



A LEVEL DRAMA AND THEATRE YEAR 11 TO YEAR 12 TRANSITION WORK

In simple terms, the subject content for A Level Drama is divided into three components:

COMPONENT	CONTENT	% of A Level
1. DRAMA & THEATRE	Written exam	40%
2. CREATING ORIGINAL DRAMA	Devised practical	30%
3. MAKING THEATRE	Scripted practical	30%

The following work is designed to help you prepare for both **practical components**. Please collate all work in an A4 ring binder. This will form the beginnings of your Drama File.

COMPONENT 2: CREATING ORIGINAL DRAMA

Kneehigh

The Devising Component is an exciting opportunity to **creatively adapt a story for the stage** in the style of a studied practitioner. You will be studying the performance techniques and production methods of the phenomenal **KNEEHIGH THEATRE COMPANY**

KNEEHIGH is based in Cornwall, founded by Mike Shepherd in 1980. **They have a distinctive, unique artistic identity and yet, by their own admission, they do not have a set approach and prefer to work in a state of constant reinvention and exploration.** **KNEEHIGH** happily mix naturalism with representation, dance, physical theatre, live music, visual imagery and puppetry, which gives their work a cheerful, anarchic feel.

TASKS

1. To begin your research of the KNEEHIGH THEATRE COMPANY, sign up to their free online resource: <https://www.kneehigh.co.uk/cookbook/>
2. Watch the YouTube clips indicated on pages 2 – 4 relating to the productions of:
 - Rebecca
 - 946: The Amazing Story of Adolphus Tips
 - Brief Encounter
3. Study the Prop and Puppet images on page 5 and take the challenge!
4. **MAKE A LIST.** Identify at least 10 different elements of Kneehigh's style. Begin with the productions shown in pages 2-5. Add at least 3 techniques from Kneehigh productions you discover through your own research. Try to **screen capture additional images**. Make brief notes on how each element was used. These notes will be useful for your WORKING NOTEBOOK.

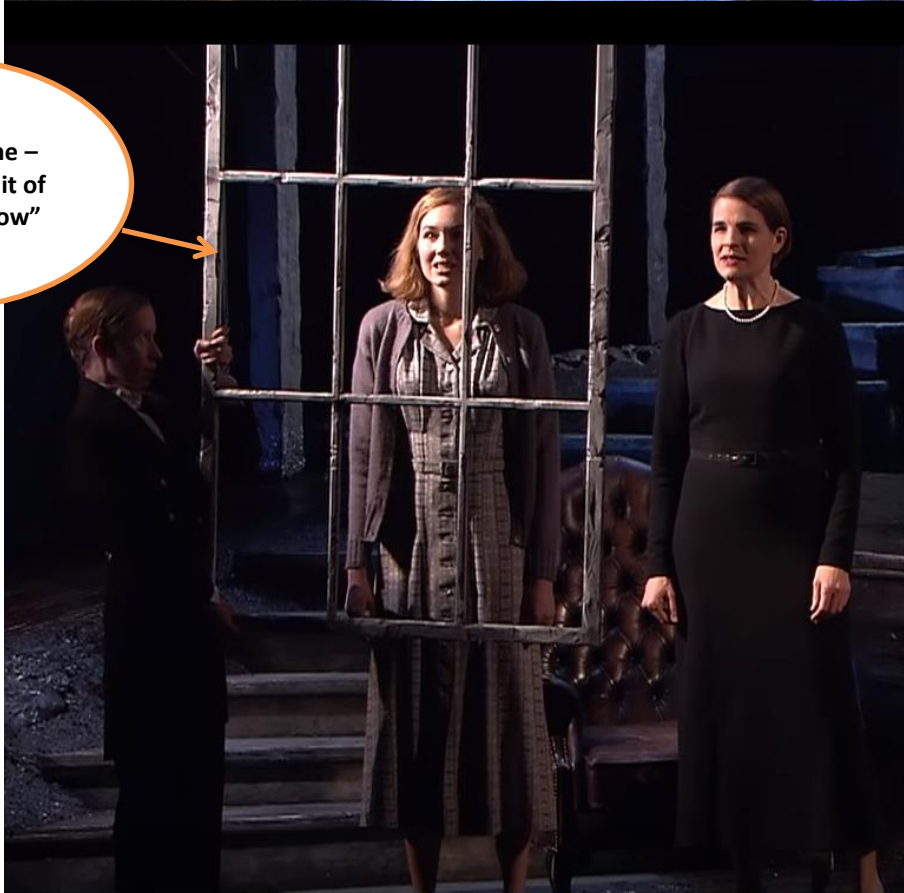
REBECCA

Watch the following YouTube clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiM3whG9Oxs>



