Top Class Drama

Discussion Forum Transcript

Tuesday 21 April 2020
With Chief Assessor Bronwyn Egan
And performers Angus Griggs, Georgia McMillan, Jeremy Harland and Teagan Matthews

**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 currently meet, 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 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 so now, I’ll ask the performers joining me today to introduce themselves.

**GEORGIA MCMILLAN [GM]**

Hi, my name’s Georgia McMillan. I went to Girton Grammar School, and I’m still going this year, Year 12. The solo that I picked was stimulus 9, Juliet.

**TEAGAN MATTHEW [TM]**

I’m Teagan Matthews, I did accelerated drama last year at Siena College. I chose stimulus 10, The Gothic Spirit.

**JEREMY HARLAND [JH]**

Hi, my name’s Jeremy Harland, I went to Haileybury College last year. I chose the stimulus of The Bush Poet.

**ANGUS GRIGGS [AG]**

Hi, my name is Angus Griggs. I went to Camberwell High School last year. The solo structure that I chose was number 4, The Toy.

**[BE]**

Thanks everybody. Just as we start with the solos, could you explain to us how you chose your character. Whether you started with a couple of different characters; when throughout the process you really decided on which character you wanted to do?

**[JH]**

Initially when we got all the stimulus’ and the structures, I was tossing up between a few – specifically The Toy, The Bush Poet, and Colonel Mustard. I had a few ideas for all of them but what really drove me to choose Bush Poet was, I did Aussie History in Year 11, so in 2018, which gave me a lot of context already with the actual debate, because we actually looked into that quite specifically. Which I thought gave me a little bit of an advantage, having already known a bit of the context around the debate and into the poems themselves. I thought it was a bit unique, and not a lot of other people would pick it. So that’s really what drove me to my solo.

**[GM]**

I was, same at Jeremy, I was tossing up between a few. I was thinking about doing The Toy, because that sounded really cool to do some physical theatre and, you know, everyone loves Toy Story. The thing that drew me to Juliet was her subtext that I was going to give her – a story that I kept thinking about. Juliet struck me as a really strong character that could prove a point really well, and I think that there was much more depth that could go into this character. At the start I sort of thought that she was someone that could be, you know, had curls in her hair and ribbons, someone that would stand out in that way, but I really wanted to see deeper into that character and see where I could take her, maybe even put a masculine side to her and give her that power, which was a really interesting thing that I was tossing up towards.

**[TM]**

I actually really struggled originally to find a character that I really enjoyed playing. When I started experimenting I really experimented with Miss Scarlet, The Spirit and The Gangster. I looked into them heavily, did a lot of research. I knew what character I really wanted to play – the trickster, the suave sly coming in kind of thing. I feel like I could see myself in all of them. But then as I looked into the research I remembered how much absolutely love the book *Frankenstein* with all of my soul! I reread the book, I was looking at it and I went, I have to pick The Gothic Spirit. The literature is so in depth, there’s so much character to it, Mary Shelley and Percy and everything, there’s so many intricate little things that you can put into it. It really struck me as the character I wanted to go with, and that’s what ultimately made me choose it.

**[AG]**

I remember initially I was thinking of doing Juliet, and it was simply because I had this one idea that I kind of liked that I wanted to do with the story, I can’t even remember what it was now. I told my teacher and she was like, ‘okay, that’s a nice idea, that’s kind of alright, but I think that you’d be much better suited to The Toy.’ I was initially reluctant because I didn’t have any ideas for The Toy. The basis of that decision to change to The Toy was that the year before last year, 2018, when I was in Year 11, to prepare for 2019’s solos we looked into the solo structures of 2018 and got to play around with the different ideas we could do for that. I chose The Raven, which also has a very prominent use of physical theatre. She really liked what I did with that, I really liked what I did with that, and so The Toy was much better suited to what I was already used to, what I already liked doing, so I ultimately went with The Toy.

**[BE]**

Thank you for that. One of the changes this year for the new study design is the greater emphasis on research. Could you describe for us how much research you did, what type, where it came from, any ideas like that?

