

University of New England

Theatre Studies

THEA 302 Approaches to Creative Arts Performance and Analysis

Example Project 1

I plan to take the part of Robin Goodfellow (the Puck) in a production of excerpts from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which will be directed by [THEA 333 student] for THEA 333 this semester. I am on stage for the whole play which will be 15 minutes long. [Staff member] has agreed to supervise my project.

Project Aims:

For the production:

- I want to give an impressive and energetic performance that will signal to the audience that I am playing a supernatural being with magical powers.
- I want the audience to be able to hear and clearly understand the language.

For myself:

- I want to experiment with physical performance to see what I can do with my body (in terms of flexibility, movement and rhythm) to create the sense of a supernatural sprite.
- I want to explore and use techniques of speaking verse in order to create the sense of a supernatural character.
- I want to find out more about the worlds in which this play was written, especially Elizabethan ideas about fairies.

My work will fall into four phases.

A. Proposal:

[5 hours]

10%

Due 7 July

B. Preparation: I shall prepare for my performance by performing the following tasks:

- reading the Arden edition of the script very thoroughly, including the notes;
- preparing a written study of the role using the UNE Theatre Studies "Guidelines for the Actor's (or Director's) Preparation";
- preparing a dramaturgical research exercise on the play, using the UNE Theatre Studies "Guidelines for Dramaturgical Research";
- reading a range of scholarly critics and interpreters of the play, including Jan Kott's *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* and Louis Montrose's *The Purpose of Playing*;
- researching Elizabethan ideas about supernatural spirits;
- researching Athenian legends and the figure of Theseus;
- reading about other productions of the play in the past, especially Brook's, Mnouchkine's and Robert Lepage's;
- watching videos of other productions;
- thinking about the most significant differences between the world of the play and the 21st century;
- thinking about the most significant differences between the world of the play and Australia;

- talking with the director to get ideas about the approach;
- talking with my supervisor to get feedback on my progress;
- spending time working on verse speaking and diction;
- working on my ability to use different voices;
- working on my fitness and perfecting my cartwheels;
- writing up a journal which outlines what I have studied and practised, and what ideas I have developed that I will take into the rehearsals with me, including indications of the time spent on each task.

Items to submit for assessment:

- My actor's preparation document;
- A summary of my most useful research findings, showing what they have revealed to me about the play and how I might perform the role.
- I shall also submit the journal, though this is not to be given a mark.

[60 hours]

2,000 words

30%

Due: 11 August

C. Rehearsals and performances:

- preparing a marked-up script showing the major features of the script, using the UNE Theatre Studies "Guidelines for Script Analysis", and annotations indicating how I modified my my voice as I spoke the lines.
- being 10 minutes early for all rehearsals for the production;
- being ready and warmed up for the start of all rehearsals;
- having all my lines learned by the third week of rehearsals;
- both contributing my own ideas, and listening to the director;
- asking my supervisor to attend a rehearsal and give feedback;
- asking my supervisor honestly what kind of mark I am headed for;
- attending technical rehearsals so that I can help with lighting, sound etc.
- giving the best performance I can;

Items to submit for assessment:

- The marked-up script showing my analysis of the structure of the play and markings showing how I tried to speak the text;
- A DVD of the full performance
- The program
- A set of still photos of key moments showing me in performance, with captions showing what I was trying to achieve at each moment.
- A note from my director evaluating my contribution to the production.

[40 hours]

30%

Due for completion 29 September

D. Reflection and Writing up:

- watching video of the performance and making notes;
- adding notes on performance analysis to the marked up script (from Part C), showing how what I did on stage tried to realize the important features of the script and my actor's preparation.
- rereading some of the scholarly critics in the light of what I now know about the play;
- evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the production;
- evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of my performance;
- writing notes about what I did and what I learned in Phase B;
- writing notes about my work in rehearsal and performance, including a log of the 40 hours of rehearsal and performance;
- writing notes about how the work in Phase B affected the work in Phase C;
- completing the Write-up form.

Items to submit for assessment:

- The completed Write-up form

- The marked up script with the Performance Analysis notes added to the Script Analysis notes.

[45 hours]

2,000 words

30%

Due: 28 October

To pass the unit I should complete all the preparatory work (Phase B) to a basic level and demonstrate that I have gained a working knowledge of the research materials. I should give evidence of a solid and thoughtful performance (Phase C), with lines confidently learned, and rehearsed and acted to the satisfaction of my director. My write-up and performance analysis (Phase D) will give an overview of what I did and why I chose to do it in that way, and demonstrate what I have learned from the project.

To gain an above-average mark I should complete all the preparatory work in Phase B to a high level, and demonstrate that I have real insight into the research materials and have thought about how to apply them constructively to my performance. I should provide evidence that I gave a clear, very physical, imaginative and inventive performance with high energy throughout, thinking deeply about the role, taking the direction I am given and transforming that into more than the director expects. My write-up will give a comprehensive overview of what I did, show how I used my research to shape, inform and enhance my performance, demonstrate that my performance put into practice the features of the script I identified in the preparatory phases, and indicate 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:

- Internet Shakespeare Editions, <http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca/index.html>
- Kott, Jan 1967. *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, trans. Boleslaw Taborski, 2nd ed., Methuen, London.
- Montrose, Louis 1996. *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Shakespeare, William 1979. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Harold F. Brooks, the Arden Shakespeare (2nd series), London, Methuen.