

## G403 PERFORMANCE CONTEXTS 2: EXEMPLAR WORK FOR CANDIDATE C

G403 Question: **Analyse the distinguishing features that you would expect to find in a political performance and the variety of techniques practitioners use to achieve them.** (June 2010)

3. Political performance, by definition, is an reaction to an event or element of life which the practitioner puts into music, dance or drama to make others aware of their opinion. A “fingerprint” of political performance, which is fundamental to it’s definition is the factor of influence, used in many ways. Therefore, there are many features which help the influence to be as strong and as life-changing as possible. In this essay I will be outlining these and explaining the techniques and examples used by my chosen practitioners.

The first distinguishing feature is the challenging of opinions, attitudes and expectations of the audience. This is fundamentally showing they are wrong and need to be altered. This is done by ridiculing in “Oh What a Lovely War” by Joan Littlewood. She ridicules through hyperbole as the general states “A loss of another 300,000 could lead to great results”. At first the audience titter at the ridicule but it gradually questions our attitude of complete trust in these generals who see men as a number. Littlewood also questions our blind patriotism in a song as the man sings “They quite forgot Britannia and the waves across the sea!” The next scene is complete carnage. This challenges our expectations of Britain and our blind patriotism.

Within music, Bob Dylan also challenges these factors in his song “Blowin’ in The Wind”. He uses the techniques of rhetorical questions – “How many ears must one man have before he can hear others cry?” This personalises the song as if Dylan is talking directly to you, subsequently challenging our attitudes to those less fortunate than us which we can clearly hear and see. This, therefore, makes challenging of attitudes & opinions a distinguishing feature.

A feature which is quite pinnacle to the receiving of political performance, is the release at a time of tension, which creates the biggest reaction.

An example of this is “Green Table” by Kurt Jooss dubbed the most pacifist dance in history which was released in the building tension of World War II. Jooss subsequently uses universality through characterisation to create the biggest effect. For example, it is not just the young soldier brutally gripped by the arm by death which falls dead but it is the slow, lyrical moving mother who is taken in a pointed embrace and marched away by death. Even the profiteer with pointed cat-like movements is eventually caught by death. This

*Plan outlines 9 points that are to be covered with brief reference to works that will illustrate the points.*

