Peddling
by Harry Melling

21 April – 6 May
Southbank Theatre, The Lawler

9 May – 27 May
Regional Tour

Notes prepared by Meg Upton
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Introduction

Because theatre is an ephemeral art form – here in one moment, gone in the next – and contemporary theatre making has become more complex, MTC Families and Education are offering the education resource in two parts.

Part A of the Peddling Teachers Notes offered VCE Drama teachers and students a rich and detailed introduction to the production in order to prepare them for seeing the MTC production – possibly only once. You are advised to refer to Part A again before you approach Part B.

Part B of the resource provides images, a detailed interview with the creative team, and analysis questions that relate to the VCE Drama Unit 3 performance analysis task.

The following questions and discussion points focus specifically on Drama Unit 3, Outcome 3: Analysing Non-naturalistic Performance. This Outcome requires students to respond to a live production from the VCE Drama Playlist, firstly as a written SAC, and then later as part of the Drama Written Examination in November.

In your analysis and response to the production remember to consider the Key Knowledge and Key Skills for this Area of Study as listed below from VCA Drama Study Design.

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<th>DRAMA UNIT 3 – AREA OF STUDY 3 – Outcome 3</th>
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<td>On completion of this unit the student should be able to analyse and evaluate a non-naturalistic performance. To achieve this outcome the student will draw on key knowledge and key skills outlined in Area of Study 3.</td>
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Key knowledge

- The ways in which non-naturalistic performance styles and conventions are used in performance
- The ways in which characters are represented in non-naturalistic performance through the actors’ use of expressive skills
- The ways in which dramatic elements, conventions and stagecraft are manipulated to enhance non-naturalistic performance
- Drama terminology associated with performance styles, traditions, and practitioners from contemporary and cultural traditions relevant to non-naturalistic performance.

Key skills

- Analyse the representation of characters within a non-naturalistic performance
- Analyse and evaluate the manipulation of dramatic elements, conventions and stagecraft within a non-naturalistic performance
- Analyse non-naturalistic performance styles within a production
- Analyse and evaluate the use of expressive and performance skills in non-naturalistic performance
- Analyse and evaluate establishment and maintenance of the actor–audience relationship in a non-naturalistic performance
- Use drama terminology appropriately to analyse and evaluate a non-naturalistic performance.
Peddling Refresher

Creative Team

Darcy Brown
Boy

Bec Matthews
Musician

Susie Dee
Director

Marg Horwell
Set & Costume Designer

Andy Turner
Lighting Designer

Kelly Ryall
Composer/Sound Designer

Directorial Secondment
Karen Berger

Dialect Coach
Leith MacPherson

Other Characters

This is a solo show so other characters are portrayed or appear through the character of Boy. Sometimes we hear them speak, sometimes they are described, and sometimes we get a sense of the Boy interacting with them. These other characters include:

- The Boss man
- other young offenders
- customers in nice house
- an elderly senile woman
- a little girl
- a woman from his past (independent reviewing officer)
- a newsagent manager who sells Boy some fireworks
- Boy as a young boy in church
Setting and Structure

The play is set in contemporary London. The central character, Boy, is constantly on the move, traversing the streets, suburbs and wastelands of the city. Time is fluid – night/day, a few minutes, a few hours, or a whole day are suggested between the beats or ‘units of action’. In the end we return to the opening location.

Language

Language is very important in *Peddling*. The play is described as being written in the style of snap rap poetry. It is often very lyrical and poet and at other times slightly more conversational using dialogue.

Locations in the Play

- vacant lot
- interior of a van
- suburbs of London (Muswell Hill, Finchley, Hampstead Heath, Hendon)
- railway carriage on the North Circular line
- newsagency
- telegraph pole in the street
- the doorstep of the home of the woman and little girl
- Hampstead ponds
- outside Boy’s mother’s house.
The Performance Space: Southbank Theatre – The Lawler

The performance you see may be quite different from the one that many other students will see because of the venue. *Peddling* is on tour to regional Victorian venues.

Below is a plan of the Lawler at Southbank Theatre, MTC.
- How would you describe this performance space?
- How would you describe the venue that you saw the performance in?
- How might the performance venue you see the show in impact the actor/audience relationship?

