

**Collaborative Theatre Project
Student B (SL and HL)**

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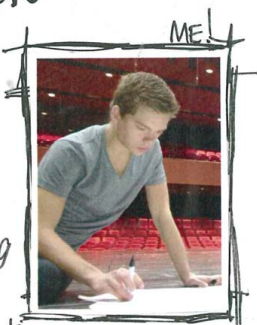
COLLABORATIVE THEATRE PROJECT PROCESS PORTFOLIO

MY PERSONAL CONTEXT

During the theatre course I have been inspired by some quite contrasting theatre forms and these have certainly contributed to the development of my 'personal context'. I am at my strongest when I approach theatre work from the perspective of the performer. I have participated in quite a few practical workshops and productions in the role of performer and these have had quite a considerable impact on me.

Workshops: Metamorphosis (Kafka/Berkoff 1969)

During a physical theatre workshop with the Theatre class I played the part of Gregor Samsa, the unfortunate individual who awakes one morning to find himself transformed into a gigantic insect.



Collaborative Theatre Project – Process portfolio

1. My personal context

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Workshops: Metamorphosis (Kafka/Berkoff 1969)

During a physical theatre workshop with the theatre class I played the part of Gregor Samsa, the unfortunate individual who awakes one morning to find himself transformed into a gigantic insect.

This bizarre and intensely physical play introduced me to the work of director and performer Steven Berkoff. Berkoff, who was heavily influenced by



Bertolt Brecht, Antonin Artaud and Jean-Louis Barrault (www.iainfisher.com). He trained at the Webber Douglas Academy in London, and later under the movement and mime guru Jacques Lecoq (www.wikipedia.org) in Paris.

MY EXPERIENCE OF BERKOFF'S PERFORMANCE STYLE

Berkoff's theatre provokes an audience by creating grotesque images of characters and by employing exaggerated mime, movement and gesture (Robert Cross, 2004). 'I found this particular style of theatre really exciting. While I enjoy creating a character and participating in 'realistic' drama, I am quite a physical and energetic person, and the demands of this script really pushed me as an actor. I certainly want to explore this aspect of performance even further in the collaborative theatre project.'

WORKSHOPS: TOTAL THEATRE

Another style of theatre, which links seamlessly to the work of Berkoff, is total theatre - an idea that all aspects of theatre (movement, text, music, visuals) are deemed equal. This work was led by our teacher, and at first involved each member of the group creating 'non-human' objects and images - so making letters, coat hangers, trees with our bodies, and then developing this concept even further into practical objects that can be moved or manipulated - linking group members together.



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This 'physical theatre' style was then taken a step further to metaphorical theatre, where we began to use our whole bodies and voices, together with technical theatre elements, to launch an assault on the senses of our audience. We reenacted a hurricane in this way, playing recorded soundtracks along with intense lighting and a movement sequence of frantic running, jumping and twisting along with screams of terror. This had a very strong impression on me and began to spark my interest in how an AUDIENCE can be engaged and challenged by theatre. (Artaud, The theatre and its double).

MY APPROACHES:

As a performer, I am interested in PHYSICAL performances which push my SKILLS and require strength, concentration and intensity. I enjoy using my voice in different ways and the challenge of creating sound effects and non-languages (as I had experimented during the totalTheater work).

OTHER THEATRE STYLES THAT INTEREST ME:

- Epic theatre: defined by clear description, choral work, and projection to provide COMMENTARY. Making an audience aware they are watching a PERFORMANCE. Particularly defined by BRECHT. (wikipedia.org).
- In-Yer-Face Theatre: "the kind of theatre that grabs the audience by the scruff of the neck and shakes it until it gets the message" (in-yer-face-theatre.com) Cutting edge drama that emerged in the UK in the 1990s.

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I was born in Sweden, and much of the traditional theatre in my home country is concerned with naturalistic plays by Ibsen and Chekhov. I personally find this style of theatre rather stale, and I have found the challenging and visceral nature of physical theatre extremely liberating!

This desire to go against naturalistic theatre led me to discover the work of professional collaborative theatre company, Gecko. This company, first formed in 2001, creates and tours its own brand of physical theatre both in the UK and internationally.



