

BACK  
TO  
BACK  
THEATRE

# BACK TO BACK THEATRE

small metal objects

EDUCATION PACK B  
POST-SHOW RESOURCE

WRITTEN BY CLAIRE WEARNE

2023



## FIRST NATIONS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Back to Back Theatre acknowledges that it lives and works on the lands of the Wadawurrung people. They pay their respects to their elders, past, present and emerging. They acknowledge there is no treaty and that this is stolen land. Back to Back Theatre acknowledges the lands of First Nations people everywhere, in Australia and in the world.

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## PLEASE NOTE:

small metal objects has an extensive performance history. The images contained in Pre-Show Pack A depict performers, props and costume designs you may not see in the performance you attend. Please click or scan here to access our regularly updated image cache for the 2023 season.

+Image archive



Archival footage of small metal objects and a recording of our post-show Q&A with VCE Drama students will also be uploaded here prior to the 2023 VCE Examination period.

cover image credit

small metal objects performance image

**Photographer:** Nate Schilling

**Year:** 2021

**Location:** Adelaide, Australia

**Description:** Simon Laherty as Steve, Gen Picot as Carolyn

# ARTISTIC TEAM

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## small metal objects ARTISTIC TEAM

### Co-Authors & Co-Devisors

Simon Laherty  
Sonia Teuben  
Jim Russell  
Genevieve Morris  
Bruce Gladwin

### Director

Bruce Gladwin

### Cast

Steve: Simon Laherty  
Gary: Brian Tilley  
Alan: Jim Russell  
Carolyn: Genevieve Picot

### Sound Composer & Designer

Hugh Covill

### Costume Designer

Shio Otani

## AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Back to Back Theatre would like to acknowledge the absence of Sonia Teuben in this season of small metal objects. Sonia was a co-author and co-devisor of this piece; in particular, she was the irreverent and creative mind behind the character of 'Gary'. Sonia revelled in introducing Gary to audiences around the world, insisting on wearing his dodgy fake yellow moustache each and every time. Sonia passed away in January 2021; her absence remains vast for the team at Back to Back Theatre.



## SIMON LAHERTY in the role of STEVE and Co-Author & Co-Devisor

Simon's involvement with Back to Back Theatre started in 1999 with his participation in its community performance-making group, THEATRE OF SPEED. Apart from his incredible performances with Back to Back Theatre, he is recognised for his work in film and television including Matthew Saville's feature film Noise. Since joining the ensemble in 2003, Simon co-devised and co-authored small metal objects, in which he has played the role of Steve. To date, Simon has toured this work to 38 cities around the world.

Simon is also a co-devisor of, and performer in, the critically acclaimed GANESH VERSUS THE THIRD REICH, LADY EATS APPLE and THE SHADOW WHOSE PREY THE HUNTER BECOMES. He has also starred in Back to Back's award-winning film, ODDLANDS, and he co-wrote and performed in the company's first feature length screen adaptation, SHADOW. Simon explains that he loves the attention he gets when he is performing, and that if he had to move to a desert island, he would only take one thing: his Britney Spears blanket. As a kid, Simon's dream job was to be either a security guard or an actor. Simon also wants to add that the character he plays, Steve, is based on his childhood; *'When they talk about the cat, well, I had a dog, and Bruce changed the script to a cat. It's mainly this scene from my childhood, I was not into drug dealing.'*



## BRIAN TILLEY in the role of GARY

Brian began his work with Back to Back Theatre in 2003 as a THEATRE OF SPEED participant, and worked as an ensemble member until 2017. Brian co-devised and toured internationally both GANESH VERSUS THE THIRD REICH and SUPER DISCOUNT. He has most recently starred in the company's films, SHADOW and ODDLANDS. Despite not having much of a dream job back when he was a kid, Brian reckons that if he wasn't performing with Back to Back Theatre, he would love to be either a historian or work in forensics. If required to move to a desert island, the three things Brian would take are an umbrella, a very big bottle of water and sunscreen. When asked what Brian has in common with his character, 'Gary', he replied: *'I am always an open-minded person, but Gary is a man of few words, he's a concealed type. [However] we are both pricks.'* (an evil laughter erupts from Brian).



## JIM RUSSELL in the role of ALAN and Co-Author & Co-Devisor

Jim Russell is an award-winning Australian actor and comedian, whose face you may well recognise from any number of iconic Aussie films and television series. He has created brilliant work with Back to Back Theatre, and toured it through Australia, Europe, North America and Japan. Jim has also performed with the Melbourne Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre and at the Melbourne Comedy Festival. If Jim was stranded on a desert island, he wouldn't seem to mind at all. In fact, it would be easy to believe that he has planned for such a scenario for many years; he'd take a luxurious van, *'decked out really nicely; it's got a little stove, a little fridge and a nice, big bed'*. Upon actually comprehending the brief and accepting that he really was only permitted to take three things to this hypothetical island, and that the *'decked-out van'* was *pushing the envelope a bit*, Jim reluctantly agreed to *'stick with the rope, the tarp, and something to start fire with...'*, but he wasn't happy about it.

Growing up in the country, Jim always harboured a secret dream to be an actor, but he worried about whether the blokes in town, and his dad, would ever approve of this creative ambition. On the downlow, Jim is also a fantastic teacher. He adores his current role which involves teaching young Afghan people how to speak English. He says, *'The students are grateful for the opportunity to be here, and I find myself thinking, "I don't reckon I would last five minutes having gone through what you've gone through, and here you are with a smile on your face, saying, "New opportunity, Mr Jim. It's going to be okay".'*



## GEN PICOT in the role of CAROLYN

If you were to play a round of *'Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon'* and swap out Kevin for Gen, you would have a much more rapid and tightly knit game. There are very few people in the Australian performing arts world who Gen has not collaborated with since graduating from NIDA in 1979. Performing on stage and film, Gen's oeuvre is diverse and fascinating, from *Belvoir* to the Melbourne Theatre Company, with sojourns to the State Theatre of South Australia in between. Her extensive screen history is certainly worth a quick peruse on IMDB, spanning both commercial and independent projects, at home and offshore. And yet, she claims as a young person, she had no ambition whatsoever. Gen states she got more into acting because her mother thought it was the only place where she would fit, *'rather than because I actually chose it'*. In fact, Gen reveals she doesn't feel she could be an actor starting out these days because of her *'complete horror'* around *having to 'be so self-promoting; you have to be on social media, you have to push yourself the whole time.'* With a faraway look in her eye, Gen wistfully mentions if she was to start her working life over again, she might pursue the possibility of physiotherapy, but she catches herself, blithely announcing *'my problem would be I'd realise I was dealing with sick people all the time.'* Despite these misgivings, and her apparent lack of ambition, Gen is particularly decisive around which three things she would take with her to a desert island, responding precisely and immediately, as though they may already be packed and waiting at the door: *'a lemon, some garlic and my cat'*.



## Director, Co-Author & Co-Devisor: BRUCE GLADWIN

Bruce Gladwin has been the Artistic Director of Back to Back Theatre since 1999, having initially experienced the company's work as an audience member in the 1980s. When he saw Back to Back's work as a young Theatre Studies graduate, Bruce felt like he was watching the birth of a new art movement, and he became determined to work with the performers he had seen on stage. Initially performing alongside the stars as a freelance actor, then a freelance director, when the opportunity to work as the Artistic Director came up, he jumped at the chance. Since then, Bruce has collaborated with this team to create 11 unique and enthralling theatrical performances and more recently, the company's first feature film. These works have toured extensively, including presentations at the world's most celebrated contemporary arts festivals and cultural venues.

Bruce was recently awarded the Australia Council for the Arts' Inaugural Award for Outstanding Achievement in Theatre and under his leadership, the company has received 22 national and international awards. When Bruce was a kid, he dreamt of living in a Parisian attic and painting all day. If he was to move to a desert island, Bruce would like to be very clear about its existing food sources and resources before deciding what he would take with him. Bruce is passionate about the donuts at the Queen Victoria Market, eliminating plastics and putting more women in charge.



## Sound Design: HUGH COVILL

Hugh spent his childhood scoping locations and overseeing the acquisition of correct building materials for tree houses. Despite occasionally being caught stretching the truth around sleepovers, Hugh successfully conscripted his dad as an accomplice and wooden weapons manufacturer for *'The Great Cypress Tree Battle'*. Dissatisfied with the hypothetical realms of imagination, Hugh invented IRL 'Rune Goldberg' tree-house trapdoor systems, to keep any potential thwarters at bay.

The years may have rolled forward, but the stakes feel equally high for Hugh, as he contributes to the leadership of some of the world's most preeminent major events. The only difference being his skill set is now described as Collaborative Leader, Project Manager, Design Thinker and Assertive Communicator, rather than *'Hey Kid! Get Off My Lawn!'*.

Hugh's pathway to arts management was forged from years of working as a creative for theatre, casino spectacles, opera, dance and public space installations. Now, Hugh is crafting the world's most intriguing major events, transforming the public realm into festival playgrounds, levitating giant things with the help of helium and laughing a lot. If stranded on a desert island, Hugh states he would only require: *'My wife, a piano and a flint and steel for starting fires. This penchant for flames might just link with his main childhood ambition of becoming a firefighter.'* Notably, Hugh now spends his professional time putting out fires of a different nature; these days, he works as an Associate Producer for the Major Events and Festivals team for the City of Sydney.



