



Looking at Practitioners

APPLICATION OF PRACTITIONER TO THREE SCRIPTED
EXTRACTS IN YEAR 12 7 13

Component 3 Outline – Scripted Extracts

Component 3: Making theatre (practical)

What's assessed

- Practical exploration and interpretation of three extracts (Extract 1, 2 and 3) each taken from a different play
- Methodology of a prescribed practitioner must be applied to Extract 3
- Extract 3 is to be performed as a final assessed piece (students may contribute as performer, designer or director)
- Reflective report analysing and evaluating theatrical interpretation of all three extracts

How it's assessed

- Performance of Extract 3 (40 marks)
- Reflective report (20 marks)
- 60 marks in total
- 30% of A-level

This component is marked by AQA.

The Reflective Report

Evidence for the Reflective report must be	Suggested length	The Reflective report must not exceed in total (evidence beyond this will not count towards the mark)
Entirely written	2,000–2,500 words	3,000 words

The Reflective report

Each student is required to write a Reflective report in which they analyse and evaluate their theatrical interpretation of all three key extracts studied. Students do not need to discuss each extract in turn. They should take a holistic approach.

Students must provide the following information on the cover sheet:

- the name of each play studied
- the playwright of each play
- the key extracts selected, indicating which one is to be performed as a final finished piece
- the specialism chosen for each extract (and if performer, the character played)
- the practitioner chosen for this component (which must be applied to the key extract performed as a final finished piece and may have been applied to the other two extracts).

For assessment students must discuss:

- the opportunities and challenges presented by their three extracts
- their theatrical interpretations for each key extract, including how this was informed by:
 - the genre and style of the play
 - the social, cultural and historical contexts of the play
 - the work and methodology of their selected prescribed practitioner, where appropriate.
- how successful their theatrical interpretations are in fulfilling their aims and communicating intended meaning, during the workshopping of material.

The report must be completed before the final assessed performance of Extract 3 takes place. Students are not required to reflect on a final performance, only on their workshopped theatrical interpretations.

Application of a Practitioner

What is a Practitioner?

A **theatre practitioner** is a person or theatre company that creates practical work or theories to do with performance and theatre. The list of theatre practitioners is constantly changing and evolving, as people are always creating new work and coming up with new thoughts and methodologies for theatre and performance.

Why study practitioners?

Looking at how theatre has changed, developed and progressed over time can be very useful for helping to shape ideas of **what** to devise (the subject matter) and **how** to do it (the **form** and **style**). The practitioner methodologies can also be applied to scripted pieces to dictate the style and often the approach to the text even before it is rehearsed.

Practitioner	Active	Broad approach or role	Marianne Elliott	Contemporary	Director
Mike Alfreds	Contemporary	Actor centred/truth in performance	Polly Findlay	Contemporary	Director
Antonin Artaud	Early 20th century	Theatre of Cruelty	Dario Fo & Franca Rame	Contemporary	Political/comic theatre
Steven Berkoff	Contemporary	Expressionism/physical theatre	Forkbeard Fantasy	Contemporary	Multimedia
Alecky Blythe	Contemporary	Verbatim theatre maker	Frantic Assembly	Contemporary	Physical theatre
Augusto Boal	Late 20th century	Theatre of the Oppressed	Gareth Fry	Contemporary	Sound designer
Bertolt Brecht	Early 20th century	Political/epic theatre	Gecko	Contemporary	Stylised/physical theatre
Peter Brook	Contemporary	Wide spectrum of approaches	John Godber	Contemporary	Political comedy
Bruiser Theatre Company	Contemporary	Physical/actor orientated	Rupert Goold	Contemporary	Director
Alison Chitty	Contemporary	Costume and set designer	The Paper Birds	Contemporary	Devising theatre company
Complicite	Contemporary	Physical theatre	Polka Theatre	Contemporary	Children's theatre
Paule Constable	Contemporary	Lighting designer	Deborah Warner	Contemporary	Director
Gordon Craig	Early 20th century	Designer	1927	Contemporary	Multimedia
Bob Crowley	Contemporary	Costume and set designer			
DV8	Contemporary	Physical/verbatim theatre/multimedia			
Declan Donnellan	Contemporary	Director			
Gregory Doran	Contemporary	Director			
Eclipse	Contemporary	Black-led company			