"With an expanding ensemble of international performers and makers, Gecko creates work through collaboration, experimentation and play." (geckotheatre.com).

The highly physical, and often surreal style of their performances made this company particularly noteworthy for me, especially as they have clearly been influenced by the work of Steven Berkoff and Lecoq. As Mermikides and Smart (2010) note in the chapter on Gecko in their book "Devising in progress" note:

"Gecko's work has been influenced by Lahav and Nedjari's work with the David Glass Ensemble. Along with Steven Berkoff, a longtime collaborator of Lahav and Nedjari, Glass trained under Lecoq - A major idea with the David Glass Ensemble that can be seen in Gecko's work is the importance of participatory activities." (165-166).

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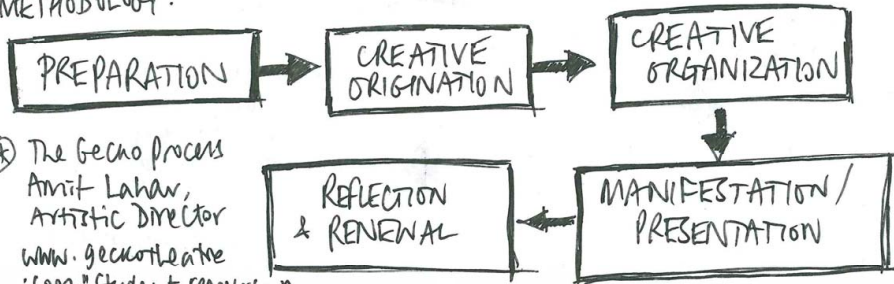
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This collaborative theatre project will, by its very nature, rely on PARTICIPATORY ACTIVITIES to ensure that the whole group have an input, role and sense of ownership of the finished piece. I am interested in the PROCESS that the Gecko Company, which is relatively small compared to other companies of the same style, undergoes to create their work.

"The process for all the shows I have made starts by allowing the initial thoughts, ideas and scenes, characters - whatever these might be - to emerge. The process can take a long time and you have to be patient" (The Gecko Process*)
 The David Glass Ensemble specialise in physical and visual theatre, making pieces that risk, experiment, innovate and celebrate. (www.britishcouncil.com/arts)

Gecko focuses on their personal experiences, relationships and emotional responses to the world for their inspiration.
 Gecko attempts to follow Glass' ideal methodology for creative development, which include five steps...
 ...As with most devised work companies, they never consider any of their productions to be completely finished.
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METHODOLOGY:



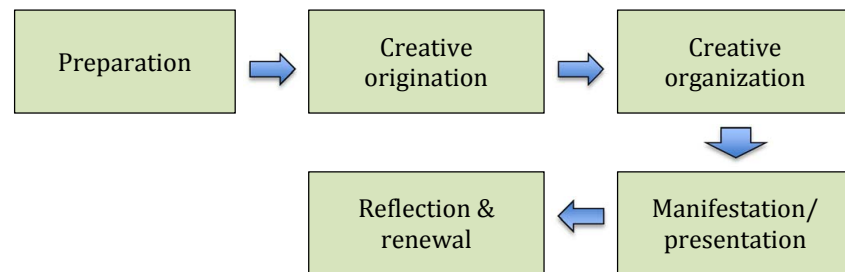
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Methodology:



Gecko's artistic director, Amit Lahav, clearly outlines the process of collaborative creation in the Gecko Student Resources, which are hosted on their website (gecko.com).

Because of the long process, everything is an influence in some way - so many things can impact on the process... we start with a blank process. (p.1)

It's not a conventional theatre process where somebody is in the rehearsal room with a script and then they add the lights. All the various elements happen together. (p.1)

... The main language is not words. Language comes from the same place as words movement; it is an emotional vehicle... it is visual language which interests me... (p.1) Although collaborative, Amit keeps a very clear hold on the final direction of the piece.

THE IDEA - the seed of the idea is the catalyst for new ideas and images, and this unfolds and develops.

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW IDEAS
New ideas and images are explored in reaction to this, music ideas arrive from physical discoveries; these stimulate more physical work. Early structural and design thoughts. Explosions of ideas here!

