

Candidate 6 evidence

Drama Advanced Higher Resource Sheet	
Candidate Name	Scottish Candidate Number
Question Selected	Question 2: 'Analyse the extent to which a practitioner successfully reimagined a play to make it relevant to their contemporary audience.'
✓	<p>IYF themes story life 'not stage, not much room for people to look away, "Look at this. Watch this. This is still happening in your city today. This story needs to be told' iyf connects to story. Too gimmicky?</p> <p>Unique, contrasts pandemic. Avenue. 'set up like a 'hit' of drugs, starts off great, fun, exhilarating but ultimately those highs must have a low, and this show really explores both of those extremities.' Audience in rave involved, feel high. Loved intimacy</p> <p>"In yer face theater was defined by Aleks Sierz as 'blatantly aggressive or provocative, impossible to ignore or avoid" Screams so loud audience disconnected. 'Main wanted to make trainspotting immersive, hide ugliness of addiction' Naked + vulnerable, darker tones ignored, not in Harrys.</p> <p>- Social media. Comfort zone Famous scene, entertaining yet ineffective. Raiding. frantiness vulnerability ignored theme drug control 'it's immersive because I genuinely believe it helps move the story along.' Normally agree. Current references</p> <p>✓ Tp. Eye contact responsible. Piercing screams. Look at audience 'im cooking' 'you can't just pause it or fold a page and put it down for another day; you must watch it until the bitter end.'</p> <p>exposed to difficult scenes 'If you have to cry or turn away from particular scenes then you do. But the scenes stay in.' Tommy spiral, strobe, dragging, soiled. No innocence. Animal. End-on no. Greg Tommy so close feel pain, Harry distance. Trapped. responsible.</p> <p>Thought provoking. Addiction poverty. Connect story characters Post pandemic. Lost impact fail acknowledge vulnerable Feel not see</p>
Word count:	250

Question 2.

①

'Trainspotting Live: The Immersive Experience' is a thought provoking play that is reimagined from Harry Gibson's 2009 play. With its initial staging taking place in 2016, 'In yer face Theater' led by Director Greg Esplin reinvented Gibson's original play to be immersive. ~~Then~~ Using ~~the~~ 'In yer face theater' was highly effective as it brought the story ~~to life~~ and its key themes to life. Greg Esplin ~~says~~ ^{states} the importance of reinventing the ^{play} to be immersive, 'because its not on stage, there is not much room for people to look away. We are saying "look at this. watch this. This is still happening in your city today. This story needs to be told." This highlights how the immersive nature of the play connects to the story as it makes the audience feel ~~more~~ part of it. However, the comedic aspect of reinventing the play to make it immersive sometimes loses impact as it overlooks serious themes. Is the immersive reinvention ineffective in portraying the actual story? ~~and is it?~~ ~~only good for a fun~~

*especially

Greg Esplin's ~~the~~ immersive reinvention of the play creates a unique viewing experience for the audience, especially post pandemic. Having actors so close to an audience who are used to social distancing ~~through~~ the use of avenue staging creates a striking experience.

One ~~scene~~^{time} where this was particularly true was, on entrance to the theater the audience were overwhelmed with flashing lights, smoke machines, ~~and~~ pounding music. Actors came over to audience members and, in role, escorted them to their seats. Whilst escorting them they swore at them, poured their drinks on them, hugged and put their arms around them, or even pulled unsuspecting members into centre stage to dance with them.

(2) For audience members who tried to avoid the commotion ~~they~~ and sat down quickly, they were targeted. One memorable example was one of the female actors went up to a man, lifted her top and flashed her breasts in his face.

Greg Esplins decision to have this scene so immersive ~~and~~ was hugely successful, especially in achieving Greg's aim for this scene to represent drug taking. He says "It's set up like a 'hit' of drugs, it starts off great, fun & exhilarating but ultimately those highs must have a low, and this show really explores both of those extremities. By ~~having~~ the audience take part in the rave it was highly successful in making them feel 'high'. ~~These~~ scenes were so overwhelmed by ~~such~~ an unexpected start, and felt so caught up in the experience I forgot where I was. I thought the immersive nature was

* reinventing the scene and
 * I found my

highly effective in this scene as the intimacy made it feel real.

Greg Esplins decision to reinvent the play and make it immersive using 'In yer face Theater' style provided a striking, almost aggressive performance which was highly successful in portraying strong themes such as addiction. 'In yer face theater' was defined by Alek siers as 'blatantly aggressive or provocative, and impossible to ignore or avoid.' This is especially true in the scene after the rave, where Renton wakes up on a broken mattress on the floor covered in a blanket of his own shit and vomit from the night before. ~~He sits up~~ He takes the blanket off to reveal he is completely naked, and sits there hunched over looking scared. Gregs decision to use in yer face theater style and have him completely naked is effective as it portrays Renton in a weak, vulnerable light which makes the audience feel sympathy for him. However, as the scene progresses the use of immersive theater becomes less effective. He gets up with the blanket and runs straight into the audience, covering a few poor members in 'shit' and 'vomit'. He then begins to bend over in front of audience members so they are looking straight

*This was not seen in Harry Gibsons version, where Renton had a towel round his waist "appeared" "vulnerable"

up his bum. During this scene the audience are laughing and screaming and shuffling out of his way. The screams were so loud it completely drowned out Renton's dialogue, meaning many audience members disconnected from the story. Greg Esplin states why he wanted the performance to be immersive 'The main reason I wanted to make train spotting immersive is because end on staging tends to hide the ugliness of addiction.' Whilst I understand his intentions to try and achieve this during the scene by making the audience feel as gross as Renton does, I think it was ineffective in portraying the fear and vulnerability that comes with addiction.