Graeae Theatre Company	Contemporary	Performers with disabilities	Out of Joint/Joint Stock	Contemporary	Political/ensemble
Jerzy Grotowski	Mid 20th century	Poor theatre	Richard Pilbrow	Mid 20th century	Lighting
Handspring Puppet Company	Contemporary	Puppetry	Tom Piper	Contemporary	Designer
Headlong	Contemporary	Innovative ensemble theatre	Mic Pool	Contemporary	Sound designer
Nicholas Hytner	Contemporary	Director	Propeller	Contemporary	All male company
Nicholas Kent	Contemporary	Verbatim theatre	Punchdrunk	Contemporary	Immersive theatre
Kneehigh Theatre	Contemporary	Multi-disciplined/storytelling/physical theatre	Emma Rice	Contemporary	Multi disciplined/storytelling/physical theatre
Ralph Koltai	Late 20th century	Designer	Malcolm Rippeth	Contemporary	Lighting designer
Mike Leigh	Contemporary	Character based devising	Josie Rourke	Contemporary	Director
Phyllida Lloyd	Contemporary	Director	Shared Experience	Contemporary	Expressionism
David Mamet	Contemporary	Director	Rae Smith	Contemporary	Set and costume designer
John McGrath	Mid 20th century	Socio-political/site specific theatre	Splendid Productions	Contemporary	Theatre company
Vsevolod Meyerhold	Early 20th century	Constructivism	Max Stafford-Clark	Contemporary	Political/ensemble theatre
Bill Mitchell	Contemporary	Site specific theatre, set and costume designer	Konstantin Stanislavski	Late 19th/early 20th century	Naturalism
Katie Mitchell	Contemporary	Naturalism/multimedia	Talawa	Contemporary	Black-led company
John Napier	Contemporary	Sets and costume designer	Tamasha	Contemporary	Multiculturalism in Britain/British Asian influences
Rufus Norris	Contemporary	Director	Julie Taymor	Contemporary	Director, set and costume designer
Toby Olié	Contemporary	Puppetry	Theatre Alibi	Contemporary	Storytelling theatre

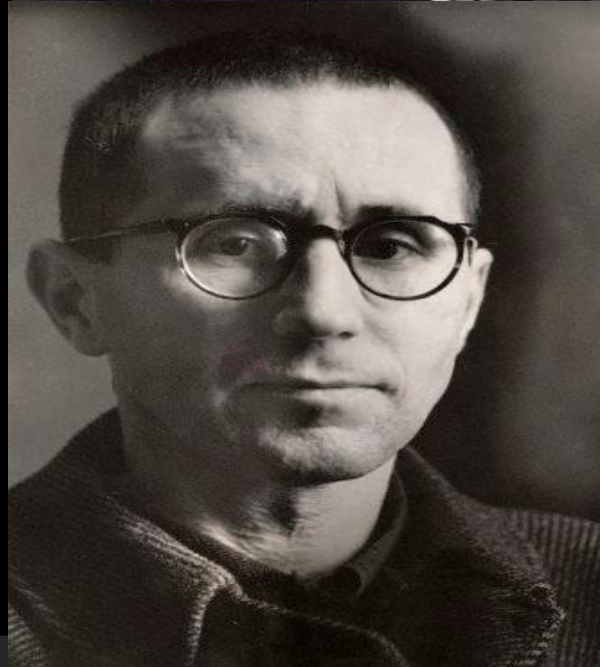
Practitioner Roots

Naturalistic

Konstantin Stanislavski is considered the father of naturalistic theatre in terms of his approach to text and finding it's truth. Put plainly, making the performance as 'real' as possible – as 'naturalistic' as possible. He has influence many practitioners approach to rehearsals including Mike Alfreds, Mike Leigh and Katie Mitchell.

Non-Naturalistic

Non-naturalism is based around techniques that do not represent real life but a style that uses conventions and techniques in order to tell a story in a less linear fashion. For example physical theatre uses movement to aid story, musical theatre uses song and dance and Brecht breaks the fourth wall to create a more political meaning.