INVESTIGATING THE FIRST IDEA - This is tested out physically.

TESTING A DRAFT SEQUENCE
Putting together a run or sequence of ideas, possibly with some simple element of set. Giving a sense of what the 'world' might be

CREATING THE 'WORLD'
Final decisions about the world of the piece

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New ideas and images are explored in reaction to this, music ideas arrive from physical discoveries; these stimulate more physical work. Early structural and design thoughts. Explosions of ideas here!

Investigating the first idea - This is tested out physically

Testing a draft sequence
Putting together a run or sequence of ideas, possibly with some simple element of set. Giving a sense of what the "world" might be.

WORKING UP A DRAFT STORYBOARD
A 'flag in the sand' storyboard is created. Ideas placed next to each other. Testing the structure

FIRST DRAFT OF THE SHOW
Improvising, choreographing, rehearsing, creating transitions
The storyboard is redrafted continually

Creating the "world"
Final decisions about the world of the piece

Working up a draft storyboard
"flag in the sand" storyboard is created. Ideas placed next to each other. Testing the structure.

First draft of the show
Improvising, choreography, rehearsing, creating transitions. The storyboard is redrafted continually.

SECOND + THIRD DRAFTS lead to a model of the show. Never finished.

Second and third drafts lead to a model of the show. Never finished.

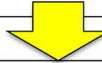
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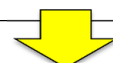
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THE FORMATION OF MY GROUP

In discussing the formation of our ensemble, I was very happy to identify other members of my class who were as excited about the PHYSICAL and SURREAL elements of performance as me, and who shared an idea of the POTENTIAL for this style of theatre to have an impact on an audience. For this collaborative project I will be working with:

- Me (Alex) → dancer, very good at movement would like to choreograph some sequences
- Carmen → very strong at mime, also interested in movement sequences. Working on sound effects or soundtracks to accompany any movement is also a strength.
- Ele → A good character actor. Not a lot of physical experience but very good with her voice. Excited by the non naturalistic features of the voice. Lots of experience in 'naturalistic' roles. Will help with fleshing out a little depth to roles.
- Alena → A good character actor. Not a lot of physical experience but very good with her voice. Excited by the non naturalistic features of the voice. Lots of experience in 'naturalistic' roles. Will help with fleshing out a little depth to roles.

We will be sharing the roles of directing, choreographing and blocking, but as we have such clear strengths we will be allocating responsibilities for specific sections to individuals to lead.

From the outset of this process, the group had immediate agreement that we wanted to create an INTENSE and ENGAGING piece of theatre that would resonate with our audience on a VISCERAL (with how they feel rather than how they think) level.



My group, mind mapping ideas

A very early possibility as a start-point for us was MENTAL ILLNESS. This theme is present in a lot of the work that inspires us - linked to Artaud, Sarah Kane and Berkoff, but we felt this was too broad. In narrowing down the theme into categories, Ele suggested INSOMNIA. This idea slowly took hold until we all felt secure - this was our starting point.

The formation of my group

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A very early possibility as a start point for us was mental illness. This theme is present in a lot of the work that inspires us - linked to Artaud, Sarah Kane and Berkoff, but we felt this was too broad. In narrowing down the theme into categories, Ele suggested insomnia. This idea slowly took hold and we all felt secure - this was our starting point.

EXPLORATION OF THE STARTING POINT: INSOMNIA



"WHEN YOU HAVE INSOMNIA YOU'RE NEVER REALLY ASLEEP... AND YOU'RE NEVER REALLY AWAKE."

NOTHING'S REAL. EVERYTHING'S FAR AWAY. EVERYTHING'S A COPY OF A COPY OF A COPY."

(Fight Club, Chuck Palahniuk, 1999)

We looked at quite a few health websites which told us most people suffer from insomnia at some point in their lives. 1 in 3 people have bouts of insomnia regularly (www.nhs.co.uk) (sleep.com). LIFESTYLE IS a big influencer on sleep patterns. 'Insomnia' caught our imaginations as a starting point because of the many different reasons someone might have for developing insomnia or be experiencing the symptoms, and the potential these have for being INTENSE and ENGAGING for an audience.

Possible causes of insomnia.