**[TM]**

As I said before, when I was looking to do my dot point 2 I read through the entire book of *Frankenstein* again, and I picked out key scenes that I thought I would be able to transmute into my solo. That was a big part of the research for dot point 2. And then, for dot point 1 and stuff, it was sort of just heavily looking through research online, and websites and everything, and trying to figure out dates and people and everything, locations. Then working out how that would work. I wanted to in my solo reference things directly to show that reference. During my solo in the beginning I say, ‘from Europe to Switzerland and Geneva’ – to give that context through that research helps develop the characters and the place where I would be, especially since the Villa Diodati was such an important place in that performance. But it was a lot of literature reading online, I looked into the vampire as well but ultimately that had to get scrapped even though it was a really fun read. A lot of online, books, staying up all night looking at stuff and referencing it, yeah!

**[JH]**

Funnily enough for me a lot of my original research into The Bush Poet came from my notes from history. I went through, and I actually had a few breakdowns of the poems themselves and what the subtext of what they were saying about the landscapes were, and what their opinions of it were. From that I went into the lives of both poets to really feel my characterisation of both. Especially with my characterisation of Banjo, he’s a lot more upper class, he’s got a bit more of a rounded accent, which is because he was a lot wealthier and so his travelling was a lot easier – and that’s why he glorified the bush so much. Whereas Lawson, I made him a little bit more down to earth in a way. He was a lot poorer, so his experience of the bush was a lot worse, and that’s how he wrote about it. And I also did a lot of research into the evolution of media in Australia, and how our national identity has been represented in those different forms. That came into play in the second half of my solo with the ads on the tv. The last bit of research, I did a lot of looking into the actual [bank]notes we have currently, and the people represented on those and what they have done, to really again experiment with how Australian national identity has been represented in different forms.

**[AG]**

When I first started researching, the first thing I did was I re-watched the movie *Toy Story*, and I researched the most prominent themes in the film. The one that stuck out the most to me was the theme of jealousy. From that came the idea of the attic, which is where the temporary fad toys would be, and that’s where the themes of my piece came from. For those toys in the attic, I wanted to get really specific references to those toys. For example, I researched Rubix Cube, and came up with the idea of referencing this random sculpture at the University of Michigan that was made of a Rubix Cube, and I wanted to work that into his little speech. For the Rock ‘Em Sock ‘Em Robots, I wanted to reference the year they came out, and of course what overshadowed them. So I had 1964 referenced and then GI Joe as overshadowing them in the following year. So a lot of my research went into the themes of the film, and then that informed my research on the attic toys and the specific real world references that I wanted them to make.

**[GM]**

Basically like these guys…when I was starting out my research on all the dot points and how I could incorporate my research and really get it right, I mostly stuck with a few versions of Romeo and Juliet, and how different the modern versions were to the older ones, and how I could incorporate a modern Juliet into my solo. I did a lot of research on the Greensleeves melody, that’s the song that I start my solo with, and I incorporated my knowledge and lyrical language to make a song out of that melody. The Greensleeves melody represented the status of women of the Elizabethan time. There’s a lot of research on the Kings and how that song was used back then. I wanted to incorporate the status of women in the song at the very start, the first thing that you see, I wanted to incorporate the status of women at that time and then incorporated the words on top of that melody. She was saying that ‘I want to be free, I want to be written, I want to write my own story’. I wanted to contrast those two ideas together to make that point from the very start of my performance.

I also did a lot of research through songs. There was a song from *Smash* that really stuck out to me, the lyrics of those songs really stuck out and really represented the character that I wanted Shakespeare to be represented as. There’s a few lines at the end of my solo that I use from that song – “how he hides behind his words, that one place he belongs, in black and white he can rewrite the wrongs.” I thought that was a really good piece of lyrical language that I could incorporate to show what I wanted in the character of Shakespeare – who wasn’t seen as a physical character in my body but I was talking to the character of Shakespeare. I wanted to make Shakespeare society and who I was talking to.

**[BE]**

One of the other changes to the new study design is that you got to choose your own dramatic element and convention. Two of you chose the same each – two of you chose exaggerated movement and two of you chose heightened language. (Not so much [similarity] with the elements.) Can you explain to us how you came to choose those dramatic elements and conventions, and when in the process did you actually choose one?

**[AG]**

For my dramatic element, tension, that came about very quickly very early on. It just sort of fit was I was trying to tell, what I was showing with all the characters. There’s a lot of tension between Woody and Buzz in the first Toy Story movie, and for dot point 1 or 2 (I can’t remember which one it was) but one of them was to recreate the adventures that led to Buzz being accepted by the other toys. Tension fit really well with that because it allowed me to highlight the tension between Woody and Buzz and then contrast it with the different version of Woody that he has become by the end of that adventure. It also allowed for the attic at the end, with all this tension between Buzz and the ideals of Andy’s room and then the ideals of the attic.

