



Complicite: A Complete Guide

For AS and A Level Edexcel

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Teacher's Introduction

For the last 30 years, Complicite has been one of the most successful and influential theatre companies in the world. They have produced work on an international scale and continue to create innovative and thrilling productions that push the boundaries of what theatre can be.

For teachers and students, Complicite is an exciting and contemporary practitioner to apply in the classroom. Their movement-centric performance style is challenging and rewarding, while their integrated designs allow performance and production design to be studied and practised in tandem. Furthermore, they are world-famous devisers, and their devising process provides an excellent framework for practical components.

Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

This guide is written primarily to support the 2016 AS and A Level Edexcel specifications. In the **AS Level** Edexcel specification, Complicite can be applied to Component 1: Exploration and Performance. In the **A Level** Edexcel specification, they can be used for Component 1: Devising, as well as Section C of Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice. The information and activities contained in the resource provide ample support for students studying Complicite for any of the above areas of the course.

What's included in this resource:

This resource introduces the important historical and contextual aspects of Complicite's development as a theatre company. Complicite's early productions are discussed, and their artistic intentions are examined.

The resource then focuses on the more practical elements of Complicite's work. Complicite's distinctive rehearsal methods are studied and practised, as are their performance and production design techniques. This includes practical activities that explore movement, space, puppetry, set design, lighting, sound design and projection. The influence of Jacques Lecoq is discussed, and students are encouraged to apply his theories in the same way that Complicite apply his theories in performance.

The final section of the resource looks at each of the relevant AS and A Level Edexcel components to which Complicite can be applied. This section explains what each component requires and includes assessment tips and revision prompts. You will also find 'assessment top tips', written in student-friendly language, throughout the resource.

How to use this resource:

The analysis and activities in this resource may be used as student handouts, or as a prompt for teacher-led sessions. Each activity is labelled as being a **written, practical, research** or **discussion task**, offering a range of learning, assessment and feedback opportunities.

The teacher's notes and answers section of this resource includes short answers to comprehension questions and research activities. For many of the practical activities there are no accompanying notes since there are no right or wrong answers. However, for some practical activities, this section outlines the purposes of the task, and how to draw out key knowledge and understanding from practical work.

When being used for AS Component 1: Exploration and Performance and A Level Component 1: Devising this guide offers plenty of pointers on how to use Complicite's techniques in the rehearsal room and inspiration for what elements of their performance style could be included in a performance. When being used for Section C of Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice the guide offers a range of ways Complicite's practice can be talked about in relation to a chosen text..

November 2017

Specification Overview

Assessment Objectives AS and A Level Drama and Theatre Studies

Assessment Objectives set by Ofqual apply to all AS and A Level Drama and Theatre Studies. Exam and class assessments will determine how successful students are in achieving the following AOs:

- **AO1** – Create and develop ideas to communicate meaning as part of the theatrical process, exploring connections between dramatic theory and practice.
- **AO2** – Apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance.
- **AO3** – Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how drama and theatre are made.
- **AO4** – Analyse and evaluate students' own work and the work of others.

Edexcel AS Level Drama and Theatre

For Section A of Component 1:

Table 1: Weighting of the Assessment Objectives – Edexcel AS Level Drama and Theatre

Component	AO1 %	AO2 %	AO3 %	AO4 %
Component 1: Exploration and Performance	20	30	0	50
Component 2: Theatre Makers in Practice	0	0	27	73
Total for GCE AS Level	20%	30%	27%	23%

Edexcel A Level Drama and Theatre

Table 2: Weighting of the Assessment Objectives – Edexcel A Level Drama and Theatre

Component	AO1 %	AO2 %	AO3 %	AO4 %
Component 1: Devising	20	10	0	70
Component 2: Text in Performance	0	20	0	80
Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice	0	0	30	70
Total for GCE A Level	20%	30%	30%	20%

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* resulting from minor specification changes, suggestions from teachers and peer reviews, or occasional errors reported by customers

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Key Defining Elements

During this section you will look in depth at the origins and work of Complicite. As their work intersects with and is influenced by many other artists working at the same time, their work is often unique, it can be difficult to pinpoint the individuality of their style. Here are some pointers on key Complicite elements to look out for, which will be explained in more detail in the next section.

Methodology

- An emphasis on collaborative working
- Taking inspiration from other creative works
- An attitude guided by the principles of Lecoq (le jeu / disponibilité / complicité)
- A creatively stimulating rehearsal room
- Thinking about how the work will appeal to the audience
- Designers being actively involved in the rehearsal process
- Integration of technology from the beginning of the process
- Breaking down text into its component parts
- Approaching theatre in terms of 'composing' it from the different elements

Style and Conventions

- Experimentation with Movement, mime and physicality
- Integration of and experimentation with technology
- A focus on the many ways of telling a story (narration, movement, visuals)
- Adaptable Sets
- Puppetry and Object Theatre.
- Projection
- Innovative Sound

While not all of these elements are in a Complicite show they are a useful reference to defining characteristics. They can also be useful to come back to when creating your own work using influences from Complicite.

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Who is Complicite?

Complicite is a touring theatre company based in London. They have produced and performed internationally, and they are well known for their distinctive performance styles.

The company was founded in 1983 by Annabel Arden, Fiona Gordon, Marcello Magni and Simon McBurney. They were initially focused on **physical performance** and **mime**, but soon moved into other theatrical forms. Since then, with Simon McBurney at the helm as Artistic Director, Complicite has become one of the most compelling and widely celebrated theatre companies in the world.