The World of the Play

When you first entered the theatre/performance space, what world did you feel you were entering?

- What aspects of the performance space indicated a particular world?
- What did you begin to imagine or predict? What were you curious about?
- What is the GREATER world of the play? What is the IMMEDIATE world of the play?
- What was initially very familiar? What felt strange? Why?
- At what point do we as an audience enter the characters’ world?
- At what point do we exit the world of the play? Where do we leave Boy?
- Was the world clear? Did you want a different beginning or ending? Why?

_Essentially [the percussion] will reflect Boy’s internal world... we are using it to get inside Boy’s mind._

_Bec Matthews, Musician_

- Discuss how the drumming and percussion created an internal world
- How did it contribute to the abstract qualities of the world of the play?
- How did it contribute to the literal qualities of the world of the play?
The world of Peddling is interesting because on the one hand you are in an alien landscape of London but also the world of the play is inside Boy’s head. It is that wonderful thing about the space inside one’s head being larger than the space that surrounds you.

Darcy Brown, Boy

- Discuss the first two bolded comments by performer Darcy Brown
- Do you agree with them? What evidence is there in the production to support these comments?
- Did you get a sense that Boy had a larger world inside his mind?
- What did that world consist of?

...the world of the play suggests Boy needs to keep moving, keep swimming lest he falls off or he drowns. [The world] could also be a bridge or a tunnel or something ominous leering out of a misty, murky landscape.

Darcy Brown, Boy

- Did you get a sense that the boy had to keep moving or that he was propelled through the world of the play?
- What may have propelled him? What happened in the story?
- Discuss the symbolism inherent in the terms ‘falls off’ or ‘he drowns’.
Structure and Narrative

In pairs share your reflections and write the story of Peddling in dot points. Use the following to help prompt you.

- At what point do we enter Boy’s life and at what point do we exit?
- What do we see, hear and feel about his life in the 70 minutes of the production?
- Who else do we meet or get a sense of?
- What happens at the end?
- How does time work in the play? Is it compressed, does it flashback, what seems to happen in real time?

We jump back ‘three yesterdays’ ago’ as it says in the second scene. So we go to the start of day one and we travel through to the start of day four. In the final scenes Boy traverses seventeen miles and six hours of walking but represented with only a small amount of text

Darcy Brown, Boy

- How does this statement about time contribute to your understanding of the structure of the play?
- How is time shown or indicated? Is it in the language, the action, the stagecraft?
- Discuss the difference between linear and non-linear narrative.
- Would you describe this production as linear in nature?
- Were there elements of both the linear and the non-linear? Identify these.
- Did you feel confused at any point? Why?
- Analyse how the structure of the play enhanced the non-naturalistic styles within the production.

Susie Dee, Marg Horwell and Karen Berger in rehearsal.
Language

I made my peace with the worms in the earth
And then darkness.
Everything gotta start somewhere y’see.
As I waken up amongst it
Up against it
Pinching skin
I’m thinking to myself
Is this a grave?
Darkness swallows everything.
Well, you can spit me back out again
And see what I do.
The grass ain’t the only thing that’s growin’
Possibly it’s rotting.
What’s the difference?
Show me the point of turning
Where one thing becomes the other.
Boy from Peddling

• Discuss this excerpt from the opening of the play
• Now that you have seen the play, what does this extract mean?
• Describe the language used in this extract
• How did the use of language such as this contribute to the non-naturalism in the performance.

[There] are ‘the scenes’ where Boy is overtly interacting with other characters and the language is more structured and conversational, as opposed to the moments where he is in monologue and the language is more poetic, often fractured and sometimes extremely minimal. You may get a single word on a line but what does that single word mean? Is it a breath, a discombobulation, a thought?

Darcy Brown, Boy

• What insights do these comments offer you about the language in the play?
• Discuss and make note of two examples from the performance where the language seems ‘more structured and conversational’
• Discuss and make note of two examples from the performance where the language is ‘more poetic’
• Discuss and make note of two examples where the language seems more ‘fractured’ or ‘minimal’.
• For each example, recall where Boy was and what was happening in that moment.

We are using accent. The play is set in London and is written by a young English writer, and when he wrote it he had a clear vision of the streets. We have to honour that I feel. I did consider an interpretation and losing the accent but the language didn’t feel right.