STRESS WORK MONEY SEX RELATIONSHIPS IDENTITY FAMILY
 DEPRESSION ADDICTION ILLNESS EXAMS/STUDY RESPONSIBILITY DRUGS
 FEAR TECHNOLOGY ISOLATION UNEMPLOYMENT LACK OF PURPOSE ABUSE
 TROUBLED PAST FOOD HAUNTED TEDIOUS LIFE UNWANTED PREGNANCY

From our mind map we underlined the causes which really interested us. Next we explored possible symptoms, and this is where our ideas for practical explorations, characters and scenes really lit up:

- | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| - tiredness | - twitching | - bags under eyes | - crying |
| - yawning | - blurry vision | - short attention span | - shaking |
| - apprehension | - changed appetite | - clumsiness | - shouting |
| - anxiety | - sweating | - listlessness | - groaning |
| - aching | - restlessness | - addiction to coffee | - fighting |
| - tension | - slurred speech | - addiction to gaming | - self harm |

Exploration of the starting point: Insomnia

"When you have insomnia you're never really asleep... and you're never really awake. Nothing's real. Everything's far away. Everything's a copy of a copy of a copy" (Fight Club, Chuck Palahniuk, 1999).

We looked at quite a few health websites which told us most people suffer from insomnia at some point in their lives. One in three people have bouts of insomnia regularly (sources: <http://www.nhs.uk/>, <http://www.sleep.com>). Lifestyle is a big influencer on sleep patterns. "Insomnia" caught our imaginations as a starting point because of the many different reasons someone might have for developing insomnia or be experiencing the symptoms, and the potential these have for being intense and engaging for an audience.

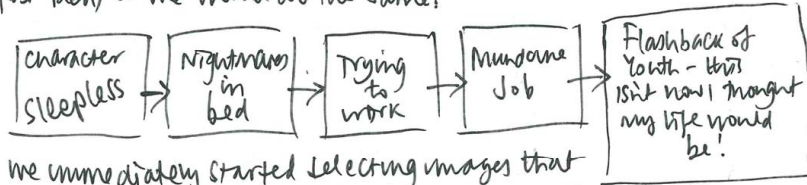
Possible causes of Insomnia

Stress Work Money Sex Relationships Identity Family
 Depression Addiction Illness Exams/study Responsibility
 Drugs Fear Technology Isolation Unemployment
 Lack of purpose Abuse Troubled past Food Haunted
 Tedious life Unwanted pregnancy

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| • Apprehension | • Changed appetite | • Clumsiness | • Shouting |
| • Anxiety | • Sweating | • Listlessness | • Groaning |
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once we had shared our research on the approaches of professional companies who collaboratively create original theatre, we unanimously agreed that the most effective way of kicking off the process was to get practical as soon as possible. Gecko Theatre begin by physically exploring the first idea, so we would do the same!



We immediately started selecting images that came to mind from looking at our mind maps. We strung a very short sequence together and improvised around this (as illustrated above).



We experimented with white sheets - using these not only to cover me (playing the role of a character tossing and turning in bed) but also to cover others in the group who were using their bodies to provide the outline of a bed.

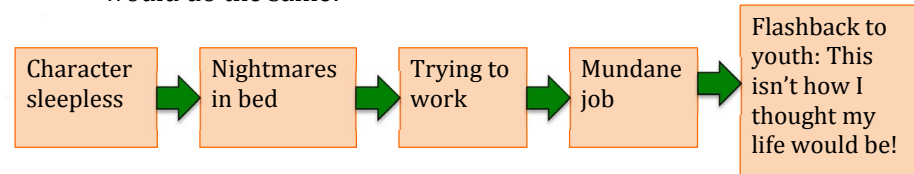
PRACTICAL + PHYSICAL EXPLORATIONS



Very early on in the process we created a nice moment where I was writhing trying to get to sleep while the rest of the group - hidden from view - provided a nocturnal soundscape, creating sound effects of dripping taps, ticking clocks, muffled speech and ominous noises. This would certainly be something to return to.