Modern day audiences who have entertainment at any moment with the click of a button on social media need more to capture their attention. Greg Esplin's reinvention to make the play immersive pushes the audience out of their comfort ~~zone~~ zone because there is no ~~real~~ barrier between the audience and characters. Greg Esplin's reinvention of the famous toilet scene was especially effective at achieving this. ~~Renton's decision to~~ ~~after~~ Renton after trying to get clean, Renton relapses and purchases

opium pills that he has to "shove up his arse" in order for them to work. He stands naked in the middle of the stage and bends over to insert it. However, ~~his~~ he suddenly needs to ~~start~~ go to the toilet, so ~~climbers~~ through the audience to a toilet in the middle of two poor audience members and has extreme diarrhoea. He then proceeds to frantically raid through the toilet to find the pills that he just shot out, throwing ~~dirty~~ toilet water on audience members and chucking used condoms around.

⑤ The audience went crazy during this scene, getting up and moving away from the toilet, screaming, laughing and even throwing the condoms around. Greg's decision to make this scene immersive may have been entertaining, but it was ineffective in portraying a scene that ~~was~~ ^{should have been} dark and disturbing.

The franticness of Renton's raiding through the toilet shows the theme of drugs having so much control over your life, yet this was ignored by the audience who were too busy laughing. Greg says 'The play is immersive as I genuinely believe it helps move the story along' whilst in many scenes I agree with this, I believe his intentions to keep the play dynamic hindered

his ~~pen~~ play as it meant the story was lost.

However, ~~the~~ Gregs decision to insert current references about the bin strikes when talking to audience members was effective as it reminded the audience of how this play isn't just a story, but is still happening right now.

⑥ Esplins immersive reinvention of this play meant that the audience were so close to the characters that they felt a lot of emotional connection to them. ~~Overhead~~ The key turning point in the play which captured audiences emotions was when Allison and sick boys baby dies. All characters were silent when Allison entered the scene, breaking the silence with her piercing screams. She sat rocking back and forth, clutching the corpse of her dead baby. She frequently looked up and made eye contact with the audience, continuing to cry. This was very powerful as it made the audience feel extreme sympathy as she addressed them directly, making them feel that they need to help her. Renton walks to the front of a group of audience members looking heartbroken and makes eye contact with them when he says 'im cooking'

* this intense vulnerability and responsibility is not something that can be achieved in a 15 minutes version, which uses end on staging.

This highlights the vulnerability of the characters to the audience and makes them feel responsible to help them and stop them taking drugs. Greg Espin ~~highlights~~ mentions the importance of having the play be immersive. He says, 'you can't just pause it or fold a page and put it down for another day: you must watch it to the bitter end.' His decision to have this scene be immersive and so vulnerable with the audience is highly effective. ~~Therefore~~ I remember feeling incredibly uncomfortable and so desperate to go to the characters and comfort them. This scene really made me think about the detrimental effects poverty and drugs can have on someone, which was highly moving.

(The immersive nature of ~~the~~ Espin's reinvented play means the audience are exposed to difficult scenes with no escape.

A key scene where this happens is at the end of the play, where Tommy's ~~own~~ spiral after becoming addicted to drugs is shown. At the beginning of the play, Tommy is shown to be a happy, innocent character, this greatly contrasts the character in the final scenes. Tommy is left ^{he is} alone in a dark room, where he is hunched

completely naked.

over on a soiled mattress. He is shaking vigorously and rolls his eyes to the back of his head ~~as~~ like he is floating in and out of consciousness. He is frantically trying to find a vein to inject into, he struggles until he finally finds one on his groin.

The way he looks is almost animal like, which is incredibly hard for the audience to watch. Esplin talks about the importance of hard scenes in immersive theater 'if you have to cry or turn away then you do.

⑧ But the scenes stay in! This shows his belief about how important these harrowing scenes are to the rest of the story and performance. Having Tommy on a mattress so close to the audience makes the audience feel as if they are sitting in his room feeling the same pain he is. ~~Meaning~~ The immersive nature of this scene highly effective as Gregs decision to ~~make~~ have him be naked made him seem so vulnerable and alone, this is ~~highly~~ something that couldn't have been achieved in Gibsons original version, so the audience wouldn't have had the same emotional connection. I felt the immersive nature of this scene made me feel as if I was trapped with Tommy and understood his pain and fear. I had the

sudden urge to want to help him and anyone else in his situation, which shows how effective Gregs immersive reinvention was in portraying the harsh reality of important themes such as drugs and addiction.

Overall, Esplin's reimagined play of train spotting was incredibly powerful and thought provoking.

- (c) The immersive nature of the play ~~and~~ and close proximity between the audience and characters meant they were able to really connect to the story, characters and key themes of addiction and poverty. ~~The~~ ~~interest~~
- (a) In a world that has been so isolated from each other due to the pandemic, it is refreshing to be so close to each other and the characters ~~there~~ ~~there~~ in such a striking way.
- (c) There were moments of the play ~~where~~ where ~~there~~ the comedic nature of the ~~the~~ immersive play meant the story and its key themes lost impact as the immersive nature ~~failed~~ failed to acknowledge some vulnerable moments. However, there were many times where the immersive reinvention payed off, as if let the audience feel the emotions connected to the play, not just see them. Being exposed to such harrowing scenes was incredibly thought

* meant the audience

provoking, and left the audience thinking about the experience for a long time after leaving the theater. This shows that overall, Esplins decision to reinvent Harry Gibsons play and make it immersive was incredibly effective.

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