*Gm?*

*Gm?*

*Intro states the aim linked to the Q*

*Try to get as much distance from ownership of just a few Q K*

*Gm? Eg*

*Eg*

*K*

*K*

*Eg*

*Compares*

*K Eg*

*Q*

*K&U*

*Gm?*

*Expression?*

*Eg*

*Expression? Related to film.*

*Context*

*Q K*

*Eg*

*Movement detail described*

*Eg with Movement detail*

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<p><u>universability</u> therefore <u>effects</u> every member of the audience and influences them to stop the war before it starts (unfortunately this didn't happen) None the less, the release <u>was pinnacle, to the reaction of the audience.</u></p> <p>“Accidental Death of An Anarchist” by Dario Fo was also released in the time of tension when the death had occurred (which appeared very suspicious.) Fo uses the technique of the practitioner’s voice through characters to get the most impact. “<u>Who’s</u> fault is it? The bastard government’s!” By making a direct reference through a character, Fo could get across his extreme opinions at a time of tension to make the audience see the real culprits. It is therefore pinnacle to the cause the political performance is fighting for that it still exists making it a distinguished feature.</p> <p>Political practitioners also use comedy to portray a serious topic (a clear feature of political performance.) This gives the audience a false sense of security and enables them to make their own political conclusion.</p> <p>A technique used in Bob Dylan’s “Talkin’ World War III Blues” is the use of one-liners. “ I said hey and away he flew – thought I was a communist” As the audience laugh they are lulled into a false sense of security and then they realise this song is fundamentally about there being no one left after another war as everyone has died. This influences them to believe in the serious topic.</p> <p>Comedy is also used in “Accidental Death of An Anarchist” in a <u>Commedia d’ell Arte</u> way. Slapstick is used “Bertozzo receives a punch that sends him reeling as he says ‘smack in the gob’” which entertains the audience and Fo also uses satire – “In other words the ambulance was called 15 minutes before the Anarchist went out the window?” The audience laugh and are entertained and <u>the</u> suddenly you realise this is about a man who seems to have been murdered by the police. The message hits the audience a lot harder as there is such an obvious contrast. This contrast is important to a political <u>performances</u> as it increases the impact.</p> <p>In comparison, a huge feature of political performance, <u>which are</u> essential to the message of the piece, is the hard hitting truths.</p> <p>This is achieved in “Oh What A Lovely War!” <u>By</u> Littlewood through the use of placards and signs while the characters on stage discuss trivial topics the placard “21,000 Americans became millionaires in the war.” By having to read and digest it <u>ourselves nothing</u> is lost in the acting or interpretation so the audience gain full impact.</p> <p>“Masters Of War” by Bob Dylan <u>also ^hard hitting truths</u> but Dylan uses the technique of personalising <u>each by adding</u> “you”. “All that money you made will never buy back your soul” This hard hitting truth is doubled by the fact Dylan is blaming <b>you</b>. This again means each individual audience member is affected by this. Truths are <u>a</u> essential feature as without them the audience would not gain the political knowledge.</p>	<p><i>Sp?</i></p> <p><i>Expression?</i> <i>Eg</i> <i>Expression?</i></p> <p><i>K</i> <i>Eg Gm?</i></p> <p><i>Rather general</i></p> <p><i>Repeated expression?</i></p> <p><i>Q</i></p> <p><i>K&amp;U</i></p> <p><i>Eg</i></p> <p><i>Eg</i></p> <p><i>K&amp;U</i></p> <p><i>Sp? Commedia Dell’ Arte</i> <i>Q</i> <i>Eg</i></p> <p><i>Eg</i></p> <p><i>Sp?</i></p> <p><i>K&amp;U</i></p> <p><i>Q Avoid ‘huge’</i> <i>Ex[pression]? Gm?</i></p> <p><i>Q K</i> <i>Eg but with what is this juxtaposed on stage?</i> <i>Punctuation?</i></p> <p><i>Gm?</i></p> <p><i>Expression?</i> <i>Eg</i></p> <p><i>Song addresses the “MoW”</i></p> <p><i>Gm?</i></p>
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<p>Another fingerprint and feature of political performance is the questioning of social norms.</p> <p>“Threepenny Opera” by Brecht questions the norm of greed for money and power “money makes the world go round!” Brecht does this by showing the manipulation power and money has on Mack the Knife. “Brown or black or white men who cares if they’re the right men it’s certain we will chop them into beef steak tartare!” This shows that the power to kill has manipulated Mack to be a killing, uncaring machine. This questions this social norm – do we want to be like that?</p> <p>“Accidental Death of an Anarchist” by Dario Fo also does this through <u>allegory</u> of the police. Fo makes the police out to be stupid and corrupt – “Its good to know the judiciary is still a policeman’s best friend!” By ridiculing the justice system it <u>would make</u> the audience question whether this social norm is really just? This is a distinguishing <u>feature</u> as most <u>practitioner’s</u> intended message <u>questions</u> social norms.</p> <p>A feature which influences many practitioners and thus becomes their work is giving the <u>oppressed</u> and unheard a voice, and subsequently making the audience listen/watch their story.</p> <p>In “Swan song” by Christopher Bruce which is about torture, the extended metaphor of a swan wanting to fly is used to describe the oppression. The male dancer continually returns to the light, looking into the distance, rises on one leg and spreads his arms in a bird like stance. This metaphor speaks to the audience as we want to set the bird free. Bruce also uses emotive images to influence the audience to help the <u>oppressed</u>. For example, “the victim” hiding, curled up like a child behind a chair. This speaks to the audience as this grown man has stooped so low.</p> <p>Bruce also tackles on behalf of oppressed people in “Ghost <u>Dances</u>” which is about the ^military coup of Chile. He impacts the audience by portraying innocence through a young boy with playful motifs, flexed feet and flirty hip thrust movements. The audience align with his innocence then he is <u>undramatically</u> yet suddenly taken by death. We are <u>effected</u> by the taking of innocence. This is a feature as it is for most practitioners, a huge influence for doing their chosen work.