Practical and Physical Explorations

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From these early experiments we were able to begin to piece together a rough structure to our piece in the form of a narrative. We all realized from our research that ALL collaborative creators of theatre make significant alterations and additions to the work during the process, but it was essential to commit to a DRAFT structure against which we would be able to construct our INSOMNIA world. Looking back at my theatre journal we wanted our piece to present the following:

OUR CONCEPT : One character - Brian (to be played by me)
 An ensemble - to play all other people in the 'insomnia world' and to physically create the objects and environments. (to be played by the 3 girls).

BRIAN IS overworked depressed with the tedious life he has. Life isn't the glossy magazine he predicted it would be!

Brian can't sleep. He is plagued by visions
 Brian is failing to keep on top of things at work. Pressure is stacking up. He hasn't got the resources to cope.
 The depression at work is making the sleeping pattern even worse

To cope with this, Brian takes SLEEPING PILLS

SPIRAL OUT OF CONTROL

These have strong adverse effects - the nightmares become more SURREAL and vivid.

Throughout this we see ineffective leaders, medical practitioners and colleagues all looking out for themselves. Brian is a victim of this, but takes the blame. Very similar to Berkoff's "The Trial" (adapted from Kafka).

↳ Brian eventually receives 'medication' to sedate him and becomes a clone of the others who inhabit his world - machine-like, exhausted and emotionless - The reality of 21st century life!

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 Brian can't sleep. He is plagued by visions.
 Brian is failing to keep on top of things at work. Pressure is stacking up. He hasn't got the resources to cope.
 The depression at work is making the sleeping pattern even worse.
 To cope with this Brian takes sleeping pills.
 These have strong adverse effects - the nightmares become more surreal and vivid.
 Brian eventually receives "medication" to sedate him and becomes a clone of the others who inhabit his world - machine-like, exhausted and emotionless - the reality of 21st century life!

Throughout this we see ineffective leaders, medical practitioners and colleagues, all looking out for themselves. Brian is a victim of this, but takes the blame. Very similar to Berkoff's "The Trial" (Adapted from Kafka's "The trial", 1914)

TARGET AUDIENCE

The ideal audience for our piece would be school leavers and young adults.

The hard-hitting 'life might not be all that you are expecting it to be' message and themes of identity, stress and lack of sense of purpose would hopefully resonate with this age group.

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- To create a piece of intense and engaging theatre which challenges the audience through the use of highly physical and stylized performance techniques.
- To push ourselves as actors to the limits, to fully use our bodies and voices to engage the audience in a slick performance.

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THE COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR PIECE

We mutually agreed that our piece should centre around the central character of 'Brian' very early on in the process, and that decision seemed to work well. Alena had the idea that Brian's insomnia should be as a result of having done everything "right" in life, and yet still feeling he has a lack of fulfillment. This straight-A student had secured a good job as an accountant but the grind and stress of life was sapping him of every ounce of enthusiasm or hope for escaping the drudgery of a 9-5 office job!

We experimented with ways of illustrating a busy and demanding office environment with only 4 actors, which was quite a demanding task!

The collaborative development of our piece

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We experimented with ways of illustrating a busy and demanding office environment with only four actors, which was quite a demanding task.

Although Carmen took overall responsibility for the direction of the office scene, it was important for us to COLLABORATE and feel able to make suggestions or recommend alterations to each scene. This balance would be essential throughout the process. Carmen wanted us all to feel comfortable using our bodies in each scene, and for us to be relaxed when making contact with each other. She led a few exercises to help us develop TRUST and to begin creating strong physical images. This early work certainly had a positive effect on the dynamic of the group and on our confidence to work PRACTICALLY and PHYSICALLY.



To begin the 'office scene' we wanted to have office workers sat down at desks, but certainly didn't want to clutter the performance space with any unnecessary items such as chairs or tables.

This linked particularly with our intention for the performance to be SLICK. We didn't want blackouts or set changes which would slow the pace of the piece. This wouldn't be helpful to make an engaging piece if the audience was constantly waiting for set changes. Physical theatre companies such as DV8 and Complicite rarely slow their work with blackouts or unnecessary set.



CREATING THE OFFICE

One of the creative ideas we had for the office was to have one person as the chair and desk, providing typing noises and office 'hub-bub' in the background. Another person then sits on their knees and mimes typing (using the fingers of the chair person as a keyboard) as I have shown in my sketch.