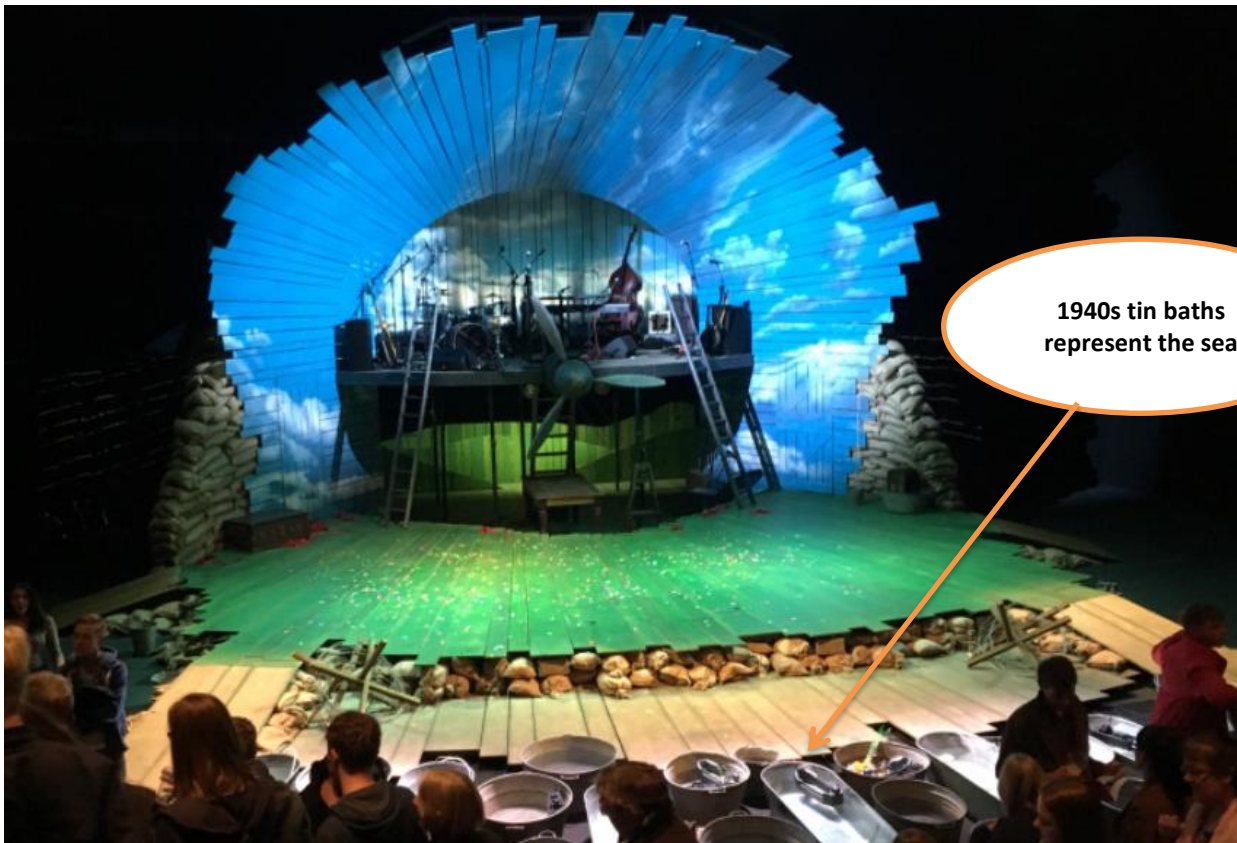
Hand held frame –
theatrical conceit of
“wall and window”