</p> <p>A feature which is especially essential for practitioners in corrupt countries is the hope and encouragement given to the audience. For example, in Shostakovich’s 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony, which was written in a time of political turmoil when people were “disappearing” everywhere. In the Largo, low tessitura cellos play in the minor key reflecting the low mood. Though melodic, lyrical flute solos join in it gives the feeling of eerie loneliness. Yet this piece ends in a tierce de picadie (a major cadence in a minor key). This gives the feeling of hope – not all is lost! In the last movement, it is triadic, lyrical and includes fanfares which <u>tells</u> the audience it will be ok in the end. This is a distinguished feature as it was an influence for Shostakovich and it is important for political performances to have some</p>	<p>Q K Eg</p> <p>Ref? Cabaret song?</p> <p>Eg</p> <p>Explains</p> <p>K&amp;U but avoid rhetorical questions.</p> <p>? satire of? They are the police and are seen as the police, an allegory would have them as a parallel stupid force- Pigs maybe? Gm? Punctuation? Gm? Expression? Sp?</p> <p>K Q Eg</p> <p>K&amp;U Sp? eg</p> <p>develops point 'effects of the' – 'The Disappeared' Eg with Dance detail</p> <p>Expression?</p> <p>K&amp;U General – another example? Q Good link across paragraphs K</p> <p>Historical Context could be clearer K&amp;U Musical analysis</p> <p>K &amp;U K&amp;U gm?</p>
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<p>positives.</p> <p>A feature, particularly important for dance, used in many political performances is the use of empathy.</p> <p>This is used through the technique of characterisation in “Ghost Dances” There are many different types and interpretations of characters yet they are all taken by the characters of death. For example, in the “Dance of the Llama” a brother and sister like duo play together with spinning, pointed motifs and the girl leading the boy by his tie in a playful and jumpy way. We can all imagine a character like that in our life and we imagine being one of them. Then when death takes the girl and the boy is left carrying her limp, we are <u>to</u> devastated as we got to know these.</p> <p>In “Swan song” Bruce uses emotive images to help the audience empathise. The male character is casually costumed so could be any male we know. As the guards turn up their caps and do a cabaret tap style dance we are happy for the victim (lulled into a false sense of security) then the guards start beating the victims with the canes and we are effected. Later on, when the victim desperately grabs and claws as he is being held under water and as he tries and tries to get to the light and be free we can all empathise us or our brothers being ^that situation and are <u>effected</u>. This is a fundamental feature of political performance as it invites the audience into the story and they are impacted hard.</p> <p>Lastly, a feature which effects the audience greatly, is the lulling into <u>of</u> false security.</p> <p>This happens through the character of Mack in “Threepenny Opera.” Brecht uses the sense of Mack having a mask. He has gloves and a cane and says “my dear little girl, everything will be as you wish” and the audience like him and feel safe. Then he is hitting men with his cane shouting “I’ll shove your head down into <u>yours</u> guts” This stark contrast gives the illusion of a mask and really shows the manipulation of money &amp; power.</p> <p>“Blowin’ in the wind” by Bob Dylan also does this by including a folk-like melody with easy root position chords. The audience prepare for an average folk song. Then there are hard hitting, questioning lyrics “How long must people exist before they are allowed to be free?” This contrast means the impact is greater and more people listen.</p> <p>Lastly, “Green Table” uses costume and allegory to give a sense of security. In the opening scene, politicians goose step and bow with exaggerated featured masks. The audience is entertained and laugh. Yet suddenly they declare war and we realise these ridiculous politicians have signed the death certificate for all these people. It is more of an impact as we laugh and are light-heartedly entertained at first. This false sense of security is very important as it causes a contrast and means the impact of the message is felt harder.</p> <p>In conclusion, the distinguishing features of political</p>	<p><i>K&amp;U</i></p> <p><i>Q</i></p> <p><i>K&amp;U</i></p> <p><i>Eg</i> <i>Dance detail</i></p> <p><i>Sp?</i></p> <p><i>Gm? Expression?</i></p> <p><i>Q K eg</i></p> <p><i>Eg</i></p> <p><i>Explained</i></p> <p><i>Eg</i></p> <p><i>Expression?</i> <i>Sp?</i></p> <p><i>Q K</i> <i>Gm? Expression?</i></p> <p><i>Eg?</i></p> <p><i>Character detail</i> <i>Explained</i></p> <p><i>Compares</i></p> <p><i>Musical detail</i></p> <p><i>Eg</i> <i>Music and lyrics</i></p> <p><i>Compares</i></p> <p><i>Eg</i></p> <p><i>K&amp;U</i></p>
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<p>performance can be split into three sections, the influence*, the effect** and the elements used to reach the effect for example comedy. Yet all three are needed to achieve a political performance which influences people to change their opinion on a particular subject.</p> <p>* for example the oppressed people. ** for example the challenging of attitudes</p> <p>Yet the most important and obvious feature of political performance is that you put your heart and soul into it and really believe that it can make a difference, which these practitioners have.</p>	<p><i>Conclusion adds to and clarifies the argument</i></p>						
<p><b>Marks for Candidate C:</b></p> <table data-bbox="143 757 670 862"> <tr> <td>Knowledge &amp; Understanding</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Quality of Language</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total (out of 45)</b></td> <td><b>36</b></td> </tr> </table> <p>This would have been a Grade A in June 2010</p> <ul data-bbox="199 969 1417 1249" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>2020 words, about the length expected at this level in this unit.</i></li> <li>• <i>It is an accomplished response answering the question, demonstrating a good overview of political performance and making comparisons between works.</i></li> <li>• <i>A range of examples is used drawing effective links across the art forms. There is a convincing sense of understanding of the area studied.</i></li> <li>• <i>Quality of Language - generally fluent writing with some grammatical errors and odd expression.</i></li> </ul>		Knowledge & Understanding	30	Quality of Language	6	<b>Total (out of 45)</b>	<b>36</b>
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