## Costume Design: SHIO OTANI

Shio Otani is passionate about craft and all things handmade. Originally from Japan, she works in diverse platforms such as theatre, dance, jewellery and textiles. Shio has designed costumes for some of Australia's leading companies and artists such as Back to Back Theatre, Chamber Made, Chunky Move, Lucy Guerin Inc. and Speak Percussion. Shio's starting point as a costume person came from her experience as a dancer. She recalls, *'Ballet is all about having to fit into the costumes they give you. So, after I studied dancing, I really wanted to make costumes that people feel comfortable performing in. Being able to read the movement and translate that into clothing people, that's what I wanted to do.'*

If Shio was to move to a desert island, all she would take is music. She says, *"That's about it, I don't need anything else. Just music"*. Shio has always felt this way about music; when she was growing up, she wanted to become a DJ. This dream comes true every Thursday at 11.00 am on her PBS 106.7FM radio show, *Eternal Rhythm*. For a glimpse into her remarkable vinyl collection, follow [Shio@jazzycatlady](#) on Instagram.

# + ACTIVITY:

## BACK TO BACK BINGO

Undertake this activity as soon as you can after having seen small metal objects. Players highlight a box when they read a phrase that describes an experience with which they can identify. Provide a description of the relevant moment on a page in your workbook, using up to three sentences. Players shout “BINGO” when they complete a full line both on this chart AND in their workbooks.



Think warmly about your own best friend	Feel like Hugh’s score perfectly defines each moment you are watching	Notice someone ‘onstage’ NOT notice the performance that they were part of	Feel any combination of the following: + Outrage + Joy + Humility + Protectiveness
Marvel	Question what ‘disability’ looks like	Want to intervene	Connect emotionally
Feel self-conscious	See your city differently	Make a list of all the people you want to bring back to see the show	Reconsider the definition of theatre
Laugh. Then cry. Then laugh again	Question a character’s motivation	Read into the subtext	Wonder whether YOU were part of the performance

# TERMINOLOGY

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**ALLIST:** Allist: an individual who does not have autism. The term 'allist' draws attention to the fact that individuals without autism may not be aware of the challenges faced by those with autism, and it is intended to encourage greater awareness and understanding.

**ANCILLARY:** something that is auxiliary, supplementary or subordinate in nature, and is used in support of something else that is considered to be more important or primary.

**CAPITALISM:** an economic system underpinned by private ownership of the production and distribution of goods and services. The primary goal of capitalism is to generate profits and increase individual wealth through the sale of goods and services. It is the dominant economic system in most industrialised countries.

**CONVENTIONS:** the widely accepted attributes, techniques or elements that are commonly evident in a particular style of theatre.

**DISCOMBOBULATION:** a state of confusion, disorientation, or bewilderment. It can be used to describe the feeling of being mentally and emotionally unsettled or thrown off balance, often due to unexpected events or circumstances.

**HUMILITY:** a sense of perspective and a recognition that one is part of something larger than oneself. It is generally considered a positive trait and can lead to greater empathy, compassion, and social connectedness.

**MINIMALISM:** a style, or approach that emphasises simplicity, sparseness and restraint, and focuses on functionality over decoration and a pared-down use of materials. Artistically, minimalism suggests that the work is likely to be stripped down to its most essential elements.

**RUNE GOLDBERG:** a minigame in the massively multiplayer online game, RuneScape. Players are required to create "vis wax" by using a machine known as the Rune Goldberg Machine. The game is named after the real-life Goldberg machine, a complex contraption designed to perform a simple task in a convoluted and humorous way.



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small metal objects performance image

Photographer: Nate Shilling

Location: Adelaide, Australia

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Year: 2021

Description: Simon Laherty as Steve,  
Brian Tilley as Gary, Jim Russell as Alan

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# MEANING

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According to the VCAA Drama Study Design, through your work as a VCE Drama student, you are enabled to ‘develop, through...analysis, an understanding of drama as a way of communicating stories, ideas and meaning’. Now that you have seen *small metal objects*, it is time to start considering what the meaning behind this story is. Due to the unusual performance space and the fact that the work is devised and performed in part by people who are not Allists, the meaning behind the performance sometimes takes a back seat. It is also relatively subtle, but the thematic idea of human connection being more valuable than capitalism underpins many moments and dynamics evident in the play. Here is what Bruce has to say about the meaning of the work:

*‘The thematics around capitalism, redefining success and championing the idea of human relationships over our obsession with gaining capital and stowing it away in the bank, that feels quite timeless to some degree, and still feels very relevant 20 years after *small metal objects* was devised.*

*‘Back then, the actors themselves and what they brought to the original workshops was really critical. The character Sonia created, Gary, revolved around Sonia and her life’s philosophy. As a businessperson, Gary is very human-centred, and who Sonia was as a person, and as a contributor in the room, really shaped this. There’s something that we saw in Sonia that is missing in where society is going...society is moving towards a very individualistic focus and is very much driven around accumulation of capital, whether that’s through trying to earn the biggest wage you can, or accumulate the biggest pool of wealth, or have the biggest house.*

*‘Sonia was very people-oriented; success in her life was measured by maintaining healthy relationships with people. That was a real priority for her and that became the meaning behind *small metal objects*. Her character, Gary, was forced to make a decision between earning a profit through a transaction or helping his friend, Steve.*

*‘I definitely think there was also an awareness for us in terms of ‘the haves’ and ‘the have nots’, and class and the social divide. That was another thing we really wanted to try and acknowledge within the work’.* – **Bruce, Artistic Director**

Jim also unpacks the meaning of the show from the perspective of his character: *‘I think Alan is, first and foremost, driven by money and success. And for him, money defines that success.’*

Compare this to what Simon feels his character, Steve, cares about: *‘For Steve, it’s his own things, he had stories for these things, like the keyring and the stubbie holders. They’re the things he values; if he loses those, he can’t live.’* Although Steve does care about these physical objects, it’s not because of their financial value, or the social status these objects give him. It’s because they represent something meaningful to him on a personal level.

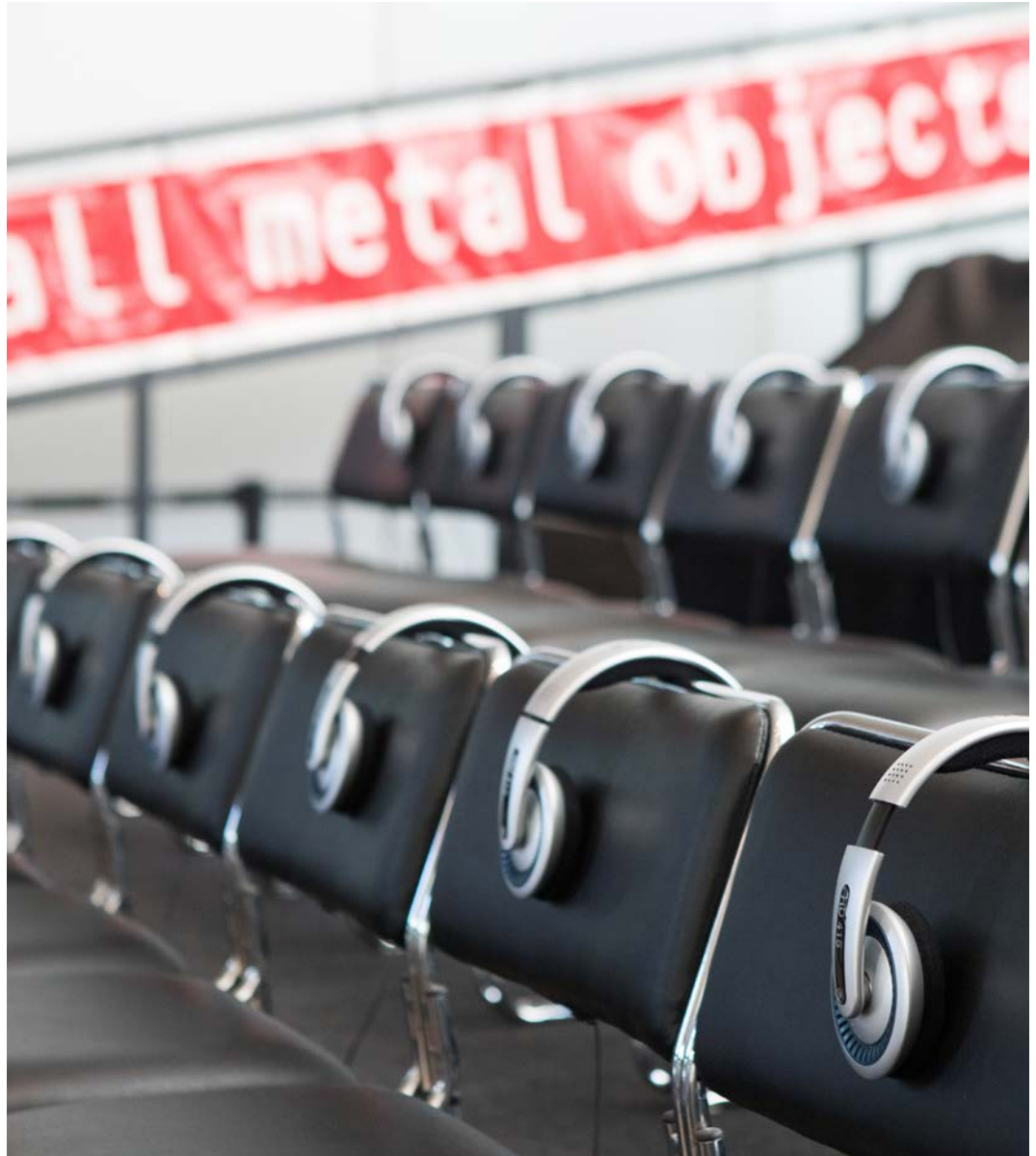
Jim went on to describe how difficult Alan finds the social interactions with Gary in the play, because they usually exist in very different sections of society, different classes with different agendas ... *‘Alan launches into that phone call with Gary thinking that’ll all be good. And instead, I’m confronted by Gary just giving me nothing, and leaving me high and dry in silence. And Alan’s normal ‘go-to’, which is to connect to a bloke like another bloke, is just confronted with silence. And he’s left thinking, ‘I don’t have another script. I only know this routine. And you’re just giving me nothing’. So, Alan starts to wrap himself up in fishing line after that, because he knows he is failing...’*

# PRODUCTION AREAS

*'A lot of the shows that we make are quite economical in terms of the use of props and set. I feel if it doesn't have a purpose, if it really can't justify being there, then let's try and get rid of it'.*

– Bruce, Artistic Director.