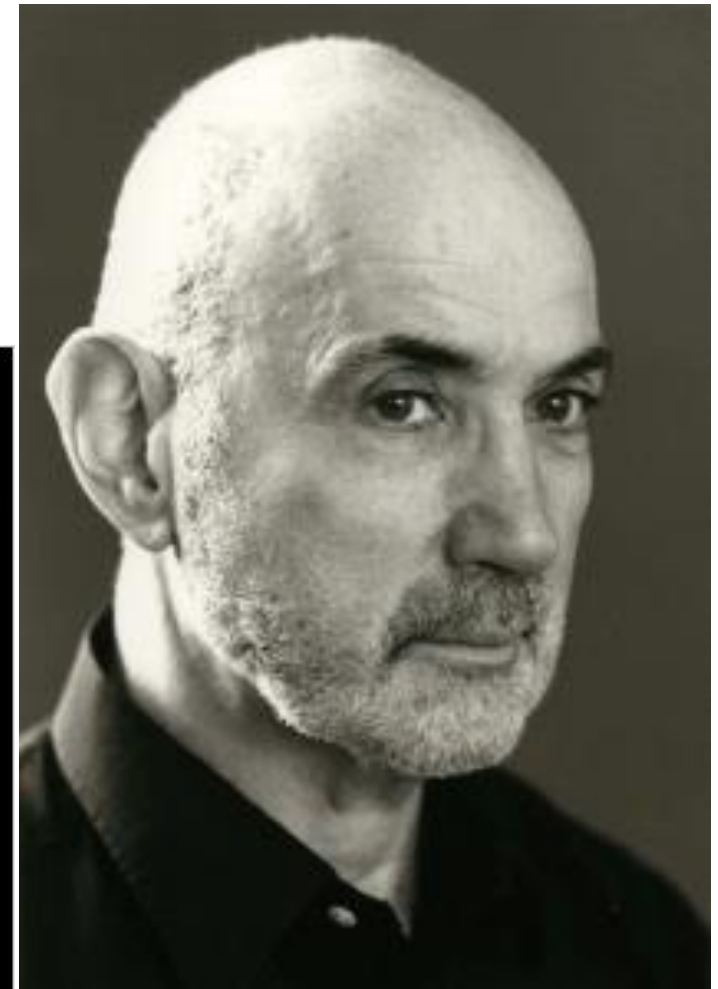
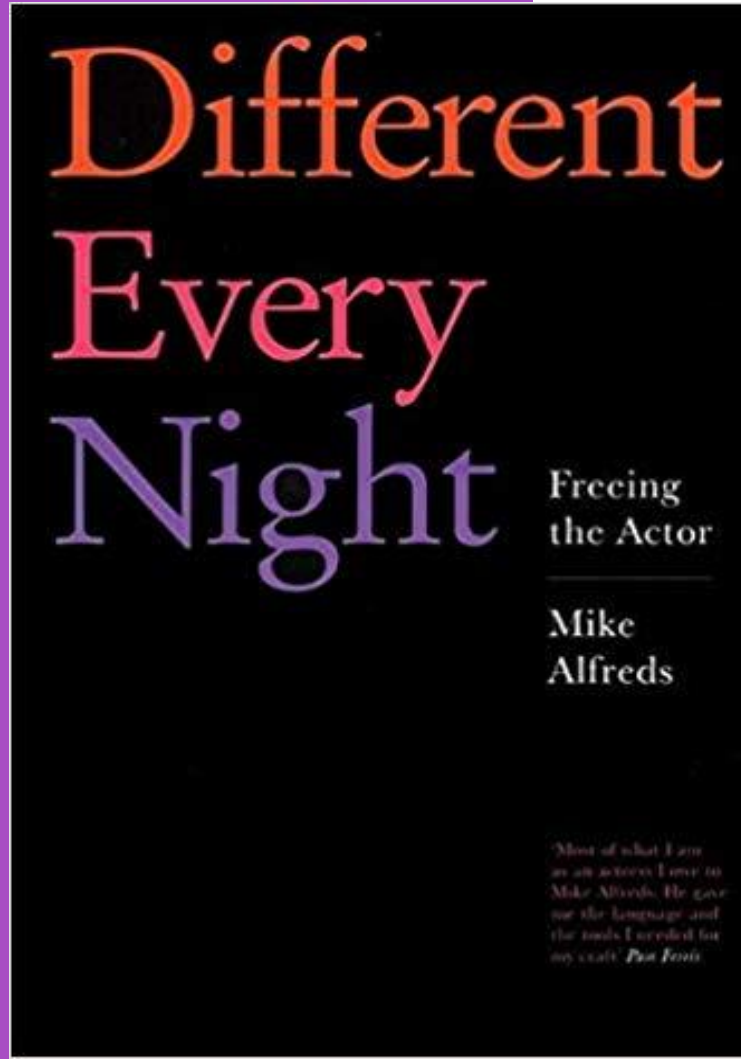