KEY WORDS

Physical Performance Performance using the body. Includes gesture, dance, movement.

Mime Performing action or emotion without words.

ACTIVITY 1

Watch It!

The only way to truly appreciate the work of Complicite is to see some examples of their work.

Watch Complicite's showreel on YouTube (Available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=k/7911-show or search for 'Complicite showreel').

What are your first reactions to what you have just seen? What struck you about the performance? What did you notice about the performance styles and production designs of Complicite?

Discuss in groups and make notes below:

First reactions:



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Performance style notes:

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Production design notes:

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¹ Gardner, L (2002) in Wiśniewski, T (2016). *Complicite, Theatre and Aesthetics*, p. 1

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THEATRE IN THE 1980s

Complicite was founded in a very specific political and cultural context that goes some way to explain their overriding style and concerns. In the 1980s, there were major shifts in the theatre landscape, both political and artistic, which changed the face of theatre making and influenced all companies of the period.

In 1979, Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party were voted into power by the British public. As Prime Minister, Thatcher turned attention to the economy, and introduced a set of policies that have since been described as Thatcherism. Thatcherism placed an emphasis on competitive markets and individual enterprise in place of government intervention and public spending. In this model, many public services that had previously been subsidised by the government, such as energy supply and telephone networks, were transferred into private ownership, run by non-government businesses for profit.

Theatre was also affected by these policies. Since the 1950s, arts and culture had been supported by government through the Arts Council. Many playwrights, directors and actors benefited from government spending, and many new plays were produced in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. However, Thatcher saw a shift in arts and culture policy. In the Conservative government's view, the arts was significantly cut and this trend continued throughout the 1980s and required theatre to rely more heavily on profits and corporate investment. Companies no longer afford to take risks on unknown plays and playwrights and instead programs were more likely to make a profit. Blockbuster musicals and well-known plays became the norm in this period.

This changed how theatre was made, especially for young theatre makers such as Complicite. The traditional process of commissioning a playwright to write a play in the face of government cuts led to more work being created without a text, through improvisation. More and more writers who could not get commissions began creating and putting on their own work. Physical theatre became increasingly popular, and new theatrical styles emerged, moving away from the traditional performance styles of previous decades. Oriental theatre styles, such as Kabuki, had a great influence, as were the movement theories of **Jacques Lecoq**. It was into this context, in the face of decline that Complicite was born.

KEY WORDS

- Jacques Lecoq** A French theatre practitioner who focused on movement and mime.
- Noh Theatre** A highly stylised form of Japanese theatre that includes music and dance.

ACTIVITY 2

Theatre in the 1980s

Use the information above to answer the questions below:

- 1) What was Thatcherism?
- 2) How did Thatcherism affect the theatre industry?
- 3) What was the Arts Council?
- 4) How do you think that the political and theatrical landscape of the 1980s influenced Complicite?

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THE BIRTH OF COMPLICITE

So how did Complicite come together? Check out the sequence of events that led

Annabel Arden, Marcello Magni and Simon McBurney meet while training at Théâtre Jacques Lecoq, a drama school set up by the theatre practitioner Jacques Lecoq.

The three found Théâtre de Complicité along with Fiona Gordon in 1983. They bring their experience of working on movement and mime into their early work.

The company devise their first show, *Put It On Your Head* (1984), a physical comedy. They tour it in a £350 van they bought together.

The early years are a blur of DIY productions, with the company making work in a variety of venues, from street corners to prisons.

The company are given an 11-week residency at the Almeida Theatre in London. During this development period, the company come together and stage an imaginative production of Dürrenmatt's *The Visit*. It is a critical success.

Simon McBurney assumes sole leadership of the company and produces increasingly ambitious productions. The Complicite we know today is born.

ACTIVITY 3

Who was Jacques Lecoq?

Lecoq was a huge influence on Simon McBurney and the other founding members of Complicite. It is important to know about him in order to fully understand Complicite's style.

Research the life and work of Jacques Lecoq. Structure your research around the following questions:

- 1) When and where was Lecoq born?
- 2) What did Lecoq do before he started theatre? How did this influence his theatre?
- 3) What were Lecoq's key theories of performance?
- 4) How did Lecoq's theories influence his theories?

Take notes on your research and be prepared to give a five-minute oral presentation on Lecoq to your class.

Hint: Check out Lecoq's Wikipedia page for more info!

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ACTIVITY 4**Who is Simon McBurney?**

Simon McBurney is now the Artistic Director and only permanent member of Complicite and work. Structure your research around the following questions:

- 1) When and where was McBurney born? Where did he study?
- 2) Is he only known for his theatre work? What else has he achieved?

Hint: Look up McBurney's IMDb page for a start!

THE NAME

Originally Theatre de Complicité, and now simply Complicite, the company's name reflects their ethos and style.

ACTIVITY 5**Complicite**

What do you think their name means? To whom does the name refer? What does their performance style and ethos?

Discuss as a class and make a mind map below.



COMPLICITE



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An Overview of Complicite²

Summarising Complicite's work so far is no easy task. They have an incredibly rich and diverse production history, ranging from small mime shows to underground walking tours to operatic epics. Furthermore, there is no overriding ethos that directs their work. As Simon McBurney says, there is 'no pattern, no reason' that explains the work that they do. In fact, they feel that their work is so difficult to define that they are surprised that they feature on the A Level syllabus at all!²

In spite of this, Complicite do have a distinctive and instantly recognisable style, and develop their own style across their productions.