The Production Areas evident in this show are very highly considered. The minimalist costuming choices enable the performers to blend into their environments in a naturalistic way, and yet, also ensure that actors are visible to the audience once they have been spotted. The soundscape provides the most 'theatrical' element of small metal objects; it is non-literal, evocative and moody. Theatre technology, in the form of the headsets and microphone systems which feed the dialogue and soundscape directly into each audience member's ears lends the show the intimacy and human connection which is so crucial to the show's thematic meaning. Considering Bruce's statement above around the economy evident in the design areas, it is important to consider how these three production areas which feature in the show impact the audiences' readings of the narrative.



small metal objects performance image

**Photographer:** Photographer unknown

**Location:** Hong Kong, China

**Year:** 2017

**Description:** No performer identified,  
image of seating bank

# + ACTIVITY:

## COSTUME ANALYSIS

### SUGGESTED SENTENCE STARTERS

Having now seen small metal objects, take a moment to jot down descriptive notes about the costuming for each character, and what you feel these choices conveyed to the audience. Feel free to use some of these analytical sentence starters if you need some guidance:



#### STEVE:

1. Otani's decision to expose Simon Laherty's arms and shoulders through dressing him in \_\_\_\_\_ positioned the audience to become keenly aware of Steve's \_\_\_\_\_ as a character.
2. The worn through and \_\_\_\_\_ footwear which Steve was seen in had been selected by Shio Otani to enable the actor to feel \_\_\_\_\_ and support him to maintain \_\_\_\_\_. The aesthetics of this choice made the audience aware that \_\_\_\_\_.

#### GARY:

1. The contemporary, pedestrian attire which Gary wore was selected by Otani to ensure that he \_\_\_\_\_ with the passers-by around him, whilst also allowing the audience to comprehend \_\_\_\_\_.
2. In the moment when \_\_\_\_\_, Brian's body language is \_\_\_\_\_ through Shio Otani's decision to \_\_\_\_\_. This enabled the audience to \_\_\_\_\_.

#### CAROLYN:

1. The corporate, expensive looking \_\_\_\_\_ which Otani selected, established the fact that Carolyn values \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The colour and fabrication selected in Carolyn's \_\_\_\_\_ indicate Shio Otani and Bruce Gladwin wanted to suggest \_\_\_\_\_.

#### ALAN:

1. When he first appeared, the audience noticed that Alan's costuming was \_\_\_\_\_ compared to that of Otani intended this to convey a sense of Alan's \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The cut of Alan's \_\_\_\_\_ enabled the actor \_\_\_\_\_ to move \_\_\_\_\_ which suggested \_\_\_\_\_ to the audience.

# + ACTIVITY: SOUND EVALUATION

The soundscape for small metal objects has been discussed, analysed and evaluated both in reviews of the performance and in academic journals. Referring to the following table of evaluative terminology, handwrite an evaluative paragraph in your books, unpacking how this particular production area enhanced three separate moments in the performance.



disturbing	elevated	suggestive	evoked
precision	unnerving	polished	haunting
considered	subtle	mesmerising	moving
jarring	dull	complex	diluted
memorable	crafted	enlightened	gentle
uneasy	edgy	captivating	clumsy

[illegible]

# + ACTIVITY: IMAGERY ANALYSIS

Here is a collection of imagery which is referenced in the scripted dialogue of small metal objects. Some of these images are very literal, and some are more subtle. Working in pairs in your class, fill in the three blank lines underneath each image, identifying which character the image is connected to, what the contents of the image might symbolise, and what the audience might feel about the character because of their association with the contents of the image. Reference the examples given. This can be tricky; take your time. Once you have completed at least ten of these, share your responses with the class.



1. Character:  
Steve

2. Symbolic of:  
*Steve's passions and his connection with community*

3. Emotional Impact:  
*Presenting Steve as a regular Aussie guy, creating connection and de-alienating people with disability*



1. Character:

2. Symbolic of:

3. Emotional Impact:



1. Character:

2. Symbolic of:

3. Emotional Impact:



1. Character:

2. Symbolic of:

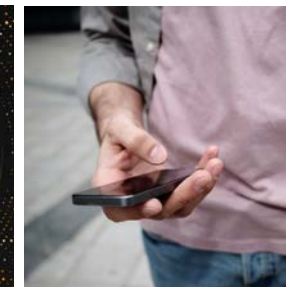
3. Emotional Impact:



1. Character:

2. Symbolic of:

3. Emotional Impact:



1. Character:

2. Symbolic of:

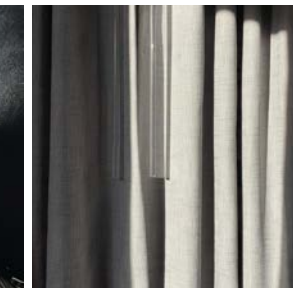
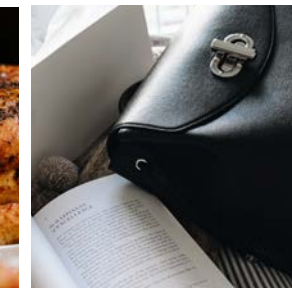
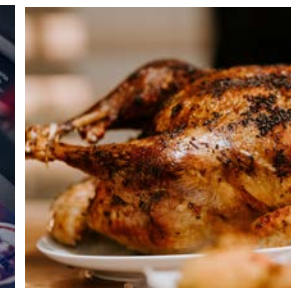
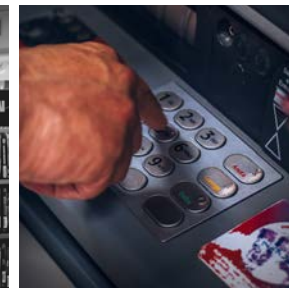
3. Emotional Impact:



1. Character:

2. Symbolic of:

3. Emotional Impact:



1. Character:

2. Symbolic of:

3. Emotional Impact:

1. Character:

2. Symbolic of:

3. Emotional Impact:

1. Character:

2. Symbolic of:

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1. Character:

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3. Emotional Impact:

1. Character:

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3. Emotional Impact:

1. Character:

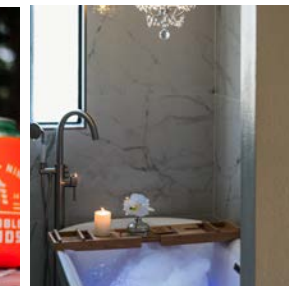
2. Symbolic of:

3. Emotional Impact:

1. Character:

2. Symbolic of:

3. Emotional Impact:



1. Character:

2. Symbolic of:

3. Emotional Impact:

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3. Emotional Impact:

1. Character:

2. Symbolic of:

3. Emotional Impact:

1. Character:

2. Symbolic of:

3. Emotional Impact:

# EXPRESSIVE SKILLS

## + ACTIVITY: MGFV MOMENTS



Take some time to unpack what you witnessed regarding the actors' use of expressive skills in the following 4 moments in small metal objects. The expressive skills outlined by VCAA and some quotes from our creative team have been included to colour some of your thinking around each skill. Example responses have been included in either analytical or evaluative structure. You may also benefit from revisiting **pages 19–20 of Pack A** to refresh your memory about the blocking of each actor in this performance.

1. The moment you initially identified Steve and Gary



2. The moment between Gary and Alan, just before Gary wanders off to buy coffee



3. The moment when Alan hands the envelope of cash over to Steve



4. The moment when Carolyn accosts Steve at the climax of the show



small metal objects performance image

Year: 2021

Photographer: Nate Schilling

Location: Adelaide, Australia

Descriptions: 01 – Simon Laherty as Steve,  
Brian Tilley as Gary  
02 – Brian Tilley as Gary,  
Jim Russell as Alan  
03 – Jim Russell as Alan  
04 – Simon Laherty as Steve,  
Gen Picot as Carolyn

# MOVEMENT

When asked about his performance of Steve, Simon stated:

*‘Well, if we’re doing a show, I think about the character, I focus on what needs to be done, and I just do it.’ Jim has more to say about how he uses movement in his portrayal of his character, Alan: ‘I’m a pretty physical performer. I have to actually run in the show; I have to chase Gary, I’m flitting across the concourse wanting to work out where Gary is going. But then there are moments of absolute stillness. And I have to consciously say to myself, “Just stay still, Jim. Just stay still.” And there’s a lot of those. But blocking-wise, Alan is everywhere. He is all over the shop because he’s out of his realm. Completely out of his realm. I’m pretending to be in control. At the end of the initial phone call, I end up very close to the audience, talking to Gary, trying to maintain control. And I’m not cool. I’m absolutely terrified in this situation. I’m a whirlwind...trying my hardest NOT to be a whirlwind..!’*

\*Can you see how Movement and Gesture have both been included in this evaluative example? Can you also spot the three explicit dramatic elements scattered throughout this paragraph? Also note that this paragraph is largely written in past tense, which is completely permissible in written responses in VCE Drama.