Naturalism

Introduction to Mike Alfreds

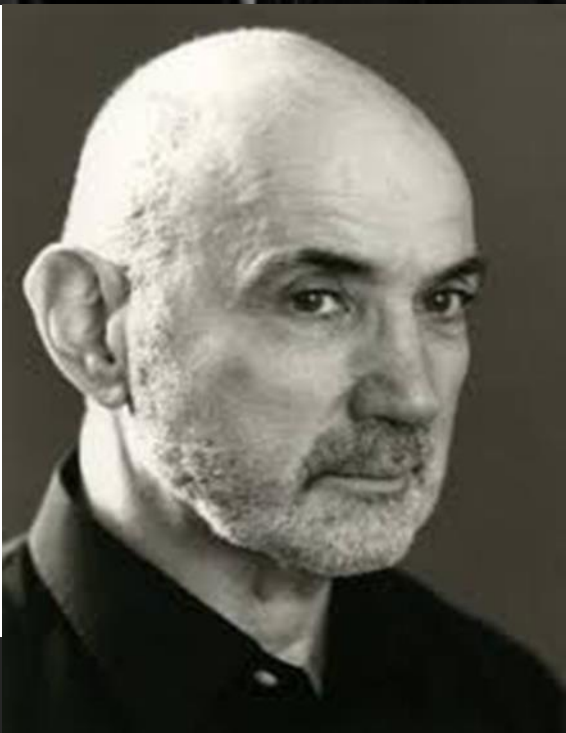
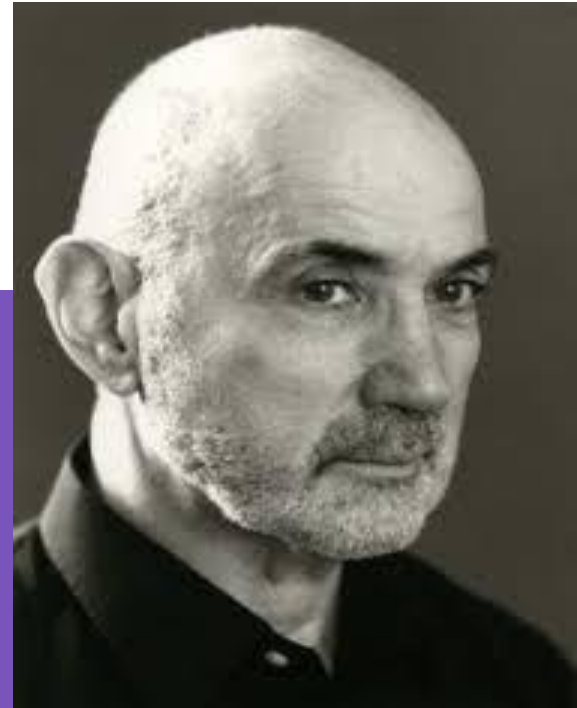
Mike Alfreds is a director. He founded Shared Experience, has directed for Shakespeare's Globe and the Royal Shakespeare Company, was an associate director at the National Theatre and artistic director of Cambridge Theatre Company, renamed Method & Madness. He has worked extensively abroad, won awards for his productions and made many translations and adaptations of novels and stories for the stage.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QlxZKmqmMnM>