Susie Dee, Director

• Discuss the use of the South London accent. Was it effective?
• Did it enhance the world of the play?
• Consider if an Australian accent could be used. Why/Why not?

You can read more about the language of the play here:
https://actorsandperformers.com/actors/advice/176/securing-work/monologue+sample+peddling
Performance Styles

Peddling is a highly non-naturalistic play and includes aspects of physical theatre, story-telling, and snap rap poetry. In Part A of the resource you were asked to research and list the conventions of each of these forms. Consider them now as you work through this section of the analysis.

It is a very physical engagement... The set structure offers great opportunities – over, under, jumping, climbing, hanging off.

Karen Berger, Directorial Secondment

- Discuss how physical theatre was used in this production of Peddling
- How did the set design enable physicality?
- How did the actor use his body to physically tell aspects of the story?
- How did he physically use the space to tell aspects of the story?
- Were there times when physicality was used instead of spoken text?

The performance is highly physical, visceral, emotionally charged, and very non-naturalistic.

Susie Dee, Director

- Discuss the bolded terms in this comment from the director
- What do they mean? How do they relate to performance styles within the production?
- How do they relate to the performance of Peddling?

Peddling, as suggested by the creative team and the script, appears to have both an internal or interior world – Boy’s memories and thoughts – and an exterior world – what is happening to him across the 3-4 days we share with him.

- Discuss how the performance styles enable an interior world and an exterior world
Characters and the use of Expressive Skills

In *Peddling*, we enter the world of the character of Boy, and we learn his story. He is 19 years old and a ‘young offender’. The play suggests that after his father died, his mother couldn’t cope and he was ‘left’ in a church and then cared for by social services.

- In detail discuss the character of BOY
- How did performer DARCY BROWN use his performance and expressive skills to create the character – voice, gesture, facial expression, focus, movement, stillness?
- Were there different versions of him? With different characters? In different movements?
- How did you FEEL about this character? What emotions did he evoke for you?
- Did the Boy use direct address and how it may have contributed to creating the character?

Other characters in the story include:
- The Boss man
- other young offenders in the van
- potential customers in nice houses
- an elderly senile woman
- a little girl
- a woman from his past (independent reviewing officer)
- a newsagent manager who sells Boy some fireworks
- Boy as a young boy in church

Bec Matthews in *Peddling*. Photo by Jeff Busby.
Darcy is of course playing Boy but is also creating the presence of other characters, achieved very simply, just through shift and change of voice...we are treading a fine line between Boy imagining the other characters, slightly taking on their persona but they are not fully realised. We get a hint of them...but what they mean to him, not ‘I am now going to fully embody this character.

Susie Dee, Director

- Discuss this statement by the director
- How does the actor use his expressive skills to create the ‘presence’ of other characters? Consider voice and focus in particular.
- You may find it useful to focus on specific characters – Boss Man, the Little Girl and the Fireworks Salesman – and how they were referenced

There are drums and a sonic and tonal world that indicates certain characters, the Boss Man for example. There will be a sound that indicates him.

Bec Matthews, Musician

- How did the percussion indicate shifts in character?
- What motifs or particular sounds did you associate with different characters especially Boy, the Boss Man, the woman and the little girl?

What is transformation of character? What are some conventions used for transforming character?
- Discuss and analyse whether the performer transformed character to create these different roles

In the production the character of Boy says on several occasions, ‘Everything’s gotta start somewhere’:

- What does this comment mean on each occasion?
- How does it represent different moments and points within the story?

The character of Boy seems to be asking questions– Who am I? Who am I to others? What am I worth?

- Is Boy in control of his life? Is he accepted by others? Does he feel rejected?
- What characteristics does he demonstrate that might indicate one or more of these states?

Thankfully I’m working with a brilliant live percussionist, Bec Matthews, and a great joy has been finding moments where we can directly interact...but we’re also trying to work out exactly what that relationship signifies: is this his subconscious, unconscious, a guardian angel, a support network, his own internal drum-beat?

