Top Class Drama

Discussion Forum Transcript

Friday 17 April 2020
With Chief Assessor Bronwyn Egan
And performers Connor Knight, Lexi Kelsall, Max Oliver and Michael Syme

**BRONWYN EGAN [BE]**

Welcome to Top Class Drama 2020, and this discussion with a few of our performers.

I’m Bronwyn Egan, and I’m the Chief Assessor for Drama. I’ll be moderating today’s discussion.

As we begin our discussion we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land across which we’re currently meeting, the people of the Kulin nations. We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Each year, Top Class concerts present some of the best work from our VCE performing arts students, for the benefit of current students, teachers and the general public. In 2020, due to the disruptions of COVID-19, Top Class Drama and Theatre Studies were unfortunately unable to proceed as live concerts at Arts Centre Melbourne. And so, we’ve endeavoured to pull together an online version of these concerts. Performers have contributed self-taped videos of their solos, and in addition we’re hosting a series of conversations with performers about the process they went through to develop their work.

Before you listen to this conversation, I’d suggest watching the videos of the four solos from today’s forum discussion, available on the website so you have context for this conversation.

And now, I’ll ask the performers joining me today to introduce themselves.

**MAX OLIVER [MO]**

Max Oliver, Frankston High School, and The Gothic Spirit.

**LEXI KELSALL [LK]**

I’m Lexi Kelsall from Melbourne Girls’ Grammar, and I did The Flower Thrower.

**MICHAEL SYME [MS]**

I’m Michael Syme from Ringwood Secondary College, and I did Ken Railings and Tina Sparkle.

**CONNOR KNIGHT [CK]**

I’m Connor Knight from Trinity College Colac, and I did Colonel Mustard

**[BE]**

Thanks. Firstly, I’d like to ask each of you, how did you decide on the character that you ultimately chose to perform? We’ll go in the same order, so Max, how did you decide?

**[MO]**

I decided, because I of course went through all the structures, I found The Gothic Spirit to be the most appealing to me as I already have an interest in classical literature and stuff like that. I found personally the stim to be quite open, and able for personally more creative output. I saw it to be a way to build more and not so limiting, whereas I found some of the others, personally, limiting to my skill and my ability. I really honed in what I could do the best and put it into a piece.

**[LK]**

I had a couple of factors that influenced my decision. First of all I sat down with my teacher after reading all the structures and we talked about my skill sets, my strengths and weaknesses when it comes to drama. For example, I’m a big fan of epic theatre, and on the other side not a great singer, so pushed away from the musical theatre stimulus’ or ones that I felt that would strengthen it. And then also working off the epic theatre passion I have, I wanted to find a stimulus that I felt I could deliver a message in, and for me The Flower Thrower really showed that. And then again quite like Max, I found in Year 11 the solo I did, I did the Lizzie Borden structure from a few years ago, and that was great but it was very…you know, recreate events, and it was quite narrow in terms of being able to be super creative. I wanted to choose a structure that gave me a lot more freedom. That was The Flower Thrower for me.

**[MS]**

When originally reading all the stimulus’ I actually tossed up between two, I obviously had the Ken and Tina one and I also was really interested in the Cluedo stimulus. But delving deeper into each I quickly realised that both the musical theatre aspect and the comedic aspect were something that more naturally appealed to me. I really enjoy musical theatre, I do it in my school productions as well as productions outside of school so I’ve had a bit of experience in that. As well I felt the characters within that stimulus were able to be very comedic and very big, which is something that I’ve always felt very comfortable in. So that was a pretty easy decision.

**[CK]**

For me with Colonel Mustard and Cluedo, I’ve always loved Cluedo growing up, great board game. And murder mysteries have always been something that…freaks me out, but I find it really interesting and fun to explore people’s reasoning and stuff like that. So when it mixed my favourite board game and the mysterious side of it I thought, it’s perfect for me.