As for exaggerated movement, that fit really well with physical theatre, fit really well with what I was doing. I just thought it was a good fit for what the stimulus was asking of me.

**[GM]**

My dramatic element was climax. I came across this one later in the process. I’m not sure which one I was originally going to do, but climax stood out to me as something that was going to be important for Juliet, with how she presented herself and how she presented her fate. Which I think was a really climactic moment in herself. I really wanted to make a point about how the frustration that she was feeling, how that came up in those climactic moments when she was talking to Shakespeare and talking to the audience, to create a climax in those moment.

My heightened language – well, Elizabethan Theatre, that was basically prescribed, that was in the stimulus. I wanted to incorporated this rhythmic sort of thing. As I said I researched songs thoroughly, because that’s something that I enjoy doing, that’s something that I wanted to put, myself, into the solo. I wanted to find this lyrical language and this rhythmic, rhyming couplets to produce a sort of dramatic and purpose and what I want it to say. I wanted to create this world for Juliet that she’s stuck in, where she is using heightened language and she is constantly doing this play – and she’s sick of it. I wanted to make that a highlight.

**[BE]**

Some of you chose to use a soundtrack, Teagan and Jeremy. When did you decide that you were going to have a soundtrack, and how was it created in the process? Was it from the start, was it tacked on from the end, and how did you actually do that?

**[TM]**

When I finally decided exactly what I wanted to do with The Gothic Spirit, I knew straight away that I wanted a soundtrack to accompany me as I performed. That was mostly to do with…while I was looking into Gothic Literature, I realised I could make ambient sounds to represent stuff. When you think about it you think of the strings and the orchestra and the rain. Even the rain is ambient, the fact that you can put into a soundtrack timed thunderclaps which when put to music put a lot more oomph into something, instead of just clapping your hands or hitting a chair or something. It fit so well with the performance to have that orchestra and everything. I knew straight away that I wanted a soundtrack to accompany me. I created mine in [program name], which I already have previous experience with. It was just going through the internet, looking at royalty-free songs, trying to find something that gave it a macabre sort of aspect. It was something I knew I immediately wanted to do and I didn’t question it, I was like, ‘I’m doing this, let’s do it’.

**[JM]**

For me, funnily enough at the start of the process I really hated the idea of having a soundtrack behind mine. Especially with my method of creating and improvising, the way it was taking shape, I wasn’t sure…because I vary a lot with my speed and delivery, I thought having a soundtrack set would throw me off in that way. But when I was creating the opening, I really liked the idea of having that board room setting with the meeting, and then them, the presentation almost coming out of the whiteboard. Punctuating that entrance for me was really important, enhancing that supernatural idea of them coming out of the whiteboard, I found the soundtrack really helped me to achieve that with making a really punchy entrance for both of the poets. I also added a little bit of an Australian context in there with having the kookaburras calling out and that sort of thing, which I thought was good, and having the Waltzing Matilda soundtrack under that as well. In creating that I just used Garage Band, and just layered the sounds. In performance the way I did it was through Q-Lab, and I just had a little presentation remote in my pocket, which gave me that little bit of freedom – now I’ve got to the line, and now I can cue the sound. That was the process for me.

**[BE]**

One of the other changes to the study design this year was putting in application of symbol. How did you tackle that in your development of your structures?

**[AG]**

Symbol for me was most overt in my costume, which I put a lot of thought and time into with my teacher – how we could get the bulkiness of Buzz but also the cowboy-look of Woody. I wanted to have the costume symbolically represent those two characters because they’re my two most prominent characters. We settled on almost a poncho kind of thing but it had arms, and it gives the bulkiness of the upper torso, but then you’ve got the skinniness of the jeans for Woody, and the belt and the shirt underneath. As well as the swimming cap that goes over the head to represent Buzz’s weird purple – whatever it is that’s under his suit. Symbol for me was most prominent in costume and how I wanted to show those two characters.