Darcy Brown, Performer


- These comments by the performer pose questions about whether the percussionist who is present on stage throughout the performance is possibly another character
- Discuss, analyse and evaluate the role and presence of the percussionist
- Do you recall moments from the performance where she could have been his subconscious, his unconscious, a guardian angel, a support network, or his own internal drum-beat?
- What other interpretations did you have?
Use of Stagecraft

Set and Props

The way that Marg Horwell has designed the set is that it is suggestive of a number of different locations – a ramp, a treadmill, a road.

Darcy Brown, performer

• Describe the textures, colour palette, aesthetic and function of the set
• Discuss and make a list of what the set may represent and symbolize within the world of the play – for Boy for us, for other characters?
• Discuss how it offered both challenges and opportunities to the performer
• Analyse and evaluate how it contributed to the non-naturalistic styles within the play.

Susie Dee, Director

• Did the set ‘allude to many places’?
• Did you ‘see’ different objects and places within it?
• How did the set act as a metaphor for the Boy’s life?

He spends a lot of time on it and at the very top of it. There is a sense of danger with the set, of Boy striking out from it and exploring the city where he knows he is far more vulnerable.

Darcy Brown, Performer

• Discuss this comment by the performer
• Do you think that the set might be both a safe place and dangerous place for Boy?
• Why would he vulnerable in the city?

His major prop is a crate that he takes peddling. In this he has ‘life’s essentials’; his household items for sale that are within the crate. There are little props mentioned in the script – money, cigarettes, beers – but we are trying to eliminate using those real versions of those without going into mime territory.

Susie Dee, Director

• How did the character of Boy use the crate in the production?
• How did he use the objects within it?
• What is meant by ‘life’s essentials’? What might this term be a metaphor for?
Lighting

Analyze how the lighting reflected TIME and how it may have constructed TIME

- Analyse how the lighting created an abstract rather than a literal world
- How did lighting create mood, tone, and atmosphere?
- What particular LIGHTING STATES do you recall that really struck you? Why?
- Did certain states complement dramatic or urgent moments in the story?
- How was lighting used during changes in time or location?
- Did the lighting reflect or assist in constructing Boy’s mind?
- Analyse and evaluate how lighting contributed to the non-naturalistic aspects of the production.
Andy Turner, the lighting designer, has had about 12-15 freestanding billboard light stands built. They represent aspects of the city, suggesting height, and generating strong shadow effect.

Susie Dee, Director

- Some of the creative team believe that the freestanding billboard lights are observers of Boy’s life, staring at him from the ground and placing a forensic lens on his life
- Would you agree with this?
- Discuss the specific effect of the billboard lights in creating the world of the play
- How did the choice of lights enable shadow to be amplified?
- How does the placement of the lights construct the performance space for the Boy?
- How does the placement of the lights construct an actor/audience relationship?

Costume

Describe and discuss the costume worn by the performer to play Boy.

- How would you describe the colour palette? How would you describe its aesthetic?
- Is the costume functional?
- Are there particular costumes that you feel belong to certain social groups or sub-cultures?
- Did Boy dress like a ‘young offender’?
- Would you say that the costumes established a ‘type’?
- Would you describe the costume as naturalistic or non-naturalistic?
- Can aspects of naturalism sit beside or within non-naturalism?
Sound and Composition

There are two parts to the sound and composition; Kelly Ryall has created a sound design that is heard at various points within the performance, to underscore and to evoke; Bec Matthews uses a drum kit with various drumsticks, cymbals, chimes, a glockenspiel, and a bronze bowl. Sometimes the percussion accompanies the action, sometimes it introduces, sometimes it cues, sometimes it responds to the performer and the moment in the story.

- Discuss and analyse the use of percussion and sound in the performance
- What stood out for you? Why?
- Were there repetitive motifs or sounds that you recall?
- Select some examples that you can record and analyse - you may like to return to your plot overview of the production or the script and make some notes
- When were there moments of silence? Did these stand out? Why?
- How did the sound and composition contribute to the non-naturalism in the performance?

Theatrical Conventions

As a class discuss the following theatrical conventions and their presence (or absence) in the production

- Episodes
- Pathos
- Stillness and silence
- Transformation of place
- Compressed/accelerated/flashback time
- Heightened language
- Stylized movement/dance

Discuss, analyse and evaluate these and other theatrical conventions present in Peddling.