**[BE]**

Great, sounds good. With the new study design, research now has its own criteria. Can any of you explain where you went to for your research, how much you did, when you knew that you’d done enough (if that ever happened)?

**[LK]**

In terms of research I feel like you almost never felt like you did enough. I made sure to continue throughout the whole process because there was always something new that popped up. I tried to do quite a variety or spread of research. The Flower Thrower is obviously based on Banksy and artwork, and I’m a drama student but definitely not an art student so had little knowledge in that area. I went at school and talked to a couple of the art teachers to get some initial background. And then obviously did web research but tried to find broader sources – I found a couple of documentaries on Banksy’s work, there was a podcast that talked about the dot point of art used in a political way so I used that a lot. I tried to use as many different sorts of research of possible to get quite a rounded information set.

**[MO]**

Within the dot points it says to recreate a moment from one of the texts written at the Villa. I read all three texts which were written, and I used deductive reasoning to figure out what would best suit my symbol. From the text I chose which was Frankenstein, which is properly titled *Frankenstein: a modern Prometheus*, I then researched into Prometheus and that as a tale and how that would then benefit my symbol and my idea for the message I’m going to convey. I also did research into how fear is created and what actually is fear, so a lot of scientific research. I looked through journals all the way back to Charles Darwin, where he said fear is actually a part of evolution, I found that to be really interesting and threw that right into my solo. All the way to the ‘70s, looking at psychopaths and such, and all the way into the present, how we see fear and how fear has developed over time from a natural to an unnatural, or social as I called it.

**[MS]**

As musical theatre was something that I needed to make sure was very prominent throughout my solo, a lot of my research came through possible moments that I could include or exploit in a way, whether that was a song or a quote from a show. My dot point two, which was exploring how the downfall of these two characters has affected them, pretty much was all song, that was a very early decision I made, so I needed to explore some shows that were not as known, so it wasn’t as predictable. That was listening to different soundtracks, exploring some websites that explain songs and contexts of shows. Another piece of research I did was watching the film, and I was able to pick up mannerisms and personality traits of the two, including Ken’s alcoholism, Tina’s obnoxious behaviour. And then with Miley, which was my public figure I made a reference to in dot point three, I explored some different interviews about her, from some loved ones discussing her drug abuse and her fall from grace. Through that I was able to include some quotes within the dot point as well as exploring that.

**[CK]**

With my research, obviously the murder of Richard Lancelyn Green actually happened, so I had to make sure I knew what happened. I didn’t want to misjudge what happened. I listened to some podcasts about the Sherlockian society to get a bit more on what Richard Lancelyn Green was about, he was definitely a strange man. Obviously very good at his job. The murder mystery was definitely something, made sure I understood it a lot before I wrote my script around it.

**[BE]**

Great, thank you. One of the other changes to the study design this year was the application of symbol, which Max you started talking about that when you were talking about your research, your symbol. How did everyone come to look at that application of symbol, how did you deal with it, and decide on your own symbol that you eventually showed the audience?

**[MO]**

Symbol is one of my most favourite things in anything ever, I’m an absolute nerd for symbol, and so when it was added to the study design I knew this was it. My consistent message is that humans are the real monsters all along, we are the ones to be afraid of not natural things. With that symbol I looked at…sorry, I’m having a blank.

**[BE]**

You were talking about your Frankenstein, and the evolution earlier.

**[MO]**

I researched into those and therefore pulled them out of symbols. I used the description of Frankenstein, something which was quite, it describes a human being. I used that and its grotesque language to then form a human being. And then that same posture which I used then I then replicate later when the humans are talking to then say that they are the equivalent to Frankenstein.

My costume is heavily symbolic is that I’m almost naked, painted entirely in grey, and that’s to show the symbol of a statue of Prometheus. The statue is for solidity and enshrinement, permanence. So when I go through dot point three I looked at moments in history which changed history, so permanent fixtures in our society that we always look at as shocking events. I look at that as well as impermanence, how things are solid, how things disappear, how things make us afraid, convoluted.