What I really loved about creating this scene was how quickly we all were able to add small details to the scene to make it even more clear: sequences of numbers, using the hand of the "chair" as a telephone receiver etc....

Although Carmen took overall responsibility for the direction of the office scene, it was very important for us to collaborate and feel able to make suggestions or recommend alterations to each scene. This balance would be essential throughout the process. Carmen wanted us all to feel comfortable moving our bodies in each scene, and for us to be relaxed when making contact with each other. She led a few exercises to help us develop trust and to begin creating strong physical images. This early work certainly had a positive effect on the dynamic of the group and on our confidence to work practically and physically.

To begin the 'office scene' we wanted to have office workers sat down at desks, but certainly didn't want to clutter the performance space with any unnecessary items such as chairs or tables.

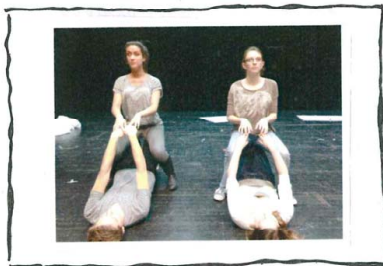
This linked particularly with our intention for the performance to be slick. We didn't want blackouts or set changes which would slow the pace of the piece. This wouldn't be helpful to make an engaging piece if the audience was constantly waiting for set changes. Physical theatre companies such as DV8 and Complicite rarely slow their work with blackouts or unnecessary set.

One of the creative ideas we had for the office was to have one person as the desk and chair, providing typing noises and office 'hub-bub' on the background.

Another person then sits on their knees and mimes typing (using the fingers of the "chair person" as a keyboard) as shown in the sketch.

What I really loved about creating this scene was how quickly we were able to add small details to the scene to make it even more clear: sequences of numbers, using the hand of the "chair" as a telephone receiver, etc.

The beauty of being able to make furniture so simply with our bodies (such as a table and chair for the doctor, sliding doors for the train and the structure of the bed) was that the images could so quickly and simply be evoked. The audience would have to "tune in" to being able to interpret these images, but once they were onboard with the concept, the pace of the theatre piece could really pick up and move along.



This sequence was intended to be a rhythmic, fast-paced display of efficiency from Brian's day-to-day office job. Ece created a soundtrack of simple drum beat, clacking typewriters and telephone noises to accompany the action, using GARAGEBAND.

This added layer of sound and clear rhythm gave an added dimension to the human-made sound effects we were making live.

Intermingled with this office environment we also thought it was important to show the character of Brian and give an insight to his past as a "perfect" student and young man filled with aspirations and potential.

We decided to insert a brief scene into the action very early on – a monologue framed as Brian's valedictorian speech at his high-school graduation ceremony – centred around the concept of 'being something' – which would clearly be ironic when the audience fully grasps his current depression and lack of self fulfillment.

An early draft of my monologue as Brian.

My fellow graduates. It is an honour to be standing beside you today, as we ready ourselves to take the next step into life. We stand here having reached our full potential. And now it's time for us to do something with that potential. To be something. Whatever you do, do it with integrity. Make it count.

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SPECIFIC EXPLORATIONS LED BY ME "The Nightmare"

Having researched into TOTAL THEATRE and the in-yer-face style of performance, I was particularly interested in directing the group for the 'nightmare' sequence. After a visit to the medical practitioner, Brian's prescribed drugs to help settle his nerves and send him to sleep. Alena's research into medication for INSOMNIA indicated that some of the drugs can cause hallucinations and nightmares. This was perfect for the shocking and challenging features we were hoping for. We purchased some boxes of small mints which would work effectively on stage as "pills".



I directed the girls to frantically writhe around trying to sleep, showing the audience that more than just the central character of Brian. The moment Brian decides to take one of the tablets, I directed the girls to freeze - creating a contrast to the frantic movement, and to build tension as I shake out a handful of pills and swallow them.

Once I had swallowed the pills all 4 of us covered ourselves up under the white sheet (which had been used to delineate the stage space). At this moment, I directed the girls to begin loud breathing sounds, exhaling, and begin to repeat Brian's name again and again, as I (as Brian) began twitching and crazily falling into the dream. * I later directed the girls to do acts with the sheets over their faces, which made them more ghost-like and bizarre when they finally sat up.