Darcy Brown in Peddling. Photo by Jeff Busby.
Dramatic Elements

Discuss, analyse and evaluate how each of the following dramatic elements were present in *Peddling* and how they may have been manipulated through the use of expressive skills, performance skills, direction and stagecraft.

- Climax – when, for whom, was there more than one?
- Contrast – between characters, worlds within the play, scenes
- Conflict – inner conflict, inter conflict, meta conflict (against the world)
- Tension – dramatic, comic, tragic
- Timing – real, compressed, disjointed, flashback
- Focus – for the characters, for the actor, for the audience
- Mood – establishment of, juxtaposition
- Rhythm – in language, in structure, within scenes
- Sound – affect, music, composition, percussion
- Space – actor/audience relationship, establishment of, endowment of
- Symbol – word, gesture, stagecraft, sound

Consider the following two elements in the performance:

- The case study file box
- The song: *I am the Lord of the Dance*
- The firework
  - What did they represent in the production?

Themes and Ideas in the Play

The creative team has spoken about the following themes and ideas as being present in the production: *Identity, isolation, choice, family, class systems, communication and miscommunication, the threshold of adulthood, responsibility, hope, possibility and equity.*

- How were these themes and ideas explored in the play? Find some specific examples
- Which themes or ideas do you feel were the most prominent? Why?
- What other ideas and themes do you think are present?
Interview with the Cast and Creative Team

The following interview with the creative team offers considerable insights into the interpretation of the script and the staging of the play, particularly for VCE Drama.

In conversation with...

- Darcy Brown – Boy
- Bec Matthews – Live musician and percussionist
- Susie Dee – Director
- Karen Berger – Directorial secondment

What is the world of Peddling? Where is Boy? Where is the audience going to be taken?

Darcy: The world of Peddling is interesting because on the one hand you are in an alien landscape of London but also the world of the play is inside Boy’s head. It is that wonderful thing about the space inside one’s head being larger than the space that surrounds you.

We were talking the other day and Kelly Ryall, the composer, said something about the dream sequence and how it feels that the more bound and trapped that Boy becomes, the larger his head space becomes, the more expansive, fantastical and ambitious his mind becomes.

The way we are playing with the world and the way that Marg Horwell has designed the set is that it is suggestive of a number of different locations – a ramp, a treadmill, a road.

I think you alluded to this in Part A of the notes, that the world of the play suggests Boy needs to keep moving, keep swimming lest he falls off or he drowns.

It could also be a bridge or a tunnel or something ominous leering out of a misty, murky landscape.

So we are trying to evoke a somewhat gritty setting but also allow it to have a lyrical, magical quality in keeping with much of the language of the play.

Are there triggers in the language that take you to different points in that world?

Darcy: Absolutely. The most obvious are ‘the scenes’ where Boy is overtly interacting with other characters and the language is more structured and conversations, as opposed to the moments where he is in monologue and the language is more poetic, often fractured and sometimes extremely minimal.

You may get a single word on a line but what does that single word mean? Is it a breath, a discombobulation, a thought?

There is a wonderful scene in the latter part of the play where suddenly the margins on the page of the script seem to disappear and the lines are written like steps.

You get a wonderful indication of a very nightmarish location but also the dislocation and distilling that is happening inside Boy’s mind. For now I am exploring the clues in the text and not just painting stuff on top of the writing.

So, Darcy, is it about finding an internal logic to the language of this world?

Darcy: Absolutely. It must be clear to me what it means. It is a very unusual work with repeating motifs and I need to bring an understanding to that so I can gift that to an audience.
Bec, what is your role in the world of Peddling and of the Boy?

Bec: The way it is evolving at present is that the music (and occasional sound effects indicated in the script) is reflecting Boy’s mind. We are still teasing out what the final effect and approach will be but essentially it will reflect Boy’s internal world. At the moment we are working on points where we interact and determining whether we maintain that or not.

We don’t want to interfere with the story but rather want to enhance it. The text is so rhythmic but we aren’t necessarily following that rhythm. There are drums and a sonic and tonal world that indicates certain characters, the Boss Man for example. There will be a sound that indicates him. I know in earlier discussion about the piece we mentioned buckets and found objects as instruments, but we have moved away from that.

Initially we thought the percussion may be part of the city sound but now that we are using it to get inside Boy’s mind the qualities of the drumming become more important than using trash percussion.