DEVELOPING A STYLE

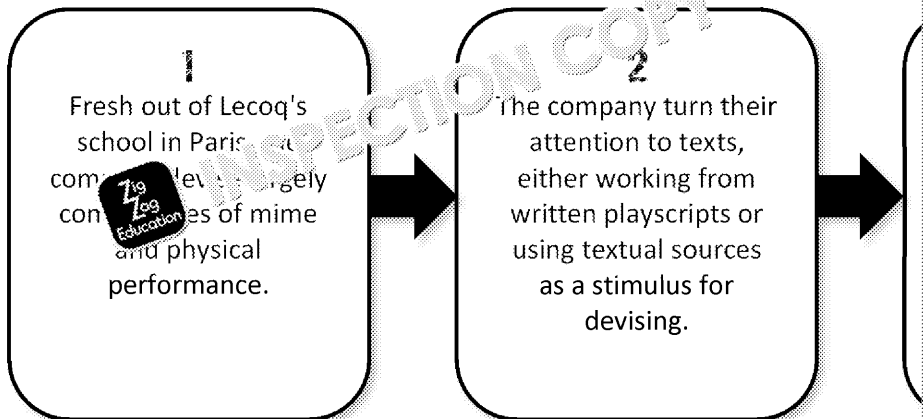
ACTIVITY 1

Tracing Complicite's Development

Below is a rough progression of Complicite's developing style.

Read through the production history on Complicite's website (available at: www.complicite.com/home.php). Check out the description and images of each show and see how they

Mark when each progression took place on the timeline on the next page of this resource.



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² zzed.uk/7911-overview

³ Complicite, 2007. *A Disappearing Number*. London: Oberon Books.

COMPLICITE KEY DATES

1983	Complicite founded	1984	<i>A Minute Too Late</i> first performed
1989	11-week Almeida season	1991	<i>The Street of Crocodiles</i> first performed
1992	<i>The Street of Crocodiles</i> first performed	2004	<i>Measure for Measure</i> first performed
2007	<i>A Disappearing Number</i> first performed	2008	<i>Shun-kin</i> first performed
2009	<i>Endgame</i> first performed	2011	<i>The Master and Margarita</i> first performed
2015	<i>Brooklyn</i> first performed <i>Encounter</i> first performed	2016	<i>A Pacifist's Guide to...</i> first performed

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Have there been any more recent Complicite developments? Add them to the timeline.

COMPLICITE'S KEY SHOWS

Research Complicite's past shows and fill in the fact files below. You may need to have a good understanding of the shows. Look for reviews, show descriptions, podcasts, common themes / ideas / performance and production styles do you notice?

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The Street of Crocodiles

First Performed:.....

Summary:.....

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Main Themes:.....

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First Performed:.....

Summary:.....

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Main Themes:.....

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First Performed:.....

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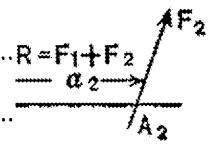
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PRODUCTION IN FOCUS: *THE ENCOUNTER* (2015)

Complicite's *The Encounter* (2015) premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival, Europe, Australia and the USA. It won numerous awards, including a Tony Award and Critics' Circle Award for Outstanding Solo Performance.

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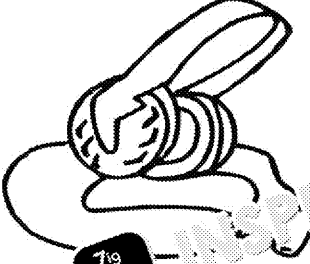
ACTIVITY 2

Watch It!

Watch the trailer for *The Encounter* on YouTube. (Available at: zzed.uk/7911-en) and 'The Encounter' on YouTube. Make sure you wear headphones while watching!



The Experience

<p>START</p> <p>The audience enters the space and finds their seats. On stage: a desk with a lamp and some microphones, a table with bottles of water on it and a binaural microphone in the shape of a head.</p>	<p>Simon McBurney enters as the audience are still coming in. He begins speaking quite informally to the audience about his children – it is unclear whether the performance has begun.</p>	<p>He and to intro and</p>
	<p>He introduces the story of Loren McIntyre, a folk rapper who got lost in the Amazon rainforest when he was taking pictures of the Mayoruna tribe.</p>	<p>He then the a res</p>
<p>He produces sound effects live. For example, he creates the sound of water lapping against a boat by moving a bottle of water next to the microphone.</p>	<p>He tells the story from Loren's perspective, speaking into a microphone that makes his voice sound deeper when playing Loren.</p>	
<p>Interspersed with the main narrative are short prerecorded episodes with McBurney's daughter in his flat. He also plays recordings of experts talking about the brain and consciousness.</p>	<p>As Loren delves deeper into the forest, he discovers he can communicate with the tribe chief telepathically – something he describes as 'beginning'. He learns that the tribe are heading back 'to the beginning' to escape civilisation.</p>	<p>po The w Mc that</p>



KEY WORD

Binaural Microphone A microphone that is actually made up of two microphones that separate sounds to the two ears of the listener.

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ACTIVITY 3

Responding to *The Encounter*

Read through the information above and then discuss the questions below:

- 1) How did the trailer for *The Encounter* make you feel? What was the effect of

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- 2) How was the method of telling the story suited to the content/themes of the text?

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- 3) What does this show teach you about the *Complicite* and their style of theatre making?

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Complicite's Artistic Interests

Complicite was founded as a reaction to the kind of theatre that McBurney and his colleagues created for them. They felt that theatre did not reflect their artistic interests and they did not like the theatre world of the 1980s. Simon McBurney said in 2010 that:

Since the arrival of television, theatre had become more and more an upper-middle class tradition of theatre – very class determined, literary, intellectual – we didn't feel that was our tradition.