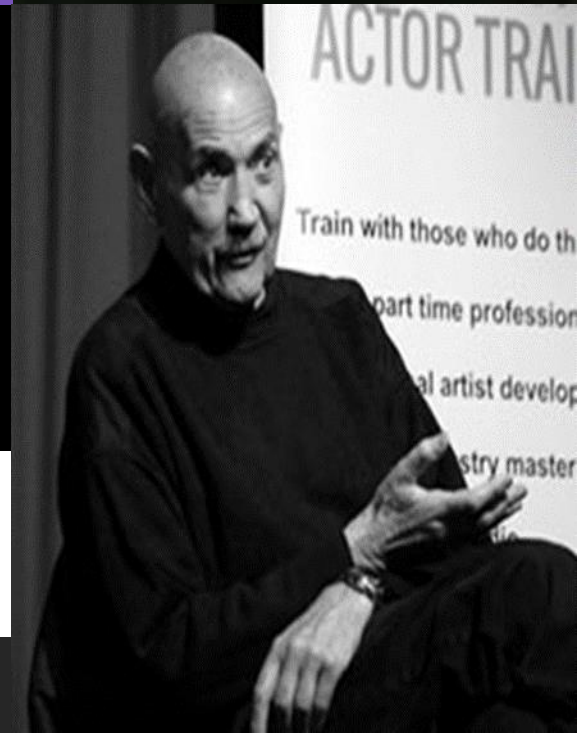




Rehearsal



POINTS OF CONCENTRATION



Rehearsal 4:

Points of Concentration

This is something that functions in our actual lives. We are complex organisms whose psychology and conduct have evolved from the infinite number of experiences we've absorbed. Accordingly, we adapt our modes of behaviour depending on who we are with (parents, lover, friends, colleagues etc).

This therefore elicits specific behaviour that we instinctively feel is appropriate towards them. This is also true of different locations or circumstances in which we might find ourselves – this is what Points of Concentration is based on.

The process of applying given circumstances as points of concentration – this should provide a wide range of responses and behaviour thereby filling the actors with all the 'ingredients' that the text suggests the characters have acquired.

Rehearsal: Points of Concentration

It will be used at the very last stage of rehearsal, after all objectives are totally known. In a given scene, the actors will layer in one point of concentration at a time. He gave us two examples. In the first scene of Hamlet, for instance, one might:

- 1) Play the scene concentrating on the fact that you are in a cold, high-up place.
- 2) Play the scene again, this time focusing on the presence of the ghost.
- 3) Play the scene again, this time focusing on (for example) your interpersonal relationship with Horatio.
- 4) ...and so on.

In the first scene of The Cherry Orchard, on the other hand, one might concentrate in turn on

- 1) how you feel about the orchard;
- 2) how you feel about Ranevskaya coming home;
- 3) how you feel about the estate being up for sale;
- 4) ...and so on.

You play the scene over and over, focusing in turn on all the things that might have an impact on character – all the given circumstances. The point of the exercise is that you're thinking about the given point of concentration even when it is not explicitly discussed in the text. Mike said he feels this adds a real richness to the acting. As always, he noted, there must be no repeating, even in rehearsal. Never repeat the exercise with the same point of concentration: it will become dead.

Mike Alfreds notes that he prefers objectives and points of concentration to have their roots in the text of the play: there should be no 'inventing'. Don't play a character with a hangover unless the text suggests they have one!

Create a list of Points of Concentration for your script extract

Play each given circumstance – totally preoccupy yourself with it – treat it imaginatively!

The Given Circumstances help to create the WORLD OF THE PLAY (strand 3).

Notes: Do not try to predict the outcome before. Allow whatever happens to happen.

You must still always pursue your objective. This can create a conflict – this is good as it creates an emotionally imaginative release.

Repeat with a new POC to keep rehearsal fresh.

Each time the texture and quality of the acting should be completely different.

Reflecting on Points of Concentration

**HOW HAS IT HELPED YOU CREATE CHARACTER AND
EXCHANGE?**

Non-Naturalistic

Introduction to Frantic Assembly

- Contemporary Theatre Company
- Categorised as Physical Theatre
- Active since 1994 – present
- Non-naturalistic style of theatre
- Devised physical movement from workshops
- Techniques documented and named
- Film rehearsals
- Music features heavily – they refer to this as ‘soundtracking’
- Adapt scripts to include physical theatre or devise original material
- Used heavily in GCSE and A-Level Drama to devise
- If you are interested:
‘The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre’ (2009)



The Definition of Physical Theatre:

'Physical theatre is a genre of theatrical performance that pursues storytelling through primarily physical means'.