## MOMENT 1:

Example evaluative observation: The actors playing ‘Steve’ and ‘Gary’ in Back to Back’s 2023 season of the utterly astonishing small metal objects at Federation Square, dawdled slowly across the space upon their initial entrance, meandering towards the audience in their own time. This gentle pace allowed an unhurried realisation for the mesmerised audience as they identified the striking physical embodiments of the voices ingeniously piped through their headsets. Simon Laherty’s masterful depiction of Steve showed a limited gait, met by Gary’s measured steps, played brashly by Brian Tilley, who also \*held his hands tensely in his pockets during this sequence. This subtle, yet clever, combination of movement and gesture suggested a familiarity and trust in Steve and Gary’s relationship, and a sense of security in the bustling and hectic action of the passers-by around them. This is where the true genius of small metal objects lies; the contrast between these moments of stillness, both physical and emotional, juxtaposed with the unrelenting chaotic movement of the anonymous masses surrounding our narrative, exposes the beauty and intimacy of genuine human connection.

‘for example gait, posture and stance.’  
– VCE Drama Study design, 2019–2024

### MOMENT 1:

Your observation:

Your observation:

Your observation:

# MOVEMENT

## ➡ MOMENT 2:

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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## ➡ MOMENT 3:

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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# MOVEMENT

## ► MOMENT 4:

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

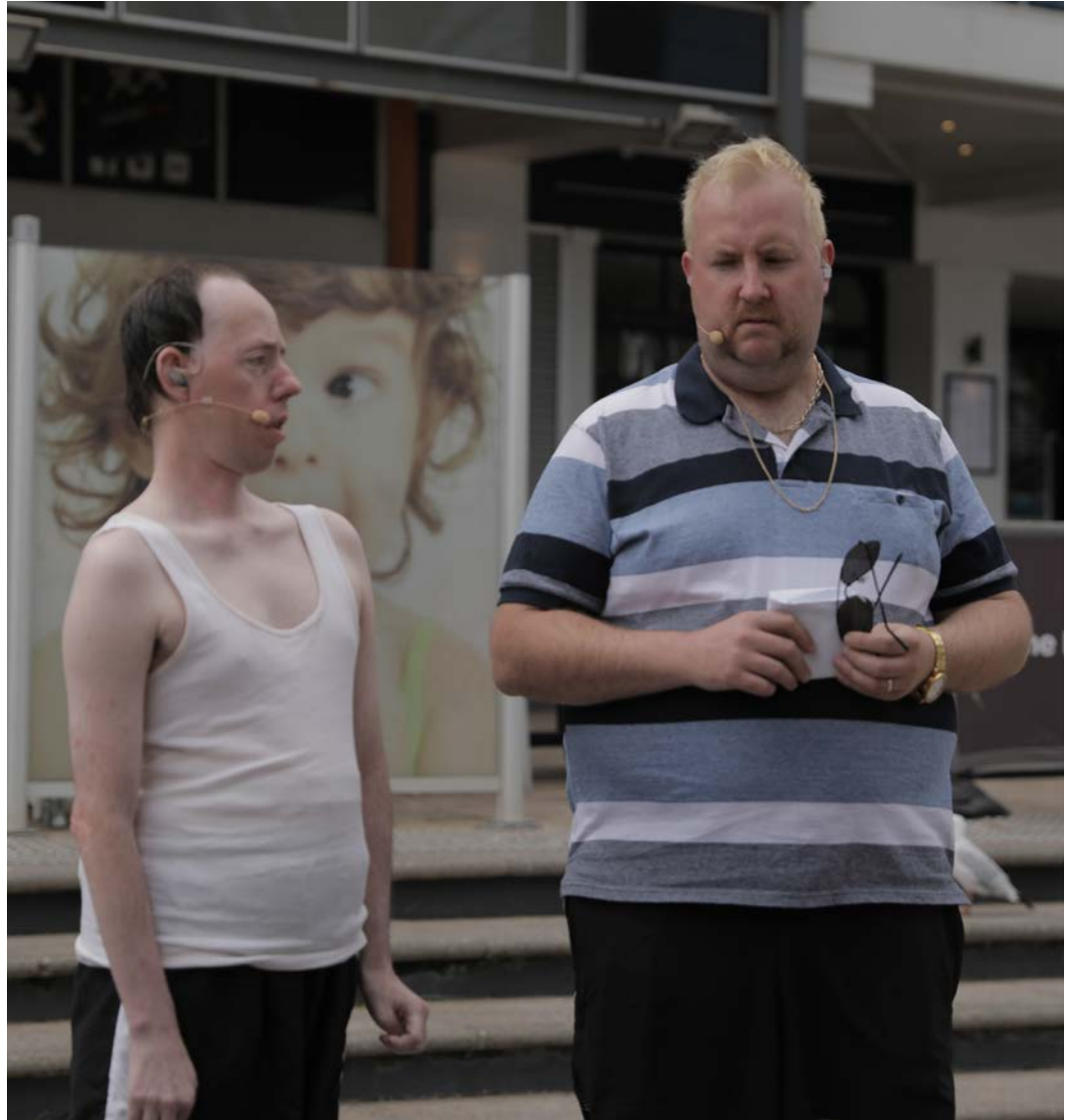
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small metal objects performance image

**Photographer:** Nate Shilling

**Location:** Adelaide, Australia

**Year:** 2021

**Description:** Simon Lahert as Steve

Brian Tilley as Gary

# GESTURE

‘for example using the body or body parts, usually the hands, to create symbols and meaning.’ – VCE Drama Study design, 2019–2024

Gen identifies how her character Carolyn harnesses hand movement: ‘She also uses her gestures to suggest relaxation, freedom, gentleness, to convey “We’re mates.” Like the gesture of offering a handshake with Steve.’



small metal objects performance image  
Photographer: Nate Shilling  
Location: Adelaide, Australia  
Year: 2021  
Description: Simon Lahert as Steve  
Brian Tilley as Gary

➤ **MOMENT 1:**

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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# GESTURE

## MOMENT 2:

Example analytical observation:

We watch Brian Tilley shunt his hands firmly into his pockets at this point, simultaneously refusing the helpless, shrugging handshake from Jim Russell, whilst also reaching for his humble collection of coins to shout Alan and Steve coffee with. This strong, unwavering gesture suggests Gary’s uncompromising determination as a character, whilst symbolising the broader \*thematic concern of the play: upholding friendship over financial gain. Tilley’s use of gesture shifts the mood here as Alan begins to flounder when his status drops and the key conflict in the narrative forms.

\*Observe how this analytical response weaves thematic meaning AND symbolism into the one moment of analysis. Also, take a moment to underline the multiple dramatic elements evident in this example. You may also note that this response is in current tense; this is also a permissible style of response in VCE Drama.

 MOMENT 2:

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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# GESTURE

## ▶ MOMENT 3:

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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## ▶ MOMENT 4:

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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# FACIAL EXPRESSION

*‘for example manipulating facial expressions to communicate emotions, reactions and meaning.’ – VCE Drama Study design, 2019–2024*

Here, Gen reveals her character’s motivation behind her facial expressions: *‘Carolyn’s very conscious that...smiling... will get her what she wants.’*

## ► MOMENT 1:

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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## ► MOMENT 2:

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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# FACIAL EXPRESSION

## MOMENT 3:

Example analytical observation:

Laherty glances sideways at Russell when he initially offers him the envelope of cash to 'keep things moving', communicating his mistrust of Alan to the audience in this moment. Whilst rummaging through this cash, Laherty's facial expression remains still and pensive, his open mouth and eyeline drawing focus on the task at hand, whilst his hunched back is turned to Alan, further indicating the \*meaning of his lack of trust here. In contrast, Russell conveys Alan's increasing emotional discomfort by darting his eyes furtively around the space and frowning slightly whilst peering over Steve's shoulder. Through these facial expressions, Russell's reaction conveys Alan's motivation to retain control of the situation.

\*Can you spot where three key words from the VCAA's definition of the expressive skill of Facial Expression have been integrated into this example analytical response? Try doing this in your response, too; it helps to show a deeper understanding of all the aspects of the expressive skills.

## MOMENT 3:

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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# FACIAL EXPRESSION

## ► MOMENT 4:

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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small metal objects performance image

**Photographer:** Nate Shilling

**Location:** Adelaide, Australia

**Year:** 2021

**Description:** Gen Picot as Carolyn,  
Jim Russell as Alan, Brian Tilley as Gary

# VOICE

‘for example diction, pitch, pace, tone, resonance, muscularity and vocal sounds.’ – VCE Drama Study design, 2019–2024

When talking about the actors’ use of voice, Bruce points out that ‘if you have the audience in a seating tribute, then you would expect the actors to face the audience and to throw their voice to the back of the stalls...In a work like *small metal objects*, it’s more like television acting. A lot of the time, Simon not so much, but the other three actors may have their backs to the audience and they’re not projecting their voice because they’re using radio mics. So, they can really get down to a very low volume in their delivery. And so when someone talks to someone else, the audience gets the sense we are hearing a very private conversation.’

Jim talks about how his use of voice conveys his character’s emotional state at different points throughout the show: ‘In the moment before Gary comes back with a coffee, Alan leans into Steve and says, “I haven’t got time to fuck around.” He’s a piece of work at that moment where he gets in Steve’s ear. It’s really manipulative; his tone is very violent, very threatening. I deliver it with that very menacing, threatening feel. And in the next moment, Gary turns up and Alan’s thinking, “Did you hear what I just said to your friend?” Alan’s voice goes from low, ominous and menacing, to panicked, pathetic. He doesn’t even know what to say. He says “he doesn’t seem good”, thinking, “That won’t incriminate me.” Alan and Carolyn are hard characters in so many ways, because they’re prepared to go to that degree, and just give up all of their dignity and status to get what they want. And I hope this contrast comes across in my tone of voice.’

**MOMENT 1:**

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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# VOICE

## ▶ MOMENT 2:

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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## ▶ MOMENT 3:

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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# VOICE

## MOMENT 4:

Example evaluative observation:

This \*doyenne of the Australian acting scene viscerally depicts 'Carolyn' as she struggles to seize power and control in her final exchange with 'Steve'. Gen Picot's precise and eloquent diction, combined with the contemptuous and menacing bridled rage in her tone, indicate her remarkable prowess as a performer. Her spittly, staccato delivery of Carolyn's desperate and appalling threats and suggestions to Steve in the climax of the dialogue captivate and appal the audience in equal measures. The contrast between her snarling and lowly vocal sounds, here compared to her charming purr in her opening exchanges with 'Alan' and 'Gary', leaves us shuddering, as her truly base nature is exposed.

\*Notice how the evaluative language in this sample response is not relying on adjectives? The verbs and nouns are doing the evaluative work here, and the resulting evaluation is more articulate and persuasive. Try this yourself in these last two observations:

## ➡ MOMENT 4:

Your observation:

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Your observation:

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Your observation:

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# + ACTIVITY:

## EXPRESSIVE INTERPRETATION

+Adjective generator



Working in pairs, select one of the following three script excerpts to explore how expressive skills can shape meaning and tone in a performance. Using this [adjective generator](#), select a random adjective to define each one of the four expressive skills listed above, and then rehearse your performance, really pushing these four expressive skills. For example, you might perform the role of Gary in Script Excerpt 2 using the following adjectives:

**MOVEMENT:** EXCITED

**GESTURE:** SASSY

**FACIAL EXPRESSION:** LABOURED

**VOICE:** SOMBRE

### SCRIPT EXCERPT 1

**CAROLYN:** What's wrong with you Steve? Why won't you let people help you? It's impossible to work everything out yourself. You need someone else.

**STEVE:** What sort of person do I need?

**CAROLYN:** Someone you can trust, like me. We could go somewhere now and have a cup of tea start talking through some problems. Do you want to be unhappy?

**STEVE:** I want to be happy.

**CAROLYN:** Good!

**STEVE:** I want to work it out as soon as possible.

**CAROLYN:** Of course you do. Shall we take a little walk?

**STEVE:** Can we go to a coffee house or café?

**CAROLYN:** Of course

**STEVE:** Can Gary come?

Carolyn: Absolutely.

(Carolyn gestures Alan and Gary to follow)



## SCRIPT EXCERPT 2

**GARY:** The operation is very common. There's no way I'd die under that anaesthetic.

**STEVE:** Yeah

**GARY:** You are a great mate. I love it how you come over for BBQ's, we play pool and have a glass of beer.

**STEVE:** I enjoy it also.

**GARY:** I love how we can do the dishes and have a talk.

**STEVE:** I can't get over this. I don't think I'll ever get over your operation.

**GARY:** You're my best mate and I'll always be there for you.

**STEVE:** Are you scared of dying?

**GARY:** Yeah, but in some ways there would be no more feeling, no more thinking. Just peace.

**STEVE:** If I lost one of my things, I just couldn't go on living. That's what my life is about, keeping things that are valuable for as long as I can. Thirteen stubby holders, a collection of gemstones and a black key ring in the shape of a shoe.

**GARY:** You're addicted.

**STEVE:** I've seen a counsellor.

## SCRIPT EXCERPT 3

(Alan walks to Steve and waits for Steve to acknowledge him)

**STEVE:** I'm deep in thought.

**ALAN:** I know it's a pain in the arse, but I just have to get this deal done.

**STEVE:** Yeah

**ALAN:** I'm just keen to get this sorted.

**STEVE:** Yep

**ALAN:** I just want to get the job done, get out of here.

**STEVE:** I don't want to go,

**ALAN:** Fair enough. (pause) You live close to town?

**STEVE:** Sunshine

**ALAN:** It's really taken off.

**STEVE:** Yeah

Once you have rehearsed these scripts using this madcap direction, perform them for the rest of your class. Ask for feedback from your audience about how your interpretation of this section of the script made them feel about the characters.

Now, take a moment to think about the selected script excerpts here and how the actors presented them in the performance of small metal objects you saw. Copy and paste the dialogue onto a fresh page and annotate it with clear descriptions of the expressive skills which were evident in the actors' performances and use specific adjectives to describe their choices as accurately as possible. As you are doing this, think about the bigger question, which is how you felt about their character as a result of their use of expressive skills, and make note of this emotional impact, too.

# THEATRICAL STYLES

## + ACTIVITY: SHOW US YOUR STYLE



small metal objects is an example of Eclectic theatre. Take a moment to go back over all the contributing styles evident in small metal objects in List 1 on the following page. Now, recalling the features and moments within the performance identified in List 2, draw a line linking the evidence and the style it is most closely linked to.

**HOT TIP:** Remember, the conventions of the styles below were identified in Pack A – Before the Show



small metal objects performance image

**Photographer:** Nate Shilling

**Location:** Adelaide, Australia

**Year:** 2021

**Description:** Simon Laherty as Steve  
Jim Russell as Alan,

Absurdism

Devised Drama

Disrupted Realism

Hyperrealism

Immersive theatre

Metatheatre

Realism

Verbatim


- + Visible headsets and the use of the sound design playing through the audience's headsets
- + Dialogue drawn from real life conversations
- + Costume design explicitly influenced by the contemporary fashion worn in the specific region the performance is taking place in
- + Jim's authentic use of gesture when playing 'Alan'
- + The actors and director created this performance collaboratively
- + Steve ponders what his life's purpose is, as he feels something is missing
- + The audience is positioned in the middle of a non-traditional performance space and given headphones which allow the aural soundscape of the passers-by to permeate the score
- + Alan's reference to the time being 3:30pm, regardless of the time of the performance
- + Simon's startlingly underplayed characterisation of 'Steve'
- + Carolyn's indifference to Steve's existential dilemma
- + The script reflects the collective experiences and perspectives of the performers
- + Alan's desires and intentions are initially ambiguous or difficult for the audience to interpret
- + SMO explores the complex themes of identity
- + Performing in non-traditional spaces challenges traditional approaches to Realism and disrupts audience expectations
- + A naturalistic acting style that aims to create a convincing portrayal of corporate characters
- + Gary's use of authentic, everyday language
- + SMO allows marginalised or under-represented voices to be heard and validates their experiences



Once you have matched the theatrical styles and the features of, and moments from, the performance, try weaving 3 or 4 sentences of your own, exploring both analytical and evaluative approaches. Here are two similar examples drawing from the same evidence, but one is entirely analytical and one evaluative. Can you see what separates them?

**ANALYTICAL:** Bruce Gladwin's directorial decision to draw the audience's attention to the actors' headsets, choosing black earbuds rather than skin-toned options, suggests that the style of Metatheatre is at play here. A convention of this style is its self-conscious commentary upon its own nature and conventions, highlighting the artificiality of the theatrical experience. This visual cue draws attention to the theatrical nature of what the audience is watching, reminding us that these are actors performing a preordained narrative.

**EVALUATIVE:** Bruce Gladwin's subversive directorial decision to draw the audience's attention to the actors' headsets, choosing conspicuous black earbuds rather than the less obvious skin-toned options, suggests the style of Metatheatre is weaving its magic in small metal objects. The convention of Metatheatre so ingeniously at play here is this self-conscious commentary upon its own nature and conventions, boldly highlighting the artificiality of the theatrical experience. This subtle but persistent visual cue slyly draws attention to the theatrical nature of what the audience is watching, reminding us that these are brilliantly convincing actors performing a preordained but highly engaging narrative.



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# SPACE

*'Space involves the way the performance area is used to communicate meaning, to define settings, to represent status and to create actor—audience relationships. This may be achieved through the use of levels, proximity and depth. The use of space may be symbolic.'*

**– VCE Drama Study design, 2019–2024**

One of the most idiosyncratic conventions of small metal objects is the fact it must be performed in a public space, rather than a traditional performance venue like a theatre or a hall. This iconic creative decision has been made by the team for a number of reasons, some of which Artistic Director, Bruce, explores through the following six statements:

1. Well, the whole show is about space. It's about fictionalising a real space. We are creating a fictional story in real time and placing it in a space that is common and known'.
2. 'And then there's spatial relationships between the actors and the passing public, but also the audience. The audience, who are both spectator and spectacle, are a physical presence within the space as well.... And so that creates a tension within the piece, too. But space is everything'.
3. 'When you're in a public space, like a public square, or a shopping centre or train station, there's already a lot of detail there ... in people passing through, in signage, in announcements that might happen, or ancillary action on roads next to the performance. So, there's always a lot for the audience to be processing'.
4. 'The story really requires a space where anything can happen rather than a space that's controlled'.
5. 'There's a constant rewriting and invention of the show through the space that we're afforded to use at any given location'.
6. 'We are really keen with Simon's character to block him as far forward in the space to the audience as possible, and for them to have a really strong visual appreciation about the nuances and subtleties that his character might be going through'.



small metal objects performance image

**Photographer:** Keizo Maeda

**Location:** Tokyo, Japan

**Year:** 2018

**Description:** Simon Laherty as Steve,  
Yumi Umiumare as Carolyn, Jim Russell as Alan

# + ACTIVITY: AUDIENCE IMPACT

The use of space is one of the most impactful creative choices in this performance. Align each of Bruce's previous six statements with the relevant claims suggested below, about the impacts of this use of space upon the audience:



+ A unique audience experience at every performance.

Statement:

+ Enabling empathetic insight for Allist audience members by emulating the emotional experience of vulnerability which many disabled and neurodiverse people regularly feel in public spaces.

Statement:

+ Creating a tension in the actor–audience dynamic through the unpredictability of the general public in the space.

Statement:

+ The audience experiencing a narrative which is open to possibility.

Statement:

+ Reframing the familiar through positioning the audience to see it in a new and unusual perspective.

Statement:

+ Positioning the audience to see the actors as part of a world they are already familiar with, and therefore creating greater emotional connection with the narrative.

Statement:

+ Feeling a slightly overwhelmed and discombobulated before the actors even appear in the space.

Statement:

+ Creating an alliance with (and understanding of) a particular character.

Statement:

+ Opening up the possibility of audience members seeing strangers in public spaces as unique individuals, all with their own values, stories, futures, pasts and lives.

Statement:

# CONVENTIONS

## + ACTIVITY

Looking back over the bonus conventions you read about in **Pack A: Before the Show** on pages 30–31, take a moment to jot down six moments in the performance where each one was evident:



**PATHOS** – The quality of a performance or a character that evokes a feeling of pity, sympathy, or compassion in the audience. It is an emotional appeal that aims to create a sense of connection between the audience and the characters or situations depicted on stage. It can be created through a variety of theatrical devices, such as the use of music, lighting, dialogue, or physical performance. Pathos can also be created through the portrayal of characters who are vulnerable, oppressed or facing difficult challenges. By highlighting the struggles and hardships of these characters, the audience is able to connect with them on a deeper level and feel a sense of empathy or compassion.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....

**STILLNESS AND SILENCE** – Performance conventions whereby the deliberate use of pauses and periods of stillness during a performance creates tension, heightens the emotional impact of a scene, or draws attention to specific moments or details.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....

**SYMBOLISM** – Objects, sounds, actions, or images that represent an idea, emotion, or concept beyond their literal or surface meaning. Symbolism can be used to explore complex themes and ideas, such as the nature of reality, the human condition, or the relationship between the individual and society. Symbolism in theatre may also involve the use of non-realistic or stylised elements, such as costumes, set design, lighting and sound to create a heightened sense of theatricality and to reinforce the symbolic meaning behind the performance.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....

# SYMBOLISM

## + ACTIVITY

In order to explore the use of symbolism in *smo*, finish the following statements:



In *smo*, we see Simon extensively blocked downstage right, symbolising.....

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The title of the play itself, *small metal objects*, symbolically references....

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We see three out of four characters clutching onto disposable coffee cups in the second half of the performance; this link between them symbolises.....

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Moments in the sound composition symbolically define the mood when....

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Bruce Gladwin used symbolism when encouraging moments of silence between characters. These represent.....

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Shio carefully considered the symbolism behind broken-down costumes, electing to comment upon.....

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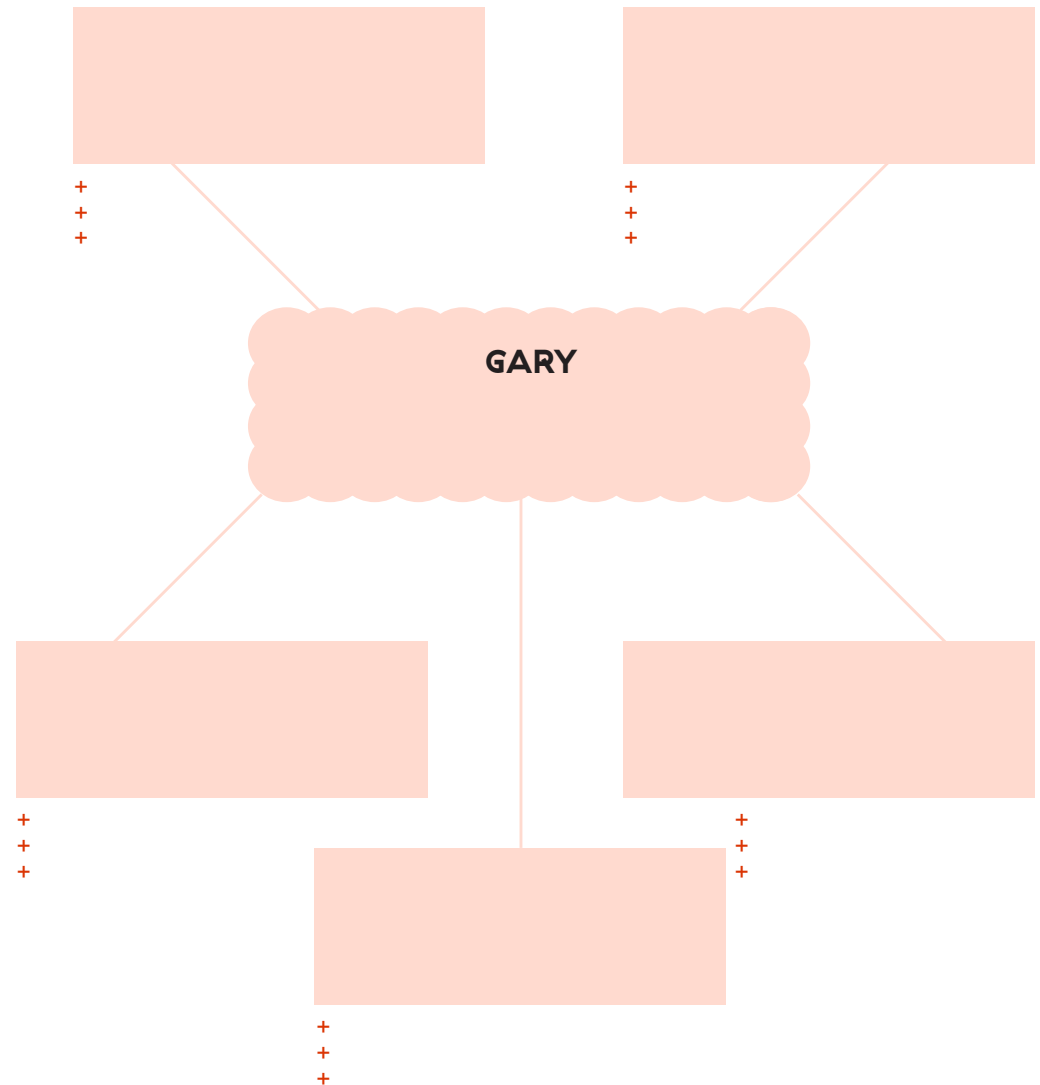
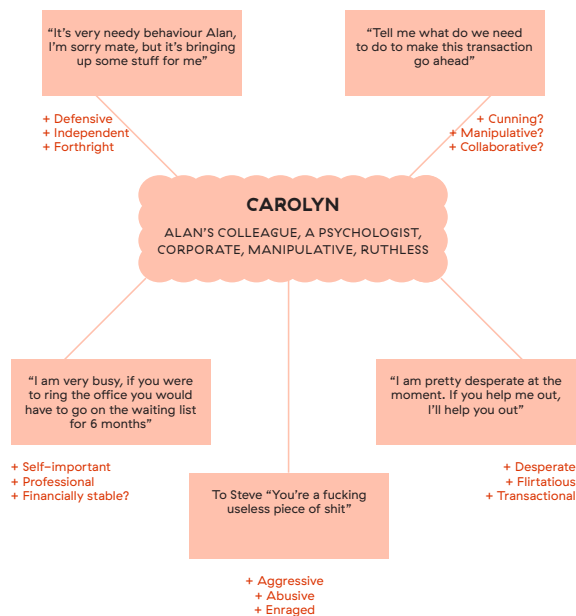
# CHARACTER ANALYSIS

## + ACTIVITY



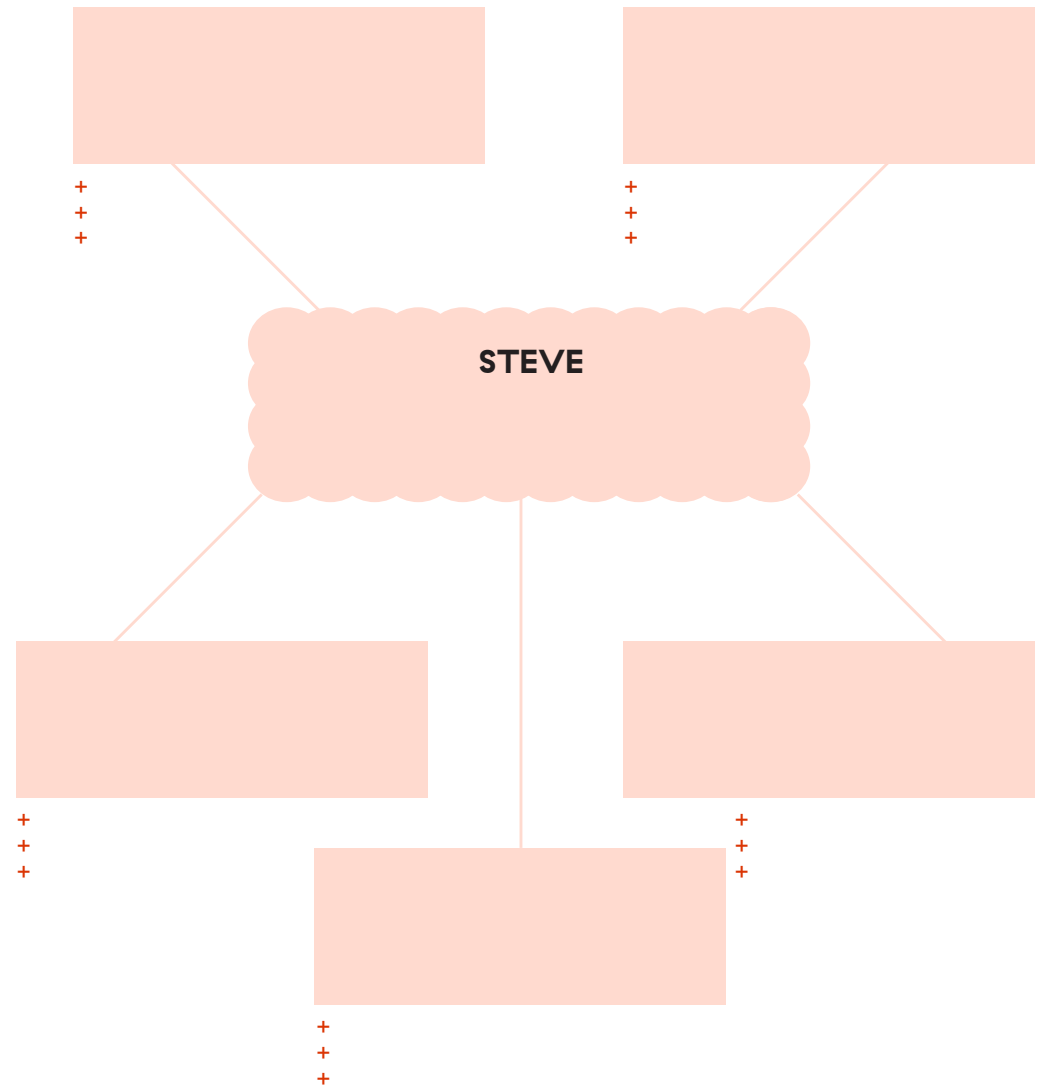
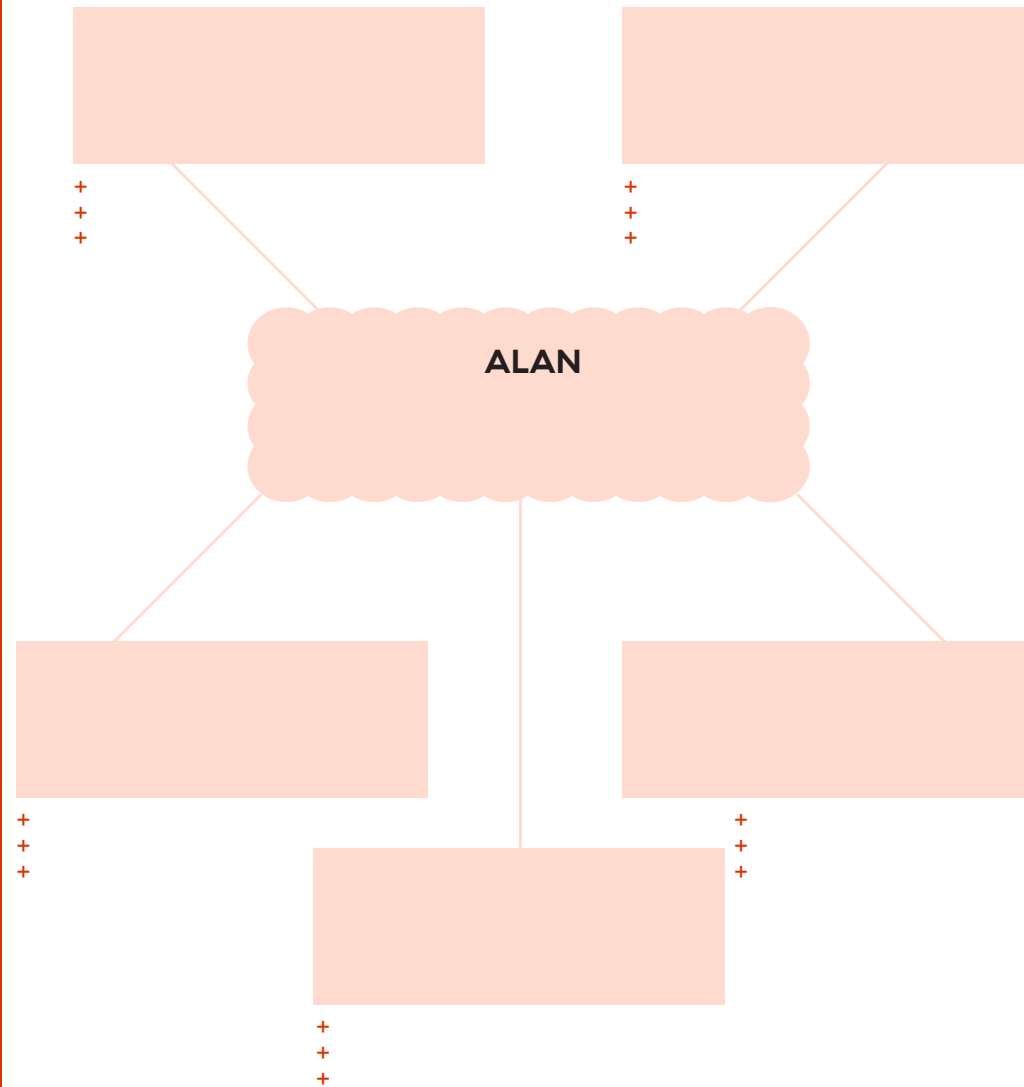
Go back to the Character Bios and Key Quotes on pages 12–15 of the Pack A: Pre-Show Resource and look at the mindmaps you completed around the four characters in small metal objects. Now that you have seen the show, reconsider the adjectives and attributes you have suggested each of them may have. Were your preconceptions based around their dialogue accurate? Delete any which proved incorrect and add five more based on what you have seen. Be as precise as possible in your language.

Hot Tip: Remember to refer to this descriptive list when you are describing these characters in your assessment tasks and exams.



# CHARACTER ANALYSIS

+ ACTIVITY



# CHARACTER MOTIVATIONS

## + ACTIVITY: CHARACTER QUOTES PART B



Brian Tilley, who plays Gary, discusses what his character is motivated by:

*“Gary is passionate — he keeps his small [business] operation running. He is also scared — as far as I can tell, he is scared to have his operation and he is always trying to keep a low profile. Let’s just say the problem with him is that he does not want to give too much away, he does not want to draw attention to himself in public, [as he is worried that] he could be discovered. What matters most to him is his friendship with Steve”.*

And here, Simon and Bruce discuss what motivates the character of Steve:

**SIMON:** *I reckon [Steve] is passionate about trying to work out if Gary’s gonna stick by him or not.*

**BRUCE:** *You feel like he’s testing Gary?*

**SIMON:** *Yeah... He’s going to miss him so much and he wants to be by him as much as he can.*

To watch the footage of this whole discussion around Motivation, [click here](#).



small metal objects performance image

Photographer: Nate Shilling

Location: Adelaide, Australia

Year: 2021

Description: Jim Russell as Alan,  
Brian Tilley as Gary, Gen Picot as Carolyn

# + ACTIVITY: MOTIVATION TABLE

The table below identifies an array of common human motivators. Read through each of them, and then use a separate coloured highlighter to indicate each character's name above the table. decide which motivators are relevant to which character, and highlight them in the colour key you have set up. Make note: some motivators may be relevant to multiple characters, so be prepared to highlight motivators with multiple colours.



STEVE	GARY	ALAN	CAROLYN
FEAR	SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE		DESIRE
UNDERSTANDING	SPIRITUALITY		DENIAL
GENDER EXPRESSION	LOVE		ESCAPISM
FAMILY	MORALS		BELONGING
GREED	COMFORT		SECURITY
MONEY	STATUS		POWER
CULTURE	CONNECTION		TRUTH

# + ACTIVITY:

## CHARACTER BUILDING THROUGH IMPROVISATION



What does each character **want** versus what do they **need**? Is there a conflict between the two? Discuss this as a whole class. Then, let's have a round of Back to Back Theatre's very own improvisation game: 'I am, I have, I want..!', followed up by developing these characters through Hot Seating.



Here is an overview of the first game, according to Bruce: 'Basically, four people come up in front of an audience and they each take turns making a list about things that they have. For example, one person says, 'I have an ironing board'. Someone else then says the first thing that comes into their head: 'I have a leg', or 'I have you'. These possessions can either be physical, or spiritual, or emotional. It's about building on things that you have or things you use, and also how you define yourself, who you are as a person. It's really about identity. We use that game with the actors in character, and then instead of just listing things, we started to build a world'.

As a class, play a game of 'I am, I have, I want..!', with four players per round. Once each participant has decided on what they are, what they have and what they want, move onto individual rounds of Hot Seating.

Bruce says their impro which formed the foundations of smo continued like this: 'Once we established the world of Gary, we thought 'Oh! Simon could play Gary's apprentice! So, he created this character, Steve, and once we started fleshing out Steve's world through Hot Seating, we already had this amazing list from Simon of all these odd things like a black key ring shaped like a shoe and four stubby holders. All this stuff came from these really detailed little impro combinations; their own lives in these fictional characters that we started building'.

small metal objects performance image

**Photographer:** Nate Schilling

**Location:** Adelaide, Australia

**Year:** 2021

**Description:** Gen Picot as Carolyn,  
Jim Russell as Alan, Brian Tilley as Gary

# OUTCOME 3.3 BASED INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

*'Students analyse and evaluate a professional drama performance selected from the prescribed VCE Drama Unit 3 Playlist published annually on the VCAA website.'*

– VCE Drama Study design, 2019–2024

Here you will find practice questions and relevant information around how your knowledge of small metal objects will be assessed during Unit 3 Drama, 2023.

## TOP TIPS:

A. Remember to make note of the amount of marks allocated to each question, and make sure you spend your time accordingly.

B. Feel free to integrate the following recommended structure into your responses: **Use the acronym ODE**

**O** – Overview – Give a summary or overview of the answer you are about to provide. Rewrite the question telling your reader what you are about to discuss. For example, if the questions was 'analyse the use of 2 expressive skills by one actor in the performance' your first sentence may say 'In the performance of (insert show name), the actor (insert actors name) used the expressive skills of voice and gesture to help portray his character as enigmatic and excited.'

**D** – Describe – Describe what you saw and heard in visceral detail. You could start by saying 'for example', and then paint a picture of the performance for your reader. Be very descriptive in your response; try using adjectives and similes to help illustrate the moment you are discussing so that your reader has a really clear picture in their mind.

**E** – Effect – describe the intended effect on the audience. How did this make the audience feel? Surprised? Happy? Was the effect humorous or did you feel scared?

C. There is no point in summing up things at the end of your answer which you have already stated. Remember, responses in Drama

D. Draw upon the evaluative language which you highlighted in the reviews on pages 6 & 7 in Pack A: Pre-Show Resource.

E. Remember to refer to the descriptive list of character traits on page 44 of this resource when you are describing these characters in the following practice questions:

## PRACTICE OUTCOME 3.3 QUESTIONS

1. Choose one scene or moment in the play and analyse how one convention belonging to the performance style of small metal objects was used to enhance that scene or moment. **5 marks**
2. Evaluate the use of multiple expressive skills by an actor in establishment and maintenance of an actor–audience relationship. **10 marks**
3. Analyse how one production area and two dramatic elements worked together to enhance the performance of small metal objects. **10 marks**
4. Describe how one actor used their expressive and performance skills to create their character during the performance. **15 marks**
5. Evaluate how one or more production area/s from the list below enhanced the intended meaning of small metal objects: **10 marks**
  - Sound
  - Costume
  - Props
  - Theatre technologies
  - Lighting

# EXAM BASED INFORMATION AND QUESTIONS

Here you will find the relevant information around how your knowledge of small metal objects will be assessed during the Drama Examination in October 2023.

## **VCE DRAMA – END OF YEAR WRITTEN EXAMINATION**

### EXAMINATION SPECIFICATIONS

#### Overall conditions:

The examination will be sat at a time and date to be set annually by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). VCAA examination rules will apply. Details of these rules are published annually in the VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook.

There will be 15 minutes reading time and 1 hour and 30 minutes writing time. The examination will be marked by a panel appointed by the VCAA. The examination will contribute 25 per cent to the study score.

#### Format:

The examination will be in the form of a question and answer book. The examination will consist of two sections.

Section A will consist of short-answer and extended-answer questions and may include questions with multiple parts. Questions will be drawn from Unit 3, Area of Study 3 and will relate to the prescribed plays from the VCE Drama playlist for the year in question. This section may include questions relating to individual plays, from which students will respond to questions relating to one play. Alternatively, there may be common questions to which students will respond with reference to one play. Section A will be worth a total of 15 marks.

The total marks for the examination will be 50.

Answers are to be recorded in the spaces provided in the question and answer book.

#### Approved Materials and Equipment:

Pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners and rulers

### Practice Written Exam Questions:

1. Evaluate how one actor used two expressive skills to portray one character in the performance of this play. In your response, explain how the actor manipulated the actor–audience relationship. **5 marks**
2. Analyse how two conventions and one production area were used to convey meaning in the performance of this play. **7 marks**
3. Explain how one dramatic element was applied in one specific moment in the performance of this play. **3 marks**
4. Describe how one actor manipulated one performance skill in one specific moment in the performance of this play. **3 marks**
5. Evaluate the use of two or more dramatic elements to enhance the performance in one specific moment in the performance of this play. **5 marks**
6. Analyse how one production area was used to enhance the performance in two specific moments in the performance of this play. **7 marks**

# CURRICULUM LINKS

## UNIT 2, AREA OF STUDY 4

### ANALYSING AN AUSTRALIAN DRAMA PERFORMANCE

In this area of study students observe and analyse a performance by professional drama performers. Drama performances by students enrolled at school cannot be analysed for this outcome. Students use appropriate drama terminology to explain, analyse and evaluate how the use of dramatic elements, conventions, performance styles, production areas, expressive skills, performance skills, and the actor—audience relationship may be manipulated to communicate meaning in performance.

### OUTCOME 4

On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and evaluate a performance of a drama work by Australian practitioners. To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 4.

### KEY KNOWLEDGE

- + Ways in which performance styles, conventions, dramatic elements and production areas are manipulated to structure, and create meaning in, a performance
- + Performance styles and how they are defined by acting, conventions and production areas
- + Ways that the actor—audience relationship may be created and manipulated
- + Appropriate drama terminology that may be used to explain, analyse and evaluate a performance

### KEY SKILLS

- + Analyse the expressive and performance skills used to communicate character to an audience
- + Analyse ways in which performance styles, conventions, dramatic elements and production areas have been manipulated to communicate meaning in a performance
- + Explain and evaluate the effectiveness of a range of performance styles, conventions, dramatic elements and production areas in the performance
- + Analyse and evaluate how the actor—audience relationship was created and manipulated
- + Use appropriate drama terminology to explain, analyse and evaluate a performance

## UNIT 3, AREA OF STUDY 3

### ANALYSING AND EVALUATING A PROFESSIONAL DRAMA PERFORMANCE

In this area of study students analyse and evaluate a professional drama performance selected from the prescribed VCE Drama Unit 3 Playlist. Students analyse the actors' use of expressive and performance skills to represent character and to communicate meaning in the performance. They consider how the actor—audience relationship is created and manipulated and analyse and evaluate how the conventions, dramatic elements, production areas and performance styles are used in the performance.

The prescribed VCE Drama Unit 3 Playlist

is published annually on the VCAA website. Outcome 3 On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and evaluate a professional drama performance. To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.

### KEY KNOWLEDGE

- + Performance styles and conventions and their use in performance
- + The actors' use of expressive and performance skills to represent characters in performance
- + Manipulation of dramatic elements and production areas to enhance performance
- + Drama terminology associated with performance styles and practitioners from contemporary and/or historical and/or cultural traditions relevant to the performance

### KEY SKILLS

- + Analyse and evaluate the representation of characters within a performance
- + Analyse and evaluate the manipulation of conventions, dramatic elements and production areas within a performance
- + Analyse and evaluate the use of performance styles within a production
- + Analyse and evaluate the actors' use of expressive and performance skills in a performance
- + Analyse and evaluate the establishment, maintenance and manipulation of the actor—audience relationship in a performance
- + Use appropriate drama terminology to explain, analyse and evaluate a performance

## EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The level of achievement for Units 3 and 4 is also assessed by an end-of-year performance examination, which will contribute 35 per cent to the study score, and an end-of-year written examination, which will contribute 25 per cent to the study score.

## WRITTEN EXAMINATION

### — END OF YEAR:

Section A will consist of short-answer and extended-answer questions, and may include questions with multiple parts. Questions will be drawn from Unit 3, Area of Study 3 and will relate to the prescribed plays from the VCE Drama playlist for the year in question. This section may include questions relating to individual plays, from which students will respond to questions relating to one play. Alternatively, there may be common questions to which students will respond with reference to one play.

Section A will be worth a total of 15 marks.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## WEBSITES

[vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/drama/2019DramaSD.pdf](http://vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/vce/drama/2019DramaSD.pdf)

[vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/Drama/Pages/Index.aspx](http://vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/vce/vce-study-designs/Drama/Pages/Index.aspx)

[Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com)

[Canva.com](https://canva.com)

[backtobacktheatre.com/cms/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/BTB\\_EDU-DOC\\_FA\\_revised-2.pdf](https://backtobacktheatre.com/cms/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/BTB_EDU-DOC_FA_revised-2.pdf)

[chat.openai.com/chat](https://chat.openai.com/chat)

## REFERENCES

VCAA Drama Written Exam, 2021

Drama Victoria Trial VCE Drama Written Exam, 2022

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