Complicite wanted to make theatre that was both exciting to them and had a wide appeal. To this end, Complicite took their early performances to Chilean shanty towns. This meant that their work necessarily had to be understood by everyone, regardless of language. The company have largely moved away from mime and increasingly work with text, but the tradition of sharing stories internationally remains.

ACTIVITY 1

Making Theatre That You Want to See

Stick a big piece of paper on the wall, and take two pens of different colours.

In one colour, write up things you like seeing in theatre. This could be types of stories, characters, theatrical styles you enjoy, types of staging – whatever it is you love to see.

In another colour, write what you would love to see that you don't see that much, if possible, even if you think it would be impossible. Do you love a show in which characters like a video game, for example, or a show in which you could fly around small. You never know how you could turn these ideas into a show!

Once you've all written on the paper, stand back and look at it as a class. Are there any suggestions that excite you most as a class? How could you put these suggestions into a show?

You're well on your way to forming your own practical ideas / production concepts.

ASSESSMENT TOP TIP

i

Edexcel A Level: Component 1 (Devising)

The Devising component of the Edexcel specification specifically asks for 'evidence of working methodology' of your chosen practitioner so be sure to record this in your portfolio! Take a picture of the final paper once everyone's finished and summarise which ideas you are particularly excited about. Take the picture as part of your portfolio – Edexcel allows 'annotated photographs' to document your process and secure some marks. 01 points ('Creative communication meaning as part of the theatre-making process').

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⁴ McBurney, S, in Wiśniewski, T (2016). *Complicite, Theatre and Aesthetics*, p. 2

VISUAL POETRY

Complicite's distinctive visual style is born out of the company's fascination with non-verbal communication. John Berger, a collaborator and inspiration for much of Complicite's work, describes the primacy of the visual over the verbal as follows:

Seeing comes before words. The child looks and understands before it can speak.⁵

For Berger and Complicite, we can see, though seeing that we understand the world around us, seeing is the most direct form of communication, channelling powerful

In their work, Complicite aims to tap into this rich form of communication. Simon is interested in how a piece of theatre 'functions in terms of space, in terms of rhythm, counterpoint, harmony: image and action, movement and stillness, words and silence

ACTIVITY 2

Looking at Art

As well as a writer, John Berger was also a well-respected art critic. He made a series about the way we look at art called *Ways of Seeing* (you can find clips on

The act of seeing and being seen is very important for Complicite. After all, theatre word theatre actually comes from the Greek theatron, which means 'seeing place

It is important to train our eyes and develop our understanding of how and why we see. Only then can you apply this knowledge to your work to make visually powerful

Look at a work of art for five minutes with no distractions. How does the work of art look? A handy guide on the Tate's website might help you articulate your ideas: [Zig Zag Education's 'Tate' and 'Ways of Seeing'](#).

Discuss the impact of the artwork as a class. How might aspects of colour, shape and composition be applied to theatre, either through performance or production design?

Art Tips: Choose one of the National Gallery's top 30 paintings for this activity! (Available at: zzed.uk/7911-gallery)

ASSESSMENT TOP TIP

i

Edexcel A Level: Component 3 (Theatre Makers in Context)

In section C of your written exam you will be asked to 'interpret one text, in light of one practitioner for a contemporary audience' – this means you should show how your production concept has been informed or influenced by one practitioner. Complicite favour the most direct form of communication. You should always consider how the meaning of your text can be communicated through visual elements (and theatre are designed and performed) marks in your exam.

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⁵ Berger, J, 1972. *Ways of Seeing*, London: Penguin

⁶ McBurney, S, 1994, in Mitter, S, and Shevtsova, M, (eds.) 2005. *Fifty Key Theatre Directors*, Abingdon: Routledge

MEMORY AND ORIGINS

Complicite do not define themselves in terms of a particular interest or style as they do not want to restrict their development. However, they do return to similar themes in much of their work. One of these themes is the idea of memory and origin.

For Complicite, our understanding of the present is informed by the past and our understanding of the past is informed by memory. Memory is, therefore, a crucial part of human existence, and the company interrogates this theme again and again.

Mnemonic (1999) begins with a focus on the nature of memory, and the characters' memories of their own lives create their sense of identity. In *A Disappearing Number* (2007), past and present and memory overlap, while in *The Encounter* (2015), as Loren loses his grip on his past existence outside the forest, his sense of consciousness begins to

ACTIVITY 3

Performing Memory

In groups, discuss childhood memories that are particularly important to you, e.g. what you can remember. Outline your memory to the group and then describe what that memory looks/feels like in your mind?

Consider the following:

- Is the memory clear or faint? How can you describe this faintness? Is it grainy?
- Is the memory made up of fragments or is it one continuous action?
- If there are people you still know in your memory, are you remembering them as they appear as they are now?
- Can you control the memory? For example, if your memory is in a garden, can you walk out of it? At what point does memory begin?

Pick one memory of the group to perform. Rehearse the memory, working on how you can create the content of the memory and the visual quality of the memory. How can you create a lack of control through performance? Think about specific performance aspects.

Perform your memory to the rest of the class. As an audience, what is the effect of the performance? How does it capture the essence of memory? How?

Discuss what you found as a class and remember to take notes! Think about the devising stimulus – what importance does memory play in them?

EXTENSION TASK

At the start of your next class, spend five minutes rehearsing and then performing your memory – from memory! How does your own memory affect the memory of another? How does the original memory feel now that their memory is so removed from them?