In terms of the additional characters that populate this world, how will they be represented or realised?

Susie: Darcy is of course playing Boy but is also creating the presence of other characters, achieved very simply, just through shift and change of voice.

We were conscious of not wanting to introduce new ‘characters’ or ‘caricatures’ because we are treating the play as a dream that unfolds in Boy’s head as he tracks what happens in the last four days.

We are treading a fine line between Boy imagining the other characters, slightly taking on their persona but they are not fully realised.

We get a hint of them and Darcy quite viscerally imagines them BUT what they mean to him, not ‘I am now going to fully embody this character’.

In this world are you using any props or costume to assist?

Susie: We are trying to simplify as much as possible. His major prop is an orange crate that he takes peddling. In this he has ‘life’s essentials’, his household items for sale that are within the crate. There are little props mentioned in the script – money, cigarettes, beers – but we are trying to eliminate using those real versions of those without going into mime territory.

Instead we are using simple gestural territory and hoping the audience will go with those conventions and the same with the set.

There are no set changes instead there is a single sculptural central piece which alludes to many places and also works on a metaphoric level. It could be the Big Dipper of life, it could be a skate ramp, or it could be something that is sinking.

The other element we are working with is lighting. Hopefully the set will enable a range of lighting features and states as it has hollow and see through components. Andy Turner, the lighting designer, has had about 12-15 free-standing bill board lights purposefully built for the show. They represent aspects of the city, suggesting height, and generating strong shadow effect.
How does time work in the world of Peddling? How long are we in the world of Boy?

Susie: We did track the timeline of the play and it runs over four days.

Darcy: The play begins with Boy waking up and wondering how he got where he is. That question reverberates through the entire play as he attempts to answer it.

We jump back ‘three yesterdays’ ago’ as it says in the second scene. So we go to the start of day one and we travel through to the start of day four.

In the final scenes Boy traverses seventeen miles and six hours of walking but represented with only a small amount of text.

He is constantly moving through London to potentially find his mother. It is elliptical as well in that suddenly you lose time within yourself and keep wondering how you got here.

He is in Hendon and then in Bishop’s Avenue or found himself at a newsagent somewhere or Hampstead Heath. These take on mythic proportions in his mind as he ranges around London.

Bec: There is one day where there is the tiniest bit of text and nothing happens. All that walking is happening predominantly over a few hours.

It is a good challenge to consider how time can work in a theatrical world. Whether an audience feels comfortable with time not being clearly indicated and comfortable that ambiguity and the uncertainty of it. There is a level of discomfort around it that is exciting, would you agree?

Darcy: Absolutely. The uncertainty is important. Everyone will come to the play with an individual experience and hopefully have an individual experience and not be afraid to embrace the contradictions within the time structure.

Even in Shakespeare, if you try and break down the logic of time it doesn’t always make sense or come together.

My notes say that Boy travels 38 miles and spends 12.8 hours on foot and that is across two days. The other two days he is in a carpark.

Karen, observing within the room, would you talk about how Darcy is physically engaging with the set and the space?

Karen: It is a very physical engagement and he has been working with a physiotherapist to determine what he will need strength and stamina wise. He has been doing a rigorous warmup each day. The set structure offers great opportunities – over, under, jumping, climbing, hanging off. As I watch I’ve become conscious of the drumming and how it is supporting the physicality of the show.

Bec: We have eye contact much of the time. Sometimes for technical reasons I have to look at what I am doing and there is one scene where I am actively not looking at him. We are currently playing with choices about where and when I need to look but predominantly I have to stay connected and I stay in a fixed position.

Susie: The performance is highly physical, visceral, emotionally charged, and very non-naturalistic,
**Does the Boy ever leave the set structure?**

**Darcy:** For two weeks we have been playing mainly on the structure but are beginning to consider how he might leave it. He spends a lot of time on it and at the very top of it. There is a sense of danger with the set, of Boy striking out from it and exploring the city where he knows he is far more vulnerable.

The great thing about being in the same space as Bec, knowing that it changes from rehearsal to rehearsal, and hopefully within the final performance there will be slight shifts depending on the audience that day. I also see the drum kit as being a great motivator so that if I am spending too long on a moment it will jerk me back to the story and stop me from over indulging.