946: THE AMAZING STORY OF ADOLPHUS TIPS

Watch the following YouTube clip:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nFpFdCFbFo>



BRIEF ENCOUNTER

Watch the following YouTube clip:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DP7EVlyzhul&list=RDDP7EVlyzhul&start_radio=1&rv=DP7EVlyzhul&t=2



KNEEHIGH USE OF PROPS & PUPPETRY



CHALLENGE! IDENTIFY AND LABEL THE KNEEHIGH PRODUCTIONS SHOWN IN THE PICS



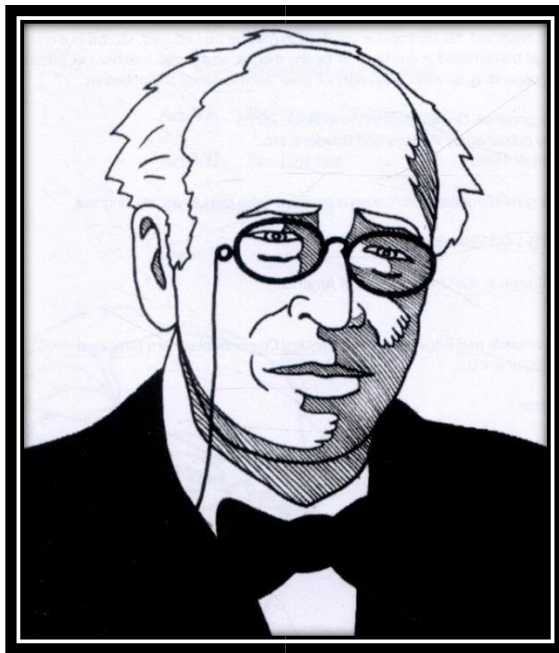
TASK

1. Source & print a list of Kneehigh's previous productions (i.e. stories that Kneehigh have creatively adapted for the stage)
2. Choose a story from the list below, or substitute with a similar type of story that you know well.
3. Select a key character and key moment from your chosen story.
4. Write a dramatic monologue for your character that could potentially feature in a stage adaptation of the story.

STORY LIST:

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	Roald Dahl
The Secret Garden	Hodgson Burnett
The Sword in the Stone	T.H. White
Treasure Island	Robert Louis Stevenson
Charlotte's Web	E.B. White
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland	C.S. Lewis
Animal Farm	George Orwell
Coraline	Neil Gaiman
A Christmas Carol	Charles Dickens

COMPONENT 3 RESEARCH



For your scripted assessment (**COMPONENT 3: Making Theatre**) you will work on extracts from three different plays. For the third extract, you will demonstrate the influence of a practitioner who has made a significant contribution to theatre practice. As part of this assessment, you will be exploring the techniques and theories of...

**Constantin
Stanislavski
1863 - 1938**

TASK

Research the following and make notes on what you find:

- **Stanislavski's historical, theatrical and political context**
*When was he around? Where? What was the contextual backdrop to his work?
Why did Stanislavski start to develop his ideas for theatre?*
- **Stanislavski's collaboration with others**
Who did he work with and where? What influence did these people have on his work?
- **Productions/projects**
What theatre productions did he direct, where and when?

➤ **Working methods: Elements of “The System”**

Research Stanislavski’s methods in depth and make sure you have a detailed understanding of the following features:

- *Units and objectives*
- *The Magic If*
- *Given and Imagined Circumstances*
- *Truth and belief*
- *Release of Tension*
- *Circles of Attention*
- *Subtext*
- *Tempo Rhythm*
- *The Unbroken line*



Top Tips for your research:

This work is worth doing well and will contribute directly to the *REFLECTIVE REPORT*, which you complete as part of the A Level – this means that ***the work you do now in Transition can be used when you start the course!***

The key to this exercise is to ***BE SELECTIVE***. There is no value in printing out reams of material that you have no intention of reading. The aim of the task is to understand Stanislavski’s approach to theatre.

KEEP A RECORD OF ALL OF YOUR SOURCES. Your research will not be credited in your REFLECTIVE REPORT if you cannot cite the origin in your bibliography.