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Complicite's Rehearsal Process

Complicite creates its productions through a process of research, experimentation and devising. While they sometimes begin with a complete play text, such as *Measure for Measure* (2004) or *Endgame* (2009), they more often work from alternative material such as novels, short stories, and academic articles. From this source material, the company create an entirely new piece of theatre.

“What is the thing in trying to...”

While one director, such as Simon McBurney, might oversee and stimulate the process discussed above, it is run by the company as a whole. Each member of the company everyone's input, whether they end up in the final piece or not, will inform the final

ACTIVITY 1

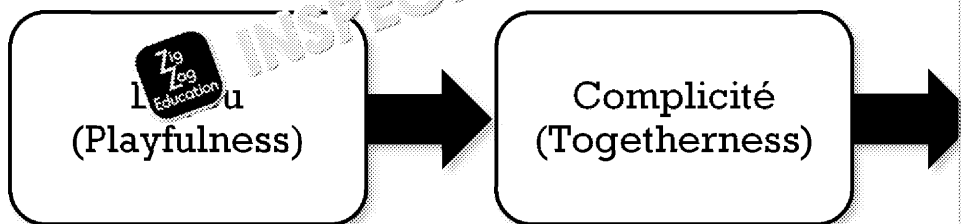
Watch It!

Watch Kirsty Housley, co-director of *The Encounter*, speaking about Complicite's process at: zedd.uk/7911-process or search 'Complicite' and 'The Encounter Co-director'

- How do you think having 'no endgame' could be both helpful and difficult with

The key to Complicite's rehearsal process is **collaboration**. Everyone, from the producers, works together to bring the collective vision of the company to life. As a rehearsal room is very important. It is here that ideas are formed and solidified, and get the best if everyone feels comfortable and open.

A Complicite rehearsal process is guided by the three principles of Jacques Lecoq:



ASSESSMENT TOP TIP

Edexcel A Level: Component 1 (Devising)
Remember that, for this devising component, Edexcel asks you to 'analyse the methodology' of your chosen practitioner. If Complicite is your chosen practitioner, you must ensure that the rehearsal room is a collaborative space. In your portfolios, be sure to record how the group worked together and how each member contributed to the realisation of the final piece. This will grab you some marks ('Analyse and evaluate your own work and the work of others')!

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⁷ Patterson, C 'Simon McBurney: 'It's chaos. You start with a bomb...'', *Independent*, 2009. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/interviews/simon-mcburney-its-chaos>

LE JEU

A sense of play is an important part of the Complicite devising process. After all, that – a play! Before rehearsals begin, the company play games together. These inject irreverence, competitiveness and energy into the rehearsal room, which are all vital to theatre. They can mean that devisors are more open to playing with ideas, and in performance the use of games can help performers be light and exciting. Complicite enjoys what they are doing then the audience will enjoy it too, and games help with discipline for devising; just like games, a piece of theatre must have rules and stakes.

Before each lesson, play some of the following games. If you know any other games, please add them to the list.

GAME 1



Patterns

Form a circle as a class. You will practise and memorise the following patterns in order together!

Pattern 1: Names

One person starts by saying someone else's name. Then that person says someone else's name. This continues until everyone's name has been said and it goes back to the first person. The cycle then repeats. Cycle a few times so that everyone else knows the order.

Pattern 2: Walking

One person walks across the circle and takes someone else's place. That person then takes someone else's place. This continues until everyone has moved and it goes back to the same cycle then begins again. Practise this a few times. Then add saying Names to the cycle.

Pattern 3: Ball

One person throws the ball to someone else. That person then throws the ball to someone else. Everyone in the class should catch and throw the ball once until it gets back to the first person. Cycle a few times and then add Names to the cycle and Walking! How many times can you cycle before breaking down?

TIP: A combination of listening and eye contact is key to succeeding at this game.



GAME 2

Playing Ball

Divide into teams. Place a chair at each end of the room. One member of each team sits on the chair on the opposite side of the room to their team.

The aim of the game is to score by throwing your ball to your team mate on the other side of the room while holding the ball. You can pass by throwing it to your teammates. They are not allowed to take the ball out of your hands.

Each time a team scores they must pick a rule card at random from a hat. They must follow the rule for the next round (until someone scores). Blank rule cards allow you to make up your own rules during their games, refining them as they go. What rules would you use?

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EXTENSION

Make Up Your Own!

Get into groups. You have 15 minutes to invent a game that builds teamwork skills. What do you win? Present your games to the rest of the class. Then play!

Game 2: Playing Ball

You must pass exactly 5 times before scoring



You must hold one hand behind your back

You can only move the ball slowly



You can only pass the ball by rolling it

The bench warmer must close their eyes



You must use your weaker hand

You must pass in alphabetical order

You must only hop

You must sing the alphabet whenever your team has the ball – every time the alphabet ends you must give the ball to the other team

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COMPLICITE

Complicite's productions, with the exception of *The Encounter* (2015), are ensemble pieces where the entire company remained on stage for the majority of the play. In *A Disappearance at Night*, the company performed slick and tightly choreographed movement sequences at key moments. The emphasis on ensemble requires a very specific type of focus. The company must be aware of one another's movements and acquiring the ability to become a single entity of individuals.

You can use the following activities to create a sense of ensemble with your group.

GAME 4



Tangled Up

Everyone in the class should get into a tight huddle. Each person should take the hand of a different person on opposite sides of the huddle. You will now be a big tangle of hands. When speaking (or letting go of hands!), you must disentangle yourselves so that you become a continuous circle. You may need to duck or climb under each other's arms. The key is to be aware of what everyone else is doing. Remember – you're not allowed to speak!