**Could we talk about the language of Peddling? It is a British play. Are you using accent and how important is that?**

**Susie:** We are using accent. The play is set in London and it is written by a young English writer and when he wrote it he had a clear vision of the streets. We have to honour that I feel.

I did consider an interpretation and losing the accent but the language didn’t feel right. Even the concept of ‘peddling’, the concept of going house to house and door to door selling your wares, that exists a lot more in the UK and not as common here in Australia.

So yes to an accent and we have a dialect coach to assist with the South London accent.

**Darcy:** Susie and I touched base prior to rehearsal and something that was a relief to learn was we were going with the dialect.

Reading the script makes you want to go in that direction anyway so to leave the accent aside I think would be a case of constantly fighting the text. It is exciting for me as it offers another way into the world of the character and as an actor it frees you, you aren’t stuck within your own voice and are less precious about it.

**What are the ideas that Peddling explores? What does it say and how does it say it?**

**Bec:** Isolation is a key idea and the Boy is physically isolated and socially isolated.

**Susie:** Identity is an important idea in the play. Who am I and where do I belong? The Boy is alone and some of the play concerns his journey to find out who he is and who he matters to, and a door opens with the appearance of the woman from his past.

Most of us pretty much know our own backstory – not everyone – but most people. For this young man there are memories that have sat there from many years ago so to have the possibility of filling some gaps is both daunting and exhilarating I would say.

**Darcy:** Choice. The choices we make and the choices that are made for you that you have no agency over whatsoever. It wasn’t my choice that I would be living this life and not knowing where I have come from.

That must be extraordinarily frustrating and angering that through no fault of your own you find yourself in this situation and you don’t have the footholds.

**Darcy:** Yes, your own decisions and choices do influence your path in life, but to have had many of them deemed by fate or circumstance, that’s what Boy has to deal with.
Susie: I think it is about class as well. The majority of the play concerns a working class boy in North London surrounded by prestigious suburbs and wealth. He’s up against these wealthy people who slam the door in his face.

Darcy: Communication. Even when the Boy meets people he is often on a completely different communicative wavelength, being rejected and dismissed.

Bec: Stepping into adulthood, being on that threshold. You know when you’re a teenager it’s everyone else’s fault.

There’s some lines in the play ‘I’m still a boy. I ain’t a man, not just yet’. Then he has the opportunity to take some action when he receives some important information. I think by the end he just steps over that line into adulthood.

Karen: Everything’s gotta start somewhere – that’s a repetitive line in the play and it takes on different meanings throughout.

Do you think there is a sense of hope at the end?

Darcy: Yes. I am not sure to the degree but it ends on a question and a sense of something better. I mean, he may have the wrong house, or the mother may not live there anymore or she may reject him and he may be unable to act to save that. But even if that was the beyond story there is a sense that he would be able to keep going.

Bec: I think the word is possibility rather than hope.
Sample Test Questions

USE THE PERFORMANCE OF PEDDLING TO WRITE RESPONSES TO THE FOLLOWING:

a. Discuss how one actor used facial expression to portray a character in the performance of Peddling. 3 marks
b. Explain how one area of stagecraft was applied to convey a theme in the performance of Peddling. 3 marks
c. Analyse how the actor–audience relationship was manipulated in the performance of Peddling. 3 marks
d. Evaluate how mood and transformation of place were manipulated in the performance of Peddling. 3 marks.

OR

a. Discuss how the actor used one expressive skill to represent a character in the performance of Peddling 3 marks
b. Explain how one area of stagecraft was applied as a symbol in the performance of Peddling. 3 marks
c. Analyse and evaluate how space and transformation of time were used in the performance of Peddling 3 marks

Darcy Brown in Peddling. Photo by Jeff Busby.
Tasmanian Drama and Theatre Production Curricula

You can view the Tasmanian Drama and Theatre Production Curricula here: https://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/year11-12-course-information-CREATIVE-ARTS-PERFORMING.pdf

This resource for MTC Education’s *Peddling* examine solo performance, performance or theatre styles, stagecraft, theatrical conventions, drama elements, direction, actor/audience relationship, sound design, composition, lighting design, acting, costume, set design, and properties. **How does the Melbourne Theatre Company production of *Peddling* address the following units of study?**

Read the resources and relate the analysis questions to:

**TECHNICAL THEATRE PRODUCTION 2 SDT215115**

You will learn about:
- Lighting and sound
- Set and properties
- Costume and theatrical make-up
- Stage management
- Publicity and front of house responsibilities.

You do this by studying:
- Lighting and audio operations
- Set design, construction and dressing and properties
- The making and keeping of costumes and sets
- Aspects of theatre production and event management.

Learning activities may include:
- The preparation for, and presentation of, live theatrical production and events
- Set painting and decoration
- Costuming and wardrobe maintenance
- Rigging and operation of lighting
- Setting up and running audio equipment, selecting and developing sound effects and music
- Publicity and marketing
- Stage managing shows
- Attending and writing reports on live theatre performances
- Reflecting on your work in a production team
**DRAMA 3 SDD315115**

You will learn about:
- Creating characters from scripts
- Vocal techniques
- Presenting solo and ensemble performances
- Live theatre
- Theatrical genres.

You do this by studying:
- Theatre reviewing
- Improvisation
- Acting skills and techniques
- Interpretation of text

Learning activities may include:
- Solo and ensemble work
- Public performances
- Attending theatre performances and writing reviews
- Reflective and analytical writing
- Research assignments
- Practical and written external exams.

**THEATRE PERFORMANCE 3 SDP315115**

You will learn about:
- Acting skills
- Ensemble and solo performance
- Working as a theatre company
- Vocal techniques
- Improvisation
- Performing to an audience
- The history of theatre.

You do this by studying:
- Live performances
- Theatre genres
- Monologues
- Improvisation
- Interpretation of text.

Learning activities may include:
- Reflective writing (internally and externally assessed)
- Practical class work
- Public performances
- Research assignments
- A practical external exam
CERTIFICATE II IN LIVE PRODUCTION AND SERVICES CUA20213

You will learn about:

- Basic audio, lighting, staging, theming and various elements of production
- The interaction between performers, technicians and business
- Providing technical support to performers, working as part of an in-house production team with industry conventions and practices.

You do this by studying:

- Design and operation – audio, lighting, vision system
- Stage management
- Front of house and box office operation
- Construction – including property building, set building, painting, rigging and fly tower areas
- Working within a range of contemporary art forms including music, dance, theatre and conferences.

Darcy Brown in Peddling. Photo by Jeff Busby.
**Peddling Specific Focus**

In addition to the content in the current resources, the following additional questions may be helpful:

**Stage management (SM) and Publicity**

For those students taking on SM roles or Publicity consider the following:

**Stage Management**

- What OH&S issues do you think an SM may need to consider with regard to the set design for this production?
- What do you think would be some key CUES you may need to write on the prompt script?
- How would you pre-set this show?
- What would the SM need to do at the end of the show in order to prepare for the next performance?
- What items are brought on stage during the performance? What is the SM’s role with regard to these?

**Publicity**

Explore the MTC website for marketing and media publicity approaches to this production.

- Comment on the poster design and how you feel it represents the play
- What would you tweet in order to advertise the production?
- Which creative team members do you think the media might like to chat to prior to the production opening? During the season?
- How would you advertise this show on Facebook?
- If the show wasn’t selling well, what type of publicity campaign could you devise?

Darcy Brown in *Peddling*. Photo by Jeff Busby.
Peddling
by Harry Melling

21 Apr – 6 May
Southbank Theatre
The Lawler

BOOK NOW AT THE BOX OFFICE
Melbourne Theatre Company

22 March

Thrilled to have the Peddling team in the building, buzzing with excitement after some of their Green Room Awards Association wins last night!


Another night, another opening! Best wishes to the #mtcPeddling team for tonight's opening. 😊

MTC Student Hub

28 April at 14:27

It's been great to share the Australian premiere of Peddling with Melbourne and hearing responses from both audiences and critics, including this five-star review from Limelight Magazine! If you've seen the show, we'd love to hear your thoughts.

★★★★★ for Peddling

A confronting but deeply expressive study of life on the lowest rungs of the socio-economic ladder.

LIMELIGHTMAGAZINE.COM.AU

MTC Education

mtc.com.au/education