We carried out a few experiments to see just how shocking and intense we could get with the nightmare without making the scene comical or unbelievable. We experimented with the girls moving towards me like harpies and wrapping me in the sheets, binding me, and actually creating a noose with one of the sheets and beginning to strangle me - symbolic of Brian's



restrictive and unfulfilled life. I then decided to repeat my monologue from earlier in the piece to fully illustrate Brian's struggle and inner-turmoil with a sinister and surreal soundtrack created by Ele on GarageBand, this sequence became really effective in fulfilling our intentions.

Specific explorations led by me "The Nightmare"

Having researched into total theatre and the in-yer-face style of performance, I was particularly interested in directing the group for the "nightmare" sequence. After a visit to the medical practitioner, Brian is prescribed drugs to settle his nerves and send him to sleep. Alena's research into medication for insomnia indicated that some of the drugs can cause hallucinations and nightmares. This was perfect for the shocking and challenging features we were hoping for. We purchased some boxes of small mints which would work efficiently on stage as "pills".

I directed the girls to frantically writhe around trying to sleep, showing the audience more than just the central character of Brian. The moment Brian decides to take one of the tablets, I directed the girls to freeze, creating a contrast to the frantic movement and to build tension as I shake out a handful of pills and swallow them.

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MAKEUP - white, bleached faces, dark heavy bags under eyes. Messy "bed hair"

COSTUMES - a cross between pyjamas and asylum clothes. Need to be able to move. 3/4 length trousers

SET + LIGHTING: studio space, audience on 3 sides. simple bright white lighting. stark. white sheets.

STORYBOARD - Final structure of the piece

1 STUDIO PERFORMANCE Stage marked with folded white sheets 	2 Busy office scene, non-stop noise and hard work 	3 BRIAN'S monologue. Previous life, leaving him. "Be something"	4 Back in work, busy sequence. BRIAN becomes overwhelmed. Breakdown ALARMS. WARNING 1
5 "YOU ARE A COG!" BRIAN IS called to see his boss. He is failing. Instructed to sort himself or find another job. BRIAN tries to explain. IGNORED	6 BRIAN decides to seek help from a medical practitioner	7 THE DOCTOR'S surgery. The doctor mocks BRIAN. He is prescribed medication	
8 BRIAN returns home on a train, with others - all reading side effects label	9 BRIAN at home. Apartment block. All residents struggle to sleep	10 MONOLOGUES from each person - blended over each other. "my symptoms"	11 The noise is too much. BRIAN takes a tablet. SLEEP
12 The Nightmare Brian is hallucinating, he is attacked by visions of his life and his past.	13 WHAT IS WRONG WITH ME?! outburst. Everything stops	14 All become inmates in an asylum - warning bell - all immediately tidy and await inspection	
15 The doctor Medical practitioner inspects inmates. Brian pleads "I shouldn't be here!"	16 All given pills. Sedated. Brian is incarcerated.	17 BRIAN'S final words - reiterates opening monologue. "do it with integrity" He takes another pill. BLACKOUT.	

- **Makeup:** white, bleached faces, dark heavy bags under eyes. Messy "bed hair".
- **Costumes:** a cross between pyjamas and asylum clothes. Need to be able to move. 3/4 length trousers.
- **Set and lighting:** studio space, audience on three sides. Simple white bright lighting. Stark. White sheets.