GAME 5

Ensemble Movement

Everyone in the class apart from one person (the leader) should bunch up into one corner of the room. The leader should face the group about 10 paces away, and hold their hand out towards the group (as if they were saying 'at a stop!').

Everyone in the group should focus on this hand. As the leader moves their hand, the group should follow. When the leader moves their hand low, the whole group should move their hands low. When the leader moves their hand away from the group, the group must follow. The entire group should always keep the same distance between the group and the hand.

Continue with this exercise for five minutes. Did you feel like one homogenous group? What focus was important to create a sense of unity?

GAME 6

Counting Together

Get in a circle and close your eyes. As a group you must count up to 21. Only one person can say a number at one time, and you are not allowed to say more than one number in a row. If two people say a number at the same time, you must start again at the beginning. Everyone should say at least one number.

This activity is all about listening and focus. You will develop an instinct for when it's your turn to say a number and an understanding of your fellow performers.

Too easy? Try it with the alphabet – backwards!



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DISPONIBILITE

Openness is a vital quality for the rehearsal room. The entire company must feel and be heard by the rest of the group. Even if you don't agree with someone's suggestion, if it will work, the idea should at least be explored as it may lead to something else.

Try out some of the following games to unlock a sense of *disponibilité* in the rehearsal room. There are no wrong answers!

GAME 7

Yes Let's!

This simple game encourages the contribution and acceptance of ideas – both vital to the rehearsal process.

As a class, walk around the room. At any time, someone can shout out a suggestion. The rest of the class then shouts in unison 'Yes let's!' and starts acting in the way suggested. The person then calls out another suggestion.

GAME 8

Improvising

One person starts on stage. A second person enters and the first person dictates their character's greeting, e.g. 'Hello old man!' The new arrival must then act in that way as they enter. The first person then exits and a third person enters. The second person dictates their character's greeting, e.g. 'Hello officer!', and the improvised scene continues. The game finishes once everyone has had a turn.

THE REHEARSAL ROOM

Complicite's rehearsal room is the most important space in their development process. This room is not only the site of meetings and improvisations, but it also becomes a huge source of inspiration. The company stick pictures, articles and bits of text on the wall as they research the show. They bring in piles of costumes and props that can be used in improvised scenes and rehearsals. By the end of the process the room is a mess, but a highly creative and imaginative mess!

ACTIVITY 2

A Rehearsal Room Mood Board

You may not be able to take over a whole room for the length of your rehearsal process, but you can create similar sources of inspiration!

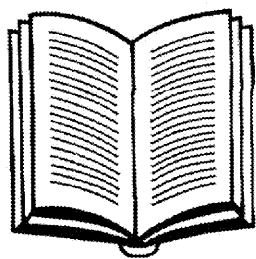
In groups, make mood boards for one of the projects you are working on. Cover them with images, Contexts, News Stories, Costume, Set Design.

Gather together pictures, articles, texts, bits of fabric – anything that you find relevant to your project. Stick them on a large piece of paper. Then, each time you meet to rehearse, you can look at the mood board to inspire creativity!

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APPROACHING A TEXT



When building a show, Complicite's starting point is often productions are straight adaptations of novels or short stories. A recent adaptation of Stefan Zweig's novel of the same name. Similarly, *Cabrol* (1994) was an adaptation of John Berger's short story. However, they are also inspired by more obscure or diverse texts. *Mnemonic* was inspired by the story of Iceman, a well-preserved 5,200-year-old body that was discovered in Italy and Austria. *A Simple Plan* (2007) was inspired by the mathematical equations discovered by Srinivasa Ramanujan.

Whatever their source material, Complicite's approach to text is highly creative and does not simply re-enact the original text out, or exactly recreate the scenes of a novel on stage. Instead, they excavate the implications and themes of the text, creating a rich and complex theatrical world.

The Encounter (2015)

Complicite's 2015 show, *The Encounter*, was inspired by Petra Popescu's book, *Amazon*, which tells the true story of Loren McIntyre, who was lost in the Amazon Jungle while photographing animals.

The company approached the text on many levels. They didn't just read the book and adapt it. They also discussed the themes and ideas that the text raised. They discussed the nature of the understanding of reality, and the relationship between the past and the present. They explored the possibilities of technology and how they could create a realistic world through sound and lighting.

This multilayered approach resulted in a multilayered show. Several narratives are presented. For example, Loren McIntyre's story was told alongside imagined scenes between Simon McBurney and other characters. Furthermore, the idea of reality was questioned by McIntyre's performance as a whole, which immersed the audience in an artificial but highly realistic world.

ACTIVITY 3

Watch

Watch Simon McBurney, Artistic Director of Complicite, speaking about *The Encounter* on www.edinburghfestival.org.uk/7911-mcburney or search 'Edinburgh International Festival' and 'Simon McBurney'.

- Discuss the idea of theatre as a 'compositional piece'. How might a piece of theatre be more than written?

ACTIVITY 4

Take It Further

Check out Complicite's online resource about developing *The Encounter* (available at www.complicite.com/encounterresource).

Look at the workshop notes and the relationship between the script and the original text. How do you think Complicite's process? How could you apply this process to your own practice?

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ACTIVITY 5

Workshopping a Text

The best way to understand Complicite's process is to put it into practice yourself.

Split into groups and look at the extract from *Great Expectations* (or an extract from studying) on the next page of this resource. You will work on this text and devise a performance by Complicite.

1) The Text

In your groups, read the text aloud twice. Highlight the moments that interest you that you think are particularly good to adapt for the stage?