**[TM]**

Symbol for me was my very big one. My entire symbol stemmed from the idea of a game and my Spirit being the trickster archetype that is guiding these character through the Villa Diodati and to lead towards his motivations. When I started I came up with the idea of a game of chess. The Gothic Spirit in the beginning directly references the audience as the opponents – society is the opponent that is holding back this Spirit from achieving his goal of enshrining himself in literature which is his plan. Through this, the characters were each introduced (Mary Shelley, Percy, Lord Byron), they were each introduced saying like, ‘Claire Claremont, The Rook’, ‘The Bishop’, ‘The Knight’. They were all players that the Spirit himself was manipulating. This was all done through physicality as well – Claire could only move forward and left, she could only move in a straight angle just as The Rook can. Lord Byron could only go up and left or up and right, same with Percy he could only go on a diagonal. Mary, because she was the special one, could just walk anywhere because she was The Queen. On my costume I had painted on The King symbol.

In the end, my major lasting comment is The Spirit, directing as well, saying, you have lost, I have won, I have been enshrined as Frankenstein inside of your minds. And then there was the reveal of the chessboard underneath my chair that I had painted on and stuck the pieces onto. The idea of the game was my main application of symbol – the trickery, the treacherousness, the betrayal and everything between these characters, that really helped guide my process.

**[JH]**

One moment in my solo which I really wanted to highlight using symbol was the actual “poetry slam” itself, particularly in Banjo’s sections. What I did there is I took the melody of classic Australian song, ‘Home Among the Gum Trees’, and I laid that over Banjo’s actual poem. I played along that with my ukulele as a way to represent that his idealistic descriptions of the bush that he made in 1800 still carry on to this day, the effect he’s had and how Australian’s can be very stuck in their ways and that a lot of stuff doesn’t change very quickly. I also used symbol quite heavily at the end of my piece with my didactic moment (for lack of a better word) – in that moment I had an eerie whistle playing the national anthem in the background, quite softly, as I had quite a political rant. The concluding line, ‘how can we act as if this country has and always will be fair and free’ as the melody plays the part of the song that goes ‘advance Australia fair’. I thought that really contrasted well, had that symbolic message of who are we really, what has actually changed since then.

**[GM]**

My symbol was based on my costume and my choice of prop, which was a big red feather. In choosing my costume as a symbol representing Amelia Earhart…there’s lots to it and lots of symbols in my solo that overlap, I’m trying to unpile them for you. In my costume I have this corset which is obviously a symbol of her being constricted and trapped and being controlled, that’s just a symbol in itself and something that she is wishing not to be. Then I paired this corset with these bloomers, these pants, that was quite different. I was going to base this symbol of masculinity, this Amelia Earhart vibe on Amelia Earhart’s boilersuit. I was originally going to come doing Juliet in this boilersuit and you would have no idea I was doing Juliet because it doesn’t…it’s just that masculine sort of thing that I was going for and I was mixing them together. That transition made that easier to see that she doesn’t really want to…she wants to get rid of that corset and be free and not be constricted anymore, and be like Amelia who writes her own story and died doing what she loves, flying in the air. That’s something that Juliet didn’t have, and she was being controlled the whole time.

The other symbol is definitely my feather. The red colour obviously represents a lot of things. I wanted it to be red for lots of reasons, for love, for the blood, the death, the anger, the infuriation that she was feeling at that time. Represented in that red colour, that red colour in the face of William Shakespeare to change her story, that’s what she wanted to strive for. Also the power that he had on her – using the feather as his quill that was controlling her and writing her story. I sort of mixed them together. And obviously the symbol of flight as the feather as well. This feather that was always in Juliet’s hand representing her dream, the vision that she strived for, getting out of this life and constantly thinking of this flight and freedom.

**[BE]**

You spoke about your prop quite a bit there as well. The choice that you all made of having a number of set pieces or props or none at all. How did you go about that process? Did you start with what you ended up with, did you experiment with a couple of other things along the way, did you get advice, trial and error? What about you Angus, because you just had a backpack?

**[AG]**

Initially I had simply just an umbrella for my prop, that was the first thing I decided on. I had this bit where I wanted the rocket from Toy Story One to explode, and I’d open the umbrella and it’d look really cool. But that was the only idea I had! And it was kind of nice, but the umbrella, I couldn’t really do anything else with it, it was just a stick that I was holding the whole time, it was really distracting, I couldn’t think of a single other interesting thing to do with it. No real transformations came from it. I was discussing with my teacher other suggestions and other ideas, and we went into our storeroom, and she came out with this backpack. And I thought, that’s kind of cool, and I thought about that and eventually ended up with the one that I actually used with the horse face on it. Even with that I was playing around with the straps and things like that and then I eventually came up with that I could attach the two straps together and hook it over my neck so when I wasn’t using it I could move around. It was really nice because it meant I could put my emphasis on my physicality, or if I wanted to I could remove it and then put the emphasis on the prop. It was much more interesting and felt much more engaging than just a simple umbrella. It was a happy little accident I think because…I could have ended up the idea but it wasn’t ideal.

