Drama
The Winter's Tale (William Shakespeare)

eduqas

Original performance

- The Globe Theatre, May 1611; thrust stage with two entrances.
- The King's Men – King James I was the patron.
- Standing audience and galleries.
- Music from live musicians; gallery for musicians.
- Costumes clearly showing status of characters through style and colour.
- Limited set – scenery and locations created through words; use of props.
- Performed at court indoors in 1614 at a marriage celebration for James I's daughter.

Context

- Renaissance ideas and thought – exploring the human condition.
- The Divine Right of kings – king put in place by God.
- Expanding world; ordinary people's minds opening up to distant lands and the exotic.
- People more aware of their status and place in society; sense of King's accountability.
- Society governed by strict codes and etiquette.
- Patriarchal society – the role of women dictated by men.
- Church of England; the power of religion; belief in Divine Providence and cosmic order.

Directing

- Will your *The Winter's Tale* be a faithful interpretation or a reinterpretation?
- What type of staging/style are you are working with?
- How are you interpreting the text? What do you want to say through your production?
- Which themes will your work emphasise?
- How do you imagine the characters and their relationships?
- How will you direct your actors to communicate relationships and motivation?
- How will you use character positioning and proxemics to communicate meaning?
- How can you link to your contemporary context to make the play relevant?
- What rehearsal techniques might you use with your actors, and how and why?

Style

- Romance or tragicomedy; problem play.
- Follows Renaissance five-act structure.
- Does not follow Renaissance unities of time, place and action.
- First three acts – tragedy (protagonist's fatal flaw brings their downfall).
- Acts four and five – light-hearted and more of a Renaissance pastoral comedy.
- Contains magical elements.
- Declamatory acting style using prose and blank verse.
- Mix of naturalistic and non-naturalistic elements – emotional moments; asides; soliloquies break the fourth wall; using Time as a narrator.

Design

Are you creating a faithful interpretation or a reinterpretation? Use live theatre to inspire you and influence your ideas. How will actors interact with the design elements? **Decisions must be consistent with your chosen style.**

Set and props – location, setting, period, themes, atmosphere, symbols

Stage type, style; layout of space; size of space; entrances and exits; colours; materials; textures; shapes; symbols; levels; projection surfaces; floor, backdrop/cyclorama; furniture and props (style, size, colour, material, condition, location) above the stage; suspending from above.

Costume, hair and make-up – status, age, context, personality, circumstances, location

Garment: colour; size; condition; texture; material; time period.

Hair: style; colour; condition; accessories.

Make-up: face; hands; feet; body; special effects; prosthetics.

Lighting – mood, atmosphere, location, time of day, emphasis, emotion

Naturalistic or non-naturalistic; colour; intensity; angle; positioning; type of lantern; birdie; special; practical; wash; gel, gobo; moving head; strobe; torches; phones; candles.

Sound – location, atmosphere, emotion, tension, pace, amplification

Music; atmospheric; ambient; special effect; diegetic; non-diegetic; volume; fade; layering; soundscape; microphones; reverb; echo; delay; effects and treatment; speaker positioning.

Characters

King Leontes: proud, jealous, paranoid, guilt-ridden, repentant.

Queen Hermione: consistent, dignified, gracious, loyal, maternal, intelligent, strong, brave, resilient.

Mamillius: clever, playful, imaginative, mature, innocent.

Camillo: loyal, true to himself, does the right thing, rational, intelligent, perceptive, brave.

Paulina: forceful, strong, brave, intelligent, loyal, moral.

Antigonus: loyal to Leontes, carries out his duty but doesn't think it's right, conflicted.

Polixenes: dignified, polite, respectful, diplomatic; also proud, forceful, angry.

Florizell: intelligent, single-minded, rebellious, strong-willed, loving, honest, brave.

Perdita: gracious, sensible, intelligent, level-headed, respectful, confident, loving, strong-willed.

Shepherd: kind, wise, humble, compassionate.

Clown: kind, naïve, simple, innocent, gullible.

Autolycus: dishonest, clever, quick-witted, perceptive, has a sense of loyalty.

Cleomenes; Dion; Emilia; Mopsa; Dorcas; Time.

Acting

Underpinned by **research** and off-text work to establish status, social class, motivation, objective/intent, superobjective, function, relationships, backstory and character arc.

Use live theatre performances to inspire you and influence your acting ideas. Adapt these influences to work in your interpretation. Consider: **What** happened? **How** and **why** did it happen? **What did I like**? How could I **adapt** the idea for my own interpretation?

Experiment and **explore practically**. Make sure you can clearly explain: **What** am I doing? **How** am I doing it? **Why** am I doing it?

Vocal skills

- To communicate meaning via tone, volume, tempo, pause, pitch, intonation, musicality and accent.
- Also consider vocal sounds: breath, sigh, cry, sing, hum, chant, whisper, hesitation and stutter.
- Consider vocal skills for more stylised approaches, for example Theatre of Cruelty.

Physical skills

- To communicate meaning through posture, gait, body language, facial expression and gesture.
- Also consider tempo, rhythm, pace, energy, dynamics, direction, weight, speed and flow.
- Consider physical skills for more stylised approaches, for example physical theatre, stylised naturalism, Theatre of Cruelty: unison; canon; repetition; motif; slow motion; exaggeration.

Interaction

- To communicate meaning through character positioning, spatial relationships, proxemics and vocal/physical choices, driven by motivation and reaction.
- Needs to effectively communicate the relationship between characters – between two or more, also with the audience or even interaction with the space/set.