2) Key Questions

Write out a list of questions that arise from your reading of the text. Examples are: How should we stage the graveyard? How is this story relevant for a modern audience?

These questions will shape your rehearsal process as you attempt to find the best way to perform the text.

3) Themes and Ideas

Discuss the following themes that can be found in the text: memory, childhood, class, love, death.

Make a mind map about two of these themes. What do these themes make you think of? How do they relate to your personal experience? Can you link these themes to any content you have studied? Do you know any other stories which deal with these themes? How? Fill a page with your ideas.

4) Research

After some initial planning, Complicite go away and research, often consulting with other people, to find challenging questions. Look up anything that arose from your planning and bring it back to your process.

5) Return to the Text

Get some scissors and cut the text up into its component parts. Try swapping parts around for example, you start with the man threatening Pip and then go back to the beginning.

Get a small section of the text on its feet. As you rehearse, experiment with different performance styles:

Storytelling: Split the text up between you and tell the story as an ensemble. One person represents Pip while the rest of the company tell his story around him.

Physical Theatre: Indicate the action through physicality and mime.

Puppetry: Use puppetry to represent characters. Puppets can be made from anything and in a certain way can resemble a person!

How can you apply what you discussed while planning your performance? For example, you could set something from your childhoods, or set the story in the context of a contemporary setting.

After some rehearsal time, show your performances to the rest of the group. Discuss your workshopping. How could you apply these skills to a future practical project?

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Great Expectations by Charles Dickens: Chapter One (extract)

My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could not express anything longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

I give Pirrip as my father's family name, on the authority of his tombstone and my sister Estella, who married the blacksmith. As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any living person who had any knowledge of what they were long before the days of photographs) and my sister's fancies regarding what they were derived from their tombstones. The shape of the tombstone on my father's gave me an odd idea that he was a man with curly black hair. From the character and turn of the inscription, "Also Georgiana, wife of Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also buried in this churchyard, and were sacred to the memory of their mother, who gave up trying to get a living exceedingly early in that universal struggle, and religiously entertained that they had all been born on their backs with their hands in their pockets, and never taken them out in this state of existence."

Ours was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles from London. In all that country, the broad impression of the identity of things seems to me to have been gained on a misty evening. At such a time I found out for certain that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard; that Philip Pirrip, late of this parish, and also Georgiana wife of the above, were dead and buried in the churchyard; that Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried in the churchyard; and that the flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with dikes and mounds and gates, with scattered cottages and farm-houses, was the marshes; and that the low leaden line beyond was the river; and that the distant sea was the sea; and that the small bundle of shingles growing afraid of it all and cowering by the water's edge, was the house where I was born, and where I still lived.

"Hold your noise!" cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from among the graves and leapt forward, glancing all round. "Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!"

A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and a broken coat, who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and crumpled with flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars; who limped, and shivered, and glared and growled; and chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin.

"Oh! Don't cut my throat, sir," I pleaded in terror. "Pray don't do it, sir."

"Tell us your name!" said the man. "Quick!"

"Pip, sir."

"Once more," said the man, staring at me. "Give it mouth!"

"Pip. Pip, sir."

"Show us where you live," said the man, pointing to the water. "Out the place!"

I pointed to the water, on the flat in-shore among the alder-trees and pollard-trees, where the church church.

The man, after looking at me for a moment, turned me upside down, and emptied my pockets, but he only found a piece of bread. When the church came to itself,—for he was so sudden and so strong,—he turned me over heels before me, and I saw the steeple under my feet,—when the church came to itself, and I saw the tombstone, trembling while he ate the bread ravenously.

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ACTIVITY 6

Evaluating Your Work

QUESTION: How did you apply the methodology of Complicite when adapting (or your choice) for performance? Outline your process and evaluate your group's work of your finished piece.

Lined writing area for student response



ASSESSMENT TOP TIP



Edexcel AS Level Component 1 (Exploration and Performance)

Remember that your portfolio is worth 50% of your total marks for the portfolio, you must know the chosen practitioner influenced rehearsal and evaluate the contribution your own theatrical skill/performance (Edexcel specification, 2016). Complicite always keep processes. Notes, pictures and videos help the company develop progress of the piece. For you, keeping notes in your portfolio will not process but also tick off some all-important AO4 ('Analyse and evaluate the work of others') marks! Best of both worlds!

Complicite's Performance

It is in Complicite's performance style that the influence of Jacques Lecoq can be most keenly felt. Just like Lecoq, Complicite place a great emphasis on the body and the physical expressiveness of movement. Complicite have used Lecoq-inspired movement for both comic effect, as in their early clowning work, and for more poetic effects, using ensemble movement and repeated rhythms to create astonishing visual spectacles.

“ [Lecoq] of nature movement

The best way to understand and practise Complicite's performance style is to study Lecoq. At the Lecoq Institute in Paris, where Simon McBurney and the other four studied, students learn about three key areas of physical performance:

TENSION | SPACE | MASK AND MIMICRY

An understanding of these areas of performance will help you develop your own style.

TENSION

Movement is the product of tension. In fact, almost all human processes are the result of us tense and relax, keeping us upright, moving our limbs, taking in oxygen and circulating blood. Even breathing down requires tension (you're probably tensing right now!). The level of tension varies depending on our emotions. When we relax and go to sleep we have little tension, but when we are excited or scared we might have a lot of tension in our bodies. Tension is a clear indication of emotion. As performers, we can use tension in our bodies to communicate meaning.

ACTIVITY 1

Exploring Tension

Complicite measure tension on a scale of 1 to 7. Find a space in the room and explore the scale.