**[BE]**

What about you Jeremy with your frame, how did you come about using that?

**[JH]**

I really started using that initially because one of the first scenes I workshopped and improvised was that boardroom scene to begin with. I thought the introduction of the poet’s is the most important scene to start with. When improvising that I liked the idea of having a whiteboard, so that’s where that frame on wheels idea came there. That was almost a stand in prop because there was one somebody had made a few years ago for their Theatre monologue, so it was really more of a stand in prop at first. But as I developed more material I realised how it could be used to frame the action in a way, and how dynamically it could be used with the wheels and the actual frame spinning as well. One particular example of that is when I do the mojo scene with all the ads, I moved it forward and it frames the actions as if it was coming through a tv screen. I also spent a lot of time just improvising with that, I can’t tell you how much footage I’ve got of myself in a room, by myself, and just going through it in different ways, trying to figure out how I could use it. A lot of that didn’t end up getting used but it was still good to understand how it worked. One particular scene where that came in handy was the plane scene about Reverend John Flynn and the flying ambulance, using that as the plane and then flipping it open to come into it and become the pilot.

**[BE]**

Teagan did you always start with the chair?

**[TM]**

I originally didn’t have anything, I wanted this to be completely physical, just my soundtrack. But then out of convenience, we moved to a chair. The chair, it took a lot of…originally it was just for convenience, but as I started playing with it, and it was really heavy and hard to move around as I wanted, until I realised there were things that I could do that, I didn’t have to move it but I could place things on the chair that could be interacted with. That led to the doorway at the back of the chair. I had to cut that out and put a hinge in with a little doorframe, and on that was the Villa Diodati pictured. I could go behind the chair, pull that down, and be represented inside of the Villa. It also created levels, there were places I could hide things underneath…originally I tried to go under the chair and I pulled out the support underneath and then realised that probably wasn’t a good idea so had to put it back in! It was levels, it fit the time, I had to repaint it so it looked a bit gothic and archaic, playing around with it really. There wasn’t a deeper meaning behind it apart from the chessboard underneath, it just helped create levels and dimensions.

**[BE]**

What about your editing process? I assume that some of you would have had far more performance than the seven minutes needed, would anyone like to comment on how they edited their performance?

**[JH]**

From the start, I knew that mine had to be edited down, because at one point I ran something like 10 and a half minutes, and I was like, don’t really know what to cut, I like all of it – you created it and you don’t want to get rid of it. For me the real way I learned how to edit was test audiences. Go in a room with someone, perform it, and I told them, anything you think is inconsequential, doesn’t actually flow on, doesn’t have any real symbolic, doesn’t add anything to the solo, just tell me. One person was really good at it, one of my best mates, he was just, ‘this bit’s bad, just cut that out’. That’s how I jumpstarted my editing process.

**[GM]**

My solo was very long before I chopped it down. It was very wordy, I came up with way too many poems, because I just wanted to get those words out. I realised that I didn’t need all those words, I needed to show not tell, and I need to do a lot more movement than I did. I think that was something important for me to realise. I also remember having lots of characters that I didn’t need. Trying to put too much into it and it was confusing me. I had a character for William Shakespeare, and Juliet and William Shakespeare were having conversations so I was making transitions between these two characters. I felt that that wasn’t really working in terms of who I wanted to make William Shakespeare, and the intention Juliet had in talking to him. So I completely cut William Shakespeare the character, and made her talk to the audience, and wanted to make that a real point. That was basically my editing process.

**[TM]**

The first time I ever timed my performance after everything was said and done – I was like, yeah, every time I’ve performed this it’s felt so short, it’s going to be great, I’m going to be so under – it was about 13 minutes long, and I almost cried. Because everything, I loved it, it was perfect, I’d put so much effort into it, everything fit, every word had so much meaning to it. It hurt a lot. I realised first step was I needed to cut the flourishes in lines, stuff that was too indulgent in words, that had to go, and from seconds turned to minutes and I got it down from just removing little lines and moments of silence, I got it down to about 7 minutes and 20 seconds…and there was nothing more I could cut. So three weeks before the final thing I trashed an entire dot point and just rewrote it, and that’s what got me to seven minutes and that was my big cut. And it hurt, a lot, and I miss that dot point so much, but I know everything was better from it. You have to let those things go, it’s for the benefit of your process…it hurts so much (!), but yeah.