**[BE]**

And that also supported your performance style of the gothic theatre, that was very well supported. Thank you for that. Michael, how did you develop your application of symbol?

**[MS]**

Well, I made it very hard for myself very early on, because I’m a huge fan of (if anyone’s seen some of their movies) Jordan Peel and Bong Joon-ho who recently did *Parasite*, huge fan of directors and content creators who can really flip a performance on its head and really make you think about something. A little bit like what Lexi said with epic theatre. I spent the first couple of weeks really trying to go way too deep into thinking how I can turn this into some huge message. It wasn’t until my teacher sat me down and said, just think common sense. That was when I realised these two are villains, or they’re seen as ‘villains’ in the film, but do they necessarily want to be villains? That’s a potential question that I could delve into. Through symbol, my costume looks like a ballroom dancer’s – I had a red puffy shirt with black suit pants and black suit shoes, but for where the contestant’s number was was ‘666’, and on the back I had ‘Villain’, so kind of emulating a devil-like character. As well with the red, and I had red strips down my suit pants. I also had a podium created for me thankfully by my neighbour (I did give him a reward, it’s okay!). It had a red theatre curtain to go around it, hiding some things but I can talk about that later, and that was red as well. So red was a very prominent thing for me, which is ‘devilly’ as well.

And really quickly with my prop, my prop was a trophy, pretty obvious decision, kind of meaning success, winning, which is what Ken and Tina want ultimately. But it also became a bottle of scotch for Ken, a bong-like figure very comedically for Miley, which I wanted to emulate that that was their idea of success, and what they were aspiring to – Ken was alcohol, and Miley was drugs.

**[BE]**

And Connor, what about you?

**[CK]**

I’m very similar to Michael, I struggled a lot with symbol and stuff like that. Me and my teacher worked hard on my symbol and then it became pretty obvious to us half-way through the process of making my solo – Cluedo: colours. So me and teacher worked really hard on how we could work colours into the script and props and stuff like that, to highlight who did what in the storyline a lot better. Similar to Michael, a lot of colour helped me with my symbol.

**[BE]**

And turned out to be good choices for you too, made it quite clear.

Another choice that you had as students this year for this year was choosing your dramatic element and convention. In the past the exam paper has actually stated them for you, which ones you have to choose. How did you find that process, was that easy for you to choose, did it come naturally, when did you decide which dramatic element and convention you were going to use?

**[LK]**

At the beginning I initially looked at the elements and circled on my paper the ones that I felt that I was stronger in, that I could showcase. Firstly I did try and choose off the bat two that I would use, but I found that it was much more difficult to write a solo with those restrictions in place, of I need to do a lot of this, or I need to show this aspect. So I ended up leaving that aside for a little while, started to create the solo to see what felt natural and what felt right. Probably about halfway through my process of creating the solo I sat down and read through it and tried to look at the dramatic element and convention that were coming up the most. From there I tried to weave them further, went back to scenes and thought how can I rewrite this to showcase this convention more or the element, things like that.

**[MS]**

I thought I had it down pat from day one, I was like okay, these are what I’m going to do, I’ve always gone with it, it was something that I’ve always leaned to and worked within my performances. And that was caricature which was an obvious one, especially with the characters, and I also elected contrast, and I thought okay, that was fine. It wasn’t until a couple of weeks before, a week and a half, I showed some drama teachers and they said ‘I did not get one bit of contrast but I did get heaps of conflict’. So after having a mild panic attack, I then had to sit down and be like, okay how can I maybe adjust a little bit to enhance the conflict further. So I then changed into conflict and it turned out to be a really good decision so I’m very very thankful! It all worked out alright.

**[MO]**

For mine I chose exaggerated movement and sound. Exaggerated movement I chose because I am someone who’s naturally very flexible, I have quite a large physique, so that kind of thing is very easy for me personally. With that I was able to create these movements and physicalisations and I thought that was a really good idea for The Gothic Spirit considering the Spirit is manipulating these people and I thought that by the Spirit becoming objects and other things in the household it makes that process easier. With exaggerated movement…I keep blanking sorry.