Storyboard - Final structure of the piece

1. Stage marked with folded white sheets. Studio performance.
2. Busy office scene, non-stop noise and hard work.
3. Brian's monologue. Previous life leaving him. "Be something".
4. Back in work, busy sequence. Brian becomes overwhelmed. Breakdown alarms. "You are a cog!"
5. Brian is called to see his boss. He is failing. Instructed to sort himself or find another job. Brian tries to explain. Ignored.
6. Brian decides to seek help from a medical practitioner.
7. The doctor's surgery. The doctor mocks Brian. He is prescribed medication.
8. Brian returns home on a train, with others. All reading side effects label.
9. Brian at home. Apartment block. All residents struggle to sleep.
10. Monologues from each person - blended over each other. "My symptoms".
11. The noise is too much. Brian takes a tablet. Sleep.
12. The Nightmare. Brian is hallucinating; he is attacked by visions of his life and his past.
13. What is wrong with me? Outburst. Everything stops.
14. All become inmates in an asylum - warning bell - all immediately tidy and await inspection.
15. The doctor. Medical practitioner inspects inmates. Brian pleads: "I shouldn't be here!"
16. All given pills. Sedated. Brian is incarcerated.
17. Brian's final words - reiterates opening monologue. "Do it with integrity". He takes another pill. Blackout.

MY CONTRIBUTION TO THE PERFORMANCE

Throughout the preparation process I felt that I contributed significantly and effectively to the development of our piece, both as a performer and a fellow collaborator, attempting to fairly balance my creative input and my supportive, responsive and pliable role as a member of the ensemble. This successfully supported my contribution to the final performance in the sense that I had developed a positive, open and responsive relationship with my fellow group members, which enabled us to feel safe and supported during the live performance, as well as feeling that I had credible ownership over my share of the piece, which I truly feel helped make us each more assertive, committed and passionate as performers. My role required me to play the character of Brian throughout the piece, and to use my physical and vocal skills to communicate a growing sense of desperation, complete and utter exhaustion, a fixed and frozen state when others were the focus of attention and strong and supple movements to transition between scenes. I was also required to contrast this with a flashback to my character in his younger days, fresh faced, full of enthusiasm, energy and passion. I was required to manipulate my skills and sustain each of these characteristics at given points throughout my performance. I believe I was able to show these characteristics by adapting my voice: the slow, slurred and heavy speech of an insomniac, the quick, high pitched rant of a desperate man, spitting every syllable, and the pained, anguished Brian of the nightmare scene, finding a low, harsh tone as I wail my speech as the girls slowly begin to strangle me. I communicated these scenes through the use of my body and my posture, contrasting the bouncy, energetic and youthful Brian of the past with hunched, aching, heavy-footed and slow paced character who was desperate for sleep. Eye contact is essential for "truthful" performances I believe, and I was sure to fix my eyes in a staring, blank expression when creating frozen physical objects, to plead with my eyes pinned sharply on the characters of my boss and the medical practitioner, and to engage face to face with seated audience members for the sequences of narration or pleading. I believe these actions enabled the audience to engage more deeply with my performance and assisted the group in our shared intentions.

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I believe that the video clips from our performance evidence these skills effectively. I have selected the opening scenes, from the office environment and the introduction of Brian, which leads into Brian's breakdown. This, I feel, evidences how we attempted to make the piece SLICK - with the swift and fluid movement between scenes, and engaging. I am particularly impressed with how well our skills appear to be evenly 'pitched' in the performance. Something we spent a great deal of time on - giving the audience a sense of us as a united, polished and collaborative group of storytellers - I believe this scene uses music, movement, sound effects (verbal) and action to ENGAGE the audience effectively.

The second scene I have selected from the whole video recording is the scene that I personally led, the NIGHTMARE scene. Here I believe the recording demonstrates how we contrasted silence, recorded sound, stillness and action to build the sense of the nightmare looming. The sounds of the girls laughing as they leap on me with the white material, and the striking image of the noose around my neck and the medication being tipped over me contributes well to a shocking and troubling scene, hopefully making the audience question if the surreal events they are witnessing are real or imagined by the character of Brian. I am very proud of how these 2 moments show us united and focused as a group and how they hopefully give a flavour of the TOTAL THEATRE and highly physical/stylized piece of theatre we were aspiring to create.

We were encouraged by our teacher to reflect in our theatre journals what we would each do differently if we were to go through this process again. I'm quite confident that as a group we would have still aimed to create a piece of theatre like this again, but would certainly have benefitted from more time, particularly working in the chosen and performance space. I felt that Ede did a fantastic job with the soundtrack, but again more time with this before the performance day would have meant we could have sorted the sound levels more (sometimes too loud, others too quiet) and also been more confident about when sections started or stopped. Otherwise, I was utterly delighted with what we created.

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