated previously this scene is the first in which the creature first sees a 'modern' society away from the countryside. It also was very successful as it was a big change from the first scene reflecting the difference in country and city life at this time in history. Similarly the scene made me as an audience member see how the play was moving forward in time and the radical changes happening worldwide in the era the play is set.

EVALUATION- EXPLAINING WHAT THE TECHNICAL DETAILS MEANT FOR THE PRODUCTION and your opinion

Evaluation should answer the question that is asked by considering the audience

Another moment that reflected the character and emotion of the scene adding to the effectiveness of the performance was Elizabeth's wedding night. In this scene we see Elizabeth interacting with Frankenstein as he is worried that they will be disturbed by the creature on their wedding night. Elizabeth is wearing a simple white lace and silk bridal gown with a low cut bodice covered in ornate stitching and has puffed sleeves very typical of the era the play and novel is set in. The skirt of the dress is floor length with pleats and a lace finish. The dress is accompanied by long white elegant gloves and a floral headdress. This is accompanied by white ballet pumps. Overall I believe the costume designer used these items to convey her innocence and purity particularly as white is a colour commonly associated with virginity a factor that is very used throughout the play to convey Elizabeth's youthful manner and later the tragedy of her death after her rape.

You are going to write out a moment and a description for the following question:

Describe how lighting was used to support the action in the production. Analyse and evaluate how successful the lighting was in helping to communicate the action of the production to the audience.

Describe how one or more actors was effective in communicating their role in the production to the audience.

Describe how the set design managed to reflect the key themes within your chosen production.

Describe how sound was used to support particular moods within the production

Describe how costume was used to support the underlying themes within the production.

**STOP- PRACTICE
TIME!**

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Describe how sound was used to support particular moods within the production

Describe how costume was used to support the underlying themes within the production.

Give yourself an WWW and EBI

- 1. Provide context of the scene**
- 2. Technical language to describe**
- 3. Linked to the question**
- 4. Used their opinion**

Writing your conclusion

- This all depends on the question you pick.
- The conclusion must summarise how effective such mediums were against the criteria of the question.
- Link to whole play
- IT MUST INCLUDE YOUR OWN OPINION!

MEDIUMS: Acting, Costume, Set design, Lighting or Sound

Aim for a concise mini summary.

Let's look at this example:

Question: Describe how **sound** was used to **support the action** in the production. **Analyse** and **evaluate** how successful the **sound was in helping to communicate the action of the production to the audience.**

In conclusion, **I thought** that the use of sound in the whole production lead us on an industrial and tragic journey. **Head of sound, Ed Ferguson** highlighted key moments within the story by using **interesting** song choices and **shocking** sound effects which supported the inhumane and mechanic style of the piece. **I believe overall,** all sound design managed to capture and communicate the essence of Frankenstein's unhinged perception of reality perfectly.

-Own Opinion

-The whole play

- Medium and Roles

- 'Wow' word

-Linking to question

5 minutes to write your own conclusion to your chosen question



**LETS SEE SOME
MORE
EXAMPLES**

**MOMENT-DESCRIPTION-ANALYSIS-EVALUA
TION**

Describe how sound was used to support the action in the production. Analyse and evaluate how successful the sound was in helping to communicate the action of the production to the audience.

moment

technical detail

analyse

evaluate

In the second scene, we find the character Kipps and the Actor discussing how they will go about creating the start of the ghost story. They talk about how they can make the ghost story effective for the audience and how they could scare them. As they did this Ron Mead used a brilliant sound-scape to help add to the mood of the scene. He created a naturalistic atmosphere of a busy London street which was really interesting- layering textures of the mumbles and voices of people passing by, showed the huge number of people in a London street. Whilst having the footsteps of horses' hooves, representing the nineteenth century horses and carriages passing by. By using a muffled quality to the sound it was like it was in the distance and captured a real sense of a busy London street in the hustle and bustle of the day which created a very busy atmosphere. This was really successful in making a busy atmosphere and made things really tense for the audience- we were on edge and felt how busy the street was and how there was danger all around in this scene.

Describe how one or more of the actors in a particular scene or section used their vocal and physical acting skills to create convincing characters. Analyse and evaluate how successful they were in communicating their character to the audience.

moment

technical detail

analysis

evaluation

Ralf Little played Tony Danlino, Dylan's manager. The character is really sleazy and tries to be charming but isn't. When the two gangsters were arguing about money in the second act Little walked into the scene. He used deliberately over the top body language and gestures to make it look like Tony was best friends with all the other characters. For example, he greeted Dylan's Dad with wide open arms, a joyful facial expression and tried to go in for a hug, even though he knows Dylan's Dad hates him. Little also did a lot of winking and pointing when he was trying to give Dylan confidence in his snooker game. He would use these cheesy gestures with emphasis at the end of lines, like when he said, 'You're gonna be a winner, kid, I'm telling you' at a low pitch and in a confident tone. Because the other characters also rolled their eyes at what Tony did, this created comedy for us. Because he did this every single time he entered, it helped create comedy for the audience, and was also very funny showing us how sleazy he was. Overall it showed us how funny Little was in these moments when he needed to communicate comedy to the audience. He was really successful in making a character that the audience didn't like and wanted to laugh at.