- 1) Begin by lying on the floor and completely relaxing. Focus on each part of your body and note the level of tension you find. This is 1 – in other words, zero tension.
- 2) Now stand up and tense every single muscle in your body. This is 7 – maximum tension for a short time. You don't want to strain anything!
- 3) Go back to 1, and then raise the tension in your body bit by bit, finding levels 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. How does each state of tension feel? What kind of character does each state have?

Come back as a class and discuss what you found. Is it helpful to think about physical tension in this way?

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⁸ Esslin, M 'Mask over Matter', *Guardian*, 1999. Available at: www.theguardian.com/news/1999

ACTIVITY 2

Identifying Tension

Once you have explored the range of tensions you can perform, it's time to identify a list of states of tension in no particular order. Below the table are the titles used. Read through the list and then order them correctly. Then match each tension to it. Once you have completed the table, why not cut up the rows and put them in the correct order?

Tension Level	Description
	Alert, ready for fight or flight, like a startled cat.
	Inquisitive, moving all the time, interested in everything around you.
	Standing tall and neutral. Simple, direct movements.
	Relaxed, everyday posture, head up, shoulders back.
	Full of tension. Your emotions have completely taken over. You can hardly move.
	No tension whatsoever. Completely relaxed on the floor.
	Full of intense emotion (terror/grief/hilarity). Can't control yourself.

Alert	Catatonic	Relaxed / Californian	Passionate	Neutral / Economic
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ASSESSMENT TOP TIP

i *Edexcel A Level: Component 3 (Theatre Makers in Section C of the Edexcel Component 3 written exam requires candidates to 'practitioner methodology to their own and others' interpretations'. Focus on the seven states of tension in your exam would be a great way to justify your direction of movement. This will help you accurately describe performance and link to the all-important AO3 (Demonstrate knowledge of how drama/theatre are developed and performed) marks.*

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ACTIVITY 3

Applying Tension to a Scene

In groups, improvise a scene with no dialogue that moves through each state of tension. You might want to take inspiration for what scenarios you use from one of the works you are studying.

An example scene might go something like this:

- 1) Your character is asleep in bed.
- 2) Your character wakes up and goes to brush their teeth.
- 3) Your character looks at themselves in the mirror, appraising how they look.
- 4) Your character notices a smudge of dirt on the mirror. They examine it and start cleaning it.
- 5) They notice that the mirror falls off the wall and smashes.
- 6) Your character hears their dad coming up the stairs. He's going to see the mirror.
- 7) The dad walks in and sees the mirror. Your character is in BIG TROUBLE and has to think of a way to escape.

After some rehearsal time, show your scenes to the class. Discuss the following questions:

- How can you move smoothly from one state of tension to the next?
- How is tension a useful and effective way of communicating meaning?

ACTIVITY 4

Taking It Further

In the same groups as Activity 3, experiment with more complex ways of using tension. You might want to take inspiration for what scenarios you use from any of the works you are studying. Use the following ideas as you devise a scene:

- Try jumping between extreme tensions. For example, a terrified character (1) might suddenly become happy (2). Alternatively, a shocked character might wake up and immediately become angry (3).
- Explore how tension can be used to create a range of emotions. A high level of tension does not just lead to a character being overjoyed or overcome with laughter at a level 6. Alternatively, a character might be distraught or overcome with sorrow.
- How might you juxtapose tension between characters? For example, what is one character doing while another is chatting in a relaxed way (2) and one character is really scared (6)? What does this suggest?

Make notes on what you find below:

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SPACE

Tension does not only exist in the body, but also in the space relationships between performers. Essentially, a performer inhabiting a space. It is, therefore, very important to consider space and what the visual impact is of their relationship with the space.

The following activities will build your awareness of the space around you and your performers:

ACTIVITY 5

Exploring Space

- 1) As a class, walk around the room. Try to keep an even space between you and the distribution of people across the floor. Imagine the floor is a wooden platform. If too many people are in one part of the room, the platform will be unbalanced and the ball will fall.
- 2) When your teacher says 'stop' you must find a partner and stand opposite them. Grasp their hand. Slowly, lean back and lower down, as if sitting down on a chair. The other person must support you. When your teacher says 'go', slowly rise and walk around, balancing the space again.

Why is an awareness of your spatial relationship with others so important as a performer?

ACTIVITY 6

Strung Up

Get into pairs. Hold a length of string (about one metre long) between you. Grip the string with your forefinger. As you move around the space, you must keep the string absolutely taut. The string should be held by both people (if you do – the string might fall from their fingers). Sensing the tension of the string of the other person.

Try some more challenging movements – get down low, hold the string high, try turning.

If you meet another pair, how will you get past them? Can you move under or over them?

ACTIVITY 7

Stick Together

Get into pairs and hold a bamboo stick (or similar) between you. Move around the space. One person should lead. Guide your partner by pushing or pulling on the stick, back, forward, left, right, etc. The other person should react accordingly, holding onto the end of the stick.

As you get more confident, experiment with different levels of tension. Try moving in a circle. Share energy via the stick, moving with it, leading and responding.

NOTE: Don't get too rough, you are a team, not competitors!

After some time, try moving around the space in a similar fashion, but without the stick. What is the dynamism between you as performers?

Devising Tip: When working on creating scenes, try out Activity 6 and 7 whilst in character. How do they affect the relationships between the characters?

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Thinking about Proxemics



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Proxemics concern the spatial relationships between characters on the stage. The distances between characters can be telling, and a powerful visual indication of the relationