

# University of New England

## Theatre Studies

THEA 302 Approaches to Creative Arts Performance and Analysis

### Example Project 2

I propose to work with three fellow students, [their names], to explore theoretical and practical ways of performing the chorus in Greek tragedy. They will be submitting their versions of the proposal separately. We want to look at how the choruses might have been performed originally, and how they might be performed now. We have persuaded [staff member] to supervise.

#### Aims

- To become familiar with 10 Greek tragedies.
- To experiment with a number of different possible approaches to performing the choruses using song and dance
- To establish what it is possible for us to achieve as performers, integrating text, music and movement.
- To articulate some basic principles about how the Greek choruses can work on stage now.

Our work will fall into four phases.

#### A. Proposal:

[5 hours]

10%

Due 7 July

#### B. Preparation:

- reading 10 important Greek tragedies (three or four from each of the major playwrights including the first and the last of the surviving scripts, i.e. Aeschylus: *The Persians*, *Agamemnon*, *The Libation Bearers*, *The Eumenides*; Sophocles: *Antigone*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Electra*; Euripides: *Medea*, *Electra*, *The Bacchae*) thinking about what the choruses do;
- reading scholarly writing about Greek tragedies in performance, starting with Oliver Taplin's *Greek Tragedy in Action*;
- researching how productions in the past have used the chorus using the APGRD database (<http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/>) as a starting point;
- thinking about the role of music and the choruses;
- thinking about the role of dance and the choruses;
- talking with our supervisor and getting feedback on ideas and progress.

#### Items to be submitted for assessment

- a comprehensive 2000-word summary of the most important findings from the research, including websites and YouTube examples if we can find them.

[50 hours]

30%

Due: 11 August

C. Rehearsal and performance:

- workshopping ideas from our research and all of us about how the choruses might have worked originally and how they might work now;
- selecting two distinctly different approaches that are promising;
- selecting a series of 5 x 3-minute excerpts from the plays to explore;
- selecting/composing music to accompany the excerpts;
- choreographing and rehearsing each of the 3 excerpts in the two different styles;
- creating a script with choreography and vocal/musical notations;
- learning lines and music;
- working to improve our dancing, singing and playing of the recorder and drums;
- picking the 3 best excerpts to perform, each in the two different styles;
- showing a rehearsal to the supervisor and getting feedback;
- asking the supervisor what kind of mark we are heading for;
- writing and rehearsing explanatory linking commentary;
- arranging for the performance to be videoed;
- performing the pieces for the markers;
- listening to feedback from the markers, and thinking about how we could have improved.

Items for assessment

- The performance
- The video
- The annotated script, with extra notations explaining the reasons for our choices.

[50 hours]

30%

Due: 29 September

D. Writing up:

- watching video of the performance and making notes;
- getting feedback from the group on my contribution to the team;
- getting feedback from my supervisor about problems I should address in the write-up;
- evaluating the strengths and weakness of the project;
- evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of my contribution;
- writing a log of what I did and what I learned in phase B that was useful;
- writing a log of my work in rehearsal and performance;
- comparing the two approaches we chose;
- thinking about what was good and what could have been better;
- thinking about what I would do differently if I had another chance;
- evaluating the helpfulness of the scholars we read;
- thinking about what I and we learned about Greek tragedy from the project;
- thinking about how we might perform a whole play in the style we like best.

#### Items for assessment

- a 2000-word summary of the above.

[45 hours]

30%

Due: 28 October

To pass the unit I should complete all the work in Phase B to a basic level and demonstrate that I have a working knowledge of the research materials. I should make a solid contribution to the production, providing research information and assistance to the satisfaction of my fellow students. My write-up will give a comprehensive overview of what I did and demonstrate what I have learned from the project.

To gain an above-average mark I should complete all the work in Phase B to a high level and demonstrate that I have real insight into the research materials. I should make a significant artistic, intellectual and practical contribution to the production and performance. My write-up will give a comprehensive and insightful overview of what I did, show how I used my research to shape and inform my contribution, and demonstrate that I have learned a great deal that will be valuable for me in my study of theatre more generally from the project.

Preliminary reference list:

Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama website:

<http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/>

Taplin, Oliver, 1978. *Greek Tragedy in Action*, Methuen, London.