**[BE]**

It came naturally to you with the character you’d chosen, the exaggerated movement, surely.

**[MO]**

Yeah. With my research as well, I found that fear is just the moment before the snap, not the snap. And so, with exaggerated movement I was able to form a shape, which looks dangerous (but it isn’t, it’s 100 per cent safe), form a shape which looks like it’s about to, not break, but about to reach the point, and then therefore that’s the fear, and therefore I can move back. I thought that was really smart, and it really came to me quite easily.

But with the element that was something that I definitely had to work on. I saw the thing said ‘atmosphere of delicious fear’; and the whole idea of atmosphere I thought, okay, how can I make the world around, so I played with space. In my piece I tried to trap everyone by moving on a square and no one really breaks the square. But I thought that wasn’t good enough, that’s not a strong enough atmosphere. So then I looked at sound, I looked at sounds I can make with my mouth and the ones I can make with the rest of my body, like stomping and creating an – of course – atmosphere. And that went really well.

**[BE]**

Connor you had a number of props that you used. How did you come to decide on your props, did you have other ones to start with and had to get rid of some, or did you know from the start those were the props that you wanted to use?

**[CK]**

It was pretty clear from the start. My prop that I was going to transform was the wooden spoon that was found in Richard Lancelyn Green’s apartment, but I experimented with using the shoelace or the wooden spoon. I wasn’t happy with the shoelace so I went with the wooden spoon and felt it was more versatile in using it in different ways and transforming it. With the whole board game stuff I knew that there was so many different objects on the board in Cluedo, and I was like, ‘oh what could I do?’ At one point I wanted to have big papier mache pieces that move on the board, and I thought, don’t get ahead of yourself, that’s ridiculous, you’re never going to get that done. I thought to myself what can I do that’s more realistic and small and compact, and that’s when I went with the cards in the envelope to show that these are the characters that I was playing. Obviously with my costume, I was dressed as Colonel Mustard, so when I was switching to Miss Scarlet, I can’t just magically turn my jumper red. So I showed the card to lead me into that direction. The props were pretty straightforward when it came to choosing them.

**[BE]**

Some of you used a soundtrack and some of you didn’t. When did you decide that you wanted to use a soundtrack, how did you introduce it, which came first, what were the good and the bad bits about that?

**[CK]**

My soundtrack…my teacher encouraged us to do soundtracks since the start of Year 11, in my first solo I did a soundtrack, so I thought I’m going to do one for this. Obviously my dramatic element was tension, and I thought I can use my soundtrack perfectly to build tension in my solo. I started my soundtrack but it took me ages and I wasn’t happy with it, and then I just googled sounds on YouTube and found an online board game of Cluedo that has its own soundtrack. It was perfect, I just put an mp3 link into Apple music and then put it into iMovie and then just went from there. It almost was meant to be, because the Cluedo sounds from the online board game were perfect to build tension. I cut and pasted different parts of different songs to build tension at certain points, and go quieter and louder. The sound track was hard but it was worth it, because it tied it all together for me.

**[BE]**

And Max, am I correct in thinking that your soundtrack was only at the start?

**[MO]**

Since my element was sound, I really fought against using a soundtrack because I didn’t want it to make my element any weaker. With discussions with my teacher we found that I was always beginning my piece way too fast, too nervous, way too much nerves. So with the beginning soundtrack what I used was the wind whooshing, which is a natural thing, and I thought was really quite, with my symbol against natural and manmade, because I end as a statue, begin as a tree. So it’s the wind whooshing, and that pace really helped me slow down my heartrate while I was in the posture of the tree, I managed to get in the zone, I was ready to go. The pace of that whooshing, because I’m someone who is quite rhythmic, then allowed me to continue into my piece and then build it all up from there.

Initially it didn’t start off like that when I introduced the sound. I researched horror movies and I got pretty much every single soundtrack everyone knows from any horror movie ever, and I through them all together and I underlined it across my whole piece, it was terrible! But I was like, ‘it’s so cool guys, look at this, I’ve got jaws!’ So then I went back through, edited it, refined it and focused it. I ended up taking a lot of those and doing them vocally rather than using sound production. So I put the jaws theme in there but it’s my mouth, to mock sharks, etc. It helps, and it helped me, but I only used it at the start because I found that it would out-balance my element.

**[BE]**

And Lexi, what about yours?

**[LK]**

I found I ended up having a pretty love hate relationships with my soundtrack. When I started I found I had an issue with almost trying to create the solo around a soundtrack, and that felt more featured than I did myself. Originally I think I was trying to showcase, because the stimulus and the prescribed structure says that Banksy jumps off a wall in Melbourne, so I was trying to use Australian advertisements, I had all of these things playing to show it was in Australia and to demonstrate consumerism which was my issue. It was super overwhelming and I had a few people watch it and they were just saying, ‘it’s going the whole time, we’re focusing on the sound and not you.’ So for a while I got rid of the soundtrack, then found that I was finding it a little bit difficult to do a couple of scenes. A lot of them were tell not show. For example, at the start of the solo when I wanted to show the protest that was going on, I found it really difficult to create that process without constantly swapping characters and it just becoming chaotic. So I used a little bit of that soundscape of a protest building in the background to help me show that scene. And then further on I had one section where I was trying to show some contrast: I had someone online shopping and then in the background there were all these news articles about the negative sides of shopping, sweatshops collapsing, people losing money and things. So I found there were a few ways I could use it to help carry the solo, but also not make it overwhelming.

**[BE]**

You’re all referring to things you decided on and then you had to abandon and edit in or refine. Can you give an example of a problem or a roadblock you encountered as you were going throughout your solo?

**[LK]**

I had a pretty major roadblock. A week before the solo, I had to pretty much restructure the entire thing. I found that over the holiday break, the September break, I was doing the solo and I guess you get to the point where you’ve done it so many times that you start to not love it so much. I just lost confidence in myself and decided I need to start again. So I created this weird solo, came back to school, presented it to my teacher, and he sat me down (yeah, it was a week before) and he said, ‘Lexi, I really don’t want to have to say this to you, but I don’t think we can use this solo.’ There was a brief meltdown, a bit of a freak out, but then I ended up printing both scripts off, had Mum and Dad help me, we cut out every scene, lay it on the table and went through each one looking at the scenes we liked from each and finding a way to combine them, that could get rid of some of the issues I had with my original solo but still keep those strong points that I had worked for weeks and refined and edited. And I ended up with a solo that I was very happy with but, I guess there was a lot of issues with confidence and not being sure with what I was doing – unnecessary stress.

**[BE]**

Max does that ring true for you as well? What did you find along the way?

**[MO]**

Pretty much the same thing. I got to a point when my solo was almost at finishing point. I’m a very hyper-critical person, I’m always re-analysing and re-looking at things. So yeah, over the school holidays I tore it all down, cut it down to 4 minutes 30, came back to school and performed this micro version of my solo, and my teacher was like, ‘what have you done??’ So we sat down and did the same thing, cut out all the scenes, all the moments, everything, got some string, that was the symbol, had it tied all together. We visually went through the solo to try and re-work it together. Ended up throwing in things I did right at the start of the whole thing and putting it back in, and ended up with what I have now. So yeah, same thing, editing and refining is such a great step, but you can definitely overdo it, which is scary.

**[BE]**

Michael, what about you?

**[MS]**

A bit similar, I’d gotten to a stage where I’d pretty much finished it, I felt like it was pretty much ready, performance-standard. I was just about ready to paint my podium, decorate it, because I wanted to leave that last so it didn’t get wrecked or I didn’t break it. I’d practiced all my twists on it and jumps on it. And then I got paint into it and I woke up the next morning and it was dried, so I was just like, okay I’ll run over it, not too much energy. And then…my podium was made of four different bits of wood in a cylinder shape standing up, and two of those blocks were thin and two of them were thick. And so I sat down on my podium, not realised that I had sat down on the thin side, and nearly broke it. I was like, ah, this is not good, breaking your performance. So I had to re-choreograph everything, which was a bum, but that’s okay, which thankfully I left a bit of time to do, still stressful! That was my main problem.

Another, really quick, problem I had throughout the whole thing was – I don’t know if this relates to you guys as well – but in terms of coming up with ideas and concepts I had very specific fleeting moments where everything would come out at once, and then there’d be other moments where I’d be sitting there thinking, I have no idea what to do. You’d have to pick those moments, and as soon as you have something you just run with it, you just jump on your laptop. But I didn’t realise that quickly I thought, okay that’s a good idea, I’ll come back to it later. And then I’d forgotten it. And it would come at really weird times, it’d be at 2am or it’d be in the shower, and I’d be like, ‘oh here’s a good song to use!’ but of course you don’t write it down. So that was another problem that I had to jump on pretty quickly.

**[BE]**

Connor does that ring true for you? You would have had to have done a lot of editing with your complex structure.

**[CK]**

Absolutely. I was very thankful that my mishap was nowhere near as close to a week before the exam. Halfway through the year I started on a script and, similar to both Lexi and Michael, my teacher basically said, ‘it’s alright’. And I was like, well that’s not what I want, I want it to be great. So we both sat down…I give so much credit to my teacher, so much help, SO much help, you always have to go and talk to your teacher about it. But we sat down and rewrote the whole script from scratch, kept bits of my stuff. Once I had my script, it was just I performed so much. It wasn’t so much doing something to start with and then not liking it and starting from scratch. It was sort of just building certain things. Like with the Cluedo board underneath the table that flips down in my solo, that started off to be a board game on the floor. Then the pieces got too much so I was like, what do I do now. And then I spoke to another drama teacher in the school and she suggested that I physically turn the table on its side, have the board underneath that and use that as a placard type thing. I was like, yeah that’s awesome, but then it took too long so I thought, what am I going to do now? And that’s when we came up with the hinge at the back that flops down with a piece of plywood. Refining is a virtue, we can learn from our mistakes and grow from there.

**[BE]**

Good advice. And on that, as a final question what advice would you give other students who will be attempting their solo performances this year?

**[LK]**

One thing that I learned over the process of doing solos in both Year 11 and 12 was, in Year 11 I had a bit of a mindset that anything I wrote had to be perfect and it had to be what I was going to use and I had to love it. I found that I got a week or two weeks before we had our Year 11 solo night and I pretty much had no material, and when I did sit down and write I was very frustrated and I was getting upset over what I was writing because I wasn’t writing it. My whole class – we had a little class – we were all having this issue. So in Year 12 our teacher told us that pretty much from the start of Term 3 onwards every week we had to perform something, we started with 30 seconds and then we had a minute and so on. At the time we all complained like no tomorrow about this and though that it was unfair and we were being forced to make content, we had a lot of issues with it, but it ended up being a lifesaver because by the time I got to week 8 I had 11 or 12 minutes of content. And a lot of it I didn’t use and a lot of it wasn’t great, but it was forcing me to come up with scenes and get something out there so that when I got to that refining stage I had a lot more to work with. And of course, a lot of the scenes, they started as one thing and then I refined and it might have ended up completely different but you need that base to start with. So I guess my advice is just try right from the start to be pushing out lots of mini-scripts, lots of ideas, and you don’t have to love it, it doesn’t have to be perfect, but you can show your teachers and friends and work with everyone around you so that material does become stuff you love. It’s important to be creating constantly.

**[BE]**

Connor, what do you suggest for students this year doing drama?

**[CK]**

Similar to Lexi – teachers. Your teacher is one of the best things that will ever happen to you in Year 12. Not just Drama, any subject, you can rely on your teachers, they’re always there for you. Just start as early as you can. I regret not starting the day that the Drama solos were announced, because I didn’t have mine chosen until two weeks after they were released and that was my own fault, my teacher was at me and I didn’t do it and I sort of freaked out. I think the earlier you start on your solo the better. And come up with ways that work for you. It’s one thing to learn in a class the best way to study or work on your solo, but figure out a way that works for you and go your own way. For example my teacher and I…I don’t know if you guys can tell on a video, but I’m not necessarily someone that can sit still for too long, I always have to be moving, I fidget. So me and my teacher actually had a code-word. Every time she said “flamingos” I had to switch on, do my stuff. It sounds crazy but it helps, it was my way to get through it and it paid off I guess. So yeah, start early and stay on track.

**[BE]**

Thank you. Michael, what do you suggest?

**[MS]**

It’s pretty basic advice, but just choose one that you’re going to have the most fun with, and the one that you find the most interest out of. There’s going to be times, pretty regularly, as much as you love the subject, you’re not going to want anything to do with it, because you’re going to be frustrated and you’re going to have all this pressure. As long as you pick one that you can keep coming back to. Even if you do a little 10 second section where you find some satisfaction out of doing it in those tough days when you can’t think of anything, that is so much better than struggling through something that you feel like you want to do but you don’t have any genuine interest in.

And one quick thing as well, just be kind to yourself. I’m sure we’re all perfectionists and we get angry at ourselves like Lexi was saying, and we get frustrated, and obviously already struggling with Year 12. You just gotta be kind to yourself. If something doesn’t quite work, that’s fine, move on, just scrap it and try something else. Or if something works and something’s just a bit off, there’s no point getting angry about it (as easy as it is to get angry about it), just sit down, think constructively what can I do to adjust this to make it effective. And through that, share with your peers. We had to show a minute every week or so, and we hated it, we despised it, but it helps so much, especially in the later stages when you just want to get something perfect and you can get some advice here and there, yeah, it’s the best piece of advice.

**[BE]**

And Max, what do you suggest to students for this year?

**[MO]**

Just like everyone else said, feedback is so important. And also, with your peers, be honest but down be mean. That way everyone in the room is getting adequate strong feedback. Have a safety clause type thing. I also highly recommend keeping a folio, even though it’s not 100 per cent, like , ‘ahhh’, definitely use your folio for the solo. That last week, if I hadn’t have had my folio with everything I’d ever done in it, I would have still had my 4 minute 30 solo and I would have had to perform that, I would have had nothing, I would have been on the floor crying, rolling, it would have been a whole mess. Definitely keep record of what you’re doing because everything you do is worth it, and you can probably thrown some old ideas and things back in there and strengthen your symbol.

Keep symbol – I already said early, symbol is my little baby – but keep that there because symbol is a great little cheat. You can fit in so many more messages and so many more words than you can actually say. With a single gesture you can provide what would take five seconds of your precious seven minutes, you can do that in one. Symbol is just great, I love it.

Also time management, like everyone else said – do what works for you. I found I needed to follow a structure because I’m a very, not lazy, but (in case you haven’t noticed) I’m not very good at keeping a straight train of thought. Deadlines are very good for me. And I found working (as Michael previously said) when you gotta work, you work. Which means that I did every now and then duck out of a class and rehearse something really quickly and then come back in…rather than going to the bathroom…don’t tell my teachers that but like, I had an idea, I just had to do it! Definitely do what works for you. Try not to get in trouble. Please be a good student.

Also, yeah, your teachers, love your teacher! So good!

**[BE]**

Thank you. Great advice from all of you.

So thanks for listening to this discussion with Lexi, Max, Michael and Connor. We hope that has given you some useful insights into the process and work involved in developing an outstanding Drama solo. For those of you undertaking VCE Drama this year, we wish you well working on this creative and rewarding task, and acknowledge the added challenges you’re likely to face given the context in which we’re studying and creating at the moment.

Thank you.