TASK

Stanislavski reading list:

Over the summer, try to borrow or buy a second-hand copy of at least one of these books to extend your knowledge of his work and practice:

- An Actor Prepares Stanislavski
- Building a Character Stanislavski
- An Actor’s Work Stanislavski
- Creating a Role Stanislavski
- Stanislavski and the Actor Jean Benedetti

TASK

Naturalistic Plays:

Aim to read at least one of the following plays – these are naturalistic plays which can be performed in the naturalistic style using Stanislavski's methods. Free access can be found at the associated link:

- ***A Doll's House*** **Henrik Ibsen**
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2542/2542-h/2542-h.htm>
- ***Miss Julie*** **August Strindberg**
<https://www.spls.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=22453&dataid=14780&FileName=Miss%20Julie.pdf>
- ***Hedda Gabler*** **Henrik Ibsen**
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4093/4093-h/4093-h.htm>
- ***The Cherry Orchard*** **Anton Chekhov**
<http://www.public-library.uk/ebooks/19/85.pdf>
- ***The Seagull*** **Anton Chekhov**
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1754/1754-h/1754-h.htm>

MONOLOGUE CHALLENGE

Now you have some understanding of Stanislavski's methods, apply these techniques to a monologue of your choice. This could be a monologue from a play you already know, or you could try some of the websites below:

1. **The Monologue Archive** is an excellent free resource for classical pieces:

<https://www.monologuearchive.com/>

2. **The Shakespeare Monologue** website organises all available speeches into comedies / histories / tragedies. You can also see the speeches in scene context. Use Spark Notes / No Fear Shakespeare for contemporary translations to aid your interpretation.

<https://www.shakespeare-monologues.org/home>

3. **The TRINITY ANTHOLOGY** is an online resource containing diverse, international material. It is intended for use in Trinity Drama examinations (similar to LAMDA). It's a great search format that gives you direct access to the monologues. Useful practice material and inspiration for playwrights.

<https://www.trinitycollege.com/gallery/anthologyonline/>

4. **The MONOLOGUE LIBRARY** is a collection of over 100 audio recordings of renown artists performing their favourite theatrical speeches.

<https://www.themonobox.co.uk/monolibrary>

5. **BACKSTAGE** Monologue search tool

<https://www.backstage.com/monologues/>

STANISLAVSKI REHEARSAL METHODS

TRY SOME OF THESE EXERCISES WITH YOUR MONOLOGUE:

1. Relaxation of tension

Put some relaxing music on and either sit on a chair or lie on the floor. Make sure your feet are flat on the floor and your back is relaxed. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing – breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Be aware of your body and any tension you carry. Go through each part of your body, tensing it for 5 seconds and then releasing that tension on an out breath – your face, neck, shoulders, arms, abdominals, buttocks, thighs, calves and feet. Then tense your whole body for 5 seconds, and release it. Feel the difference in your body when you have now released the tension. When you are ready, get up and think about the body of your character – where do they hold tension?

2. Imagination

Sit on a chair and close your eyes. Imagine yourself on a beach, and spend a few minutes visualising this, imagining the sights, smells, sounds, touch and taste of this place. Now imagine yourself in the world of your play – what sights, smells, sounds, touch and tastes can you imagine in this place? Where does your character fit in to this world? By strengthening our imagination we are allowing ourselves to get more fully into our character.

3. Given and Imagined Circumstances

Make a table of the given circumstances from your monologue – facts that you already know from the script, and then the imagined circumstances – things about your character you have had to fill in using your imagination.

4. Off text improvisation

Put your script down and improvise the monologue using the given circumstance as your guide. Think about how the scene went and if you felt the action fitted the scene. Start to think about and make notes on your objective, the relationships in the monologue, the super objective etc. at this point. Your improvisations are the spark to ignite and bring together all the elements of the system. Improvise the scene again – don't try to remember the text but concentrate on the action, objective and the given circumstance.

If you're feeling brave, film a final version of your monologue and show this to your teacher at the start of your A Level Drama and Theatre course!