What might it look like?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JzdIPSdAmE>

Did it break or meet your expectations?

Can you see how music has influenced the movements?

Did you notice the absence of dialogue and character?

Frantic Assembly Methodologies

Watch this clip of Steven Graham the Creative Director of Frantic Assembly running a workshop at the National Theatre, London on devising building blocks in physical theatre utilizing the 'Frantic Method'.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUqZPfGIX6U&t=298s>

So how would you apply that to scripted work?

Two key ways in which you could apply Frantic's physical theatre method:

- 1 – Integrate the dialogue into the movement sequence.
- 2 – Have physical scenes or interludes interspersed with naturalistic acting scenes.

Katie Mitchell

multimedia, termed **live cinema**.

Example productions: *Orlando*, *4.48 Psychosis*, *Miss Julie*

Key facts:

- Katie Mitchell is an English director
- she often explores feminist themes
- she has worked with the Royal Court, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre
- her productions include a vast array of **opera** as well as theatre performances
- she is best known for her adaptations of classic plays from playwrights such as **Chekhov**, **Strindberg** and **Euripides**

Example techniques:

- influenced by **Stanislavski's** methods for creating a character
- uses multimedia to support the set design in communicating the world and ideas of the play, and to act as a live participant in the performance, with almost equal status to an actor
- multimedia is often used live on stage to pick out a performer's more subtle details, eg **facial expressions**
- the importance of **narrative**, using technology to show what is going on in the character's head, not just simply the beginning,



Kneehigh

Date: 1980-present

Broad approach: Eclectic, **creative adaptations**

Example productions: *The Red Shoes*, *Dead Dog in a Suitcase*, *Brief Encounter*

Key facts:

- Kneehigh are an international touring theatre company based in Cornwall, UK
- **Emma Rice** worked with Kneehigh as an actor and as joint artistic director
- they have performed at venues such as the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company and Shakespeare's Globe

Example techniques:

- work with an ever-changing **ensemble**
- a focus on storytelling for a wide audience, mostly through creative adaptations of novels, films, myths and folktales
- often featuring live music, song, puppetry, dance and film, with a high energy and a playful style
- strong emphasis on the visual design elements

Steven Berkoff

Date: 1937-present

Broad approach: **Expressionism** and **physical theatre**

Example productions: *Metamorphosis*, *East*, *Messiah*

Key facts:

- Berkoff is an English actor, director and playwright
- he focuses on the physical abilities of the performers as a substitute for sets and props, often known as **total theatre**
- his work is influenced by **Ancient Greek theatre**, Japanese **Noh** and **Kabuki**, Shakespeare, East End music halls and his Jewish heritage
- he also uses the techniques of **practitioners** such as **Artaud** and **Brecht** in his work

Example techniques:

- **stylised movement**, including slow motion and robotic, from an **ensemble** of performers
- exaggerated **facial expressions** and vocal work
- often includes **direct asides** and **tableaux**
- **minimalistic** use of costume and set



Other key practitioners worth a note...

A flavour of Steven Berkoff...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZQOEZO1n10&list=PLW32gj3GIFc3ZNfR3p1s3NCAdpHQh2EYD>

Key things to note:

The influence of mime.

The grotesque exaggeration

The revelation of the underbelly of society

It is meant to make the audience feel.



What happens next?

You apply the practitioner, refine and rehearse your material over a 5 month period, so the examiner here is looking for deep understanding of the methodologies in performance and wants to see this evidenced.

You then take your application of the practitioner and write about it in your reflective report. You look at how the practitioner has enabled you to interpret the script and rehearsal techniques you have applied and how you refined them.

You need to be making notes on the process as you go, so I encourage Year 12 to keep a rehearsal diary to document their interpretations and reflections through the work of the practitioner.

Practitioner Task

Choose 1-3 Practitioners of your choice from the list on this powerpoint and create your own fact file about them.

Include images and clips to help you illustrate their methodologies.

Extension:

Take a script of your choice and try and apply at least one practitioner method to it. What do you discover about your character?