**[AG]**

The whole dot point ‘recreating the adventures that led to Buzz being accepted by the other toys’, that was originally really difficult for me to trim down to…I think it ended up being 2 or 3 minutes in the end. The most difficult part for me was the part in Sid’s room, I couldn’t figure out a way to have Sid out of there and then have Woody and Buzz escape in a really quick timely manner. It was really really wordy, and I couldn’t figure out how to get them out quickly. I think the thing that saved that was the ‘show don’t tell’ thing. The way I ended up doing it was, ‘a wind up car, a ramp, a window…it’s not much but it’ll do’ and then Woody jumps down into the wind-up car, whizzes around the room, and basically just flies out – after apologising to Buzz. That was something that didn’t have too much dialogue, it was really quick, really short. Initially Buzz was going to say a lot there, ‘oh I forgive you Woody, blah blah blah’. It was just too long. I think the quick apology from Woody and just the quick little physical escape really removed a lot of the unnecessary stuff and trimmed it down, and I ended up being really happy with it.

**[BE]**

Thank you. Finally, is there any advice that you would give students that are tackling this subject and the drama solo performance this year?

**[TM]**

The advice I would give would be to study your prescribed structure like there’s no tomorrow. That thing is so important, and even though it’s so short, every word in your stem and in your dot point is so important. If you can refer to the wording in it during your performance, I felt like that helped guide me. Like, it said directly, ‘enshrinement’ and ‘delicious fear’, and I went, I want to directly say those words, I want it to be known exactly what I’m doing. That kind of thing as well, that document is so important and so helpful and if you’re not following it you’re not going to get a good score for it. Put it up everywhere, re-read it every day, study it!

**[GM]**

I think study it like she says, study it hard, and really make a really good checklist for yourself. Look up what you have to do, and what you have to put in it, and check them off – ‘have I got that? Have I got that? Have I got that? Yes, no?’ Fix that straight away before you really start refining and working.

And have fun with it as well! Don’t stray away from dumb ideas, because most ideas that you have are not dumb. If you voice them to people and start developing really weird ideas, our brains are weird, they come up with weird stuff, and it may sound really weird speaking it but it could be a really bangin’ idea when you put it into a solo or put it into a show. Let out every idea you have and write it down.

**[JH]**

Building on what Georgia said, one thing I would say to everyone doing this is, no idea is a bad idea. When I started, I was talking through a few ideas I had with somebody, and then I said, ‘oh I had this idea but I decided not to do it, it’s not great’. Then they said, ‘no you should do that, that’s a really good idea, but maybe try it in this way.’ As soon as you talk to other people about it, they see it in a different light to you. That’s another thing – talking to your classmates or anybody really about what you’re doing, saying ‘oh I had this idea, I’m not sure how to do it.’ And they might come up with something you never would have thought of, like ‘oh why don’t you try it standing up with your back to the audience’ or weird things like that. I found, with me and a couple of my friends, talking through each other’s solos, we’ll spend five minutes on yours and five minutes on mine, things like that really helped to speed up the creative process.

**[AG]**

Talking to your friends and getting ideas from them is really great. One thing I’d definitely recommend is giving your prop to a friend and seeing what they do with it, how they play with it, what it looks like with a person using it – because they’ll come up with uses of it you wouldn’t have even thought of. Then you can implement those in different parts, different scenes, you can try them out yourself. The dot points in the stimulus are really really important, it’s good to have those really defined. Each dot point should be its own scene I found. If you think of it like that, then you really get them distinct, and you know that you’re checking every one off. Make sure that you know your script really well, every word in the script because that means that you’ll eventually end up hitting that seven minute mark or 6 minute 57 second mark every time. And yeah, have fun with it – because it’s really fun! It’s a really really good assessment, great fun, it’s really good to get that creative stuff and put it into an assessment, it’s a lot of fun.

**[BE]**

Great, thank you.

So thanks for listening to this discussion today with Georgia, Jeremy, Teagan and Angus. We hope it’s 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 you’re studying and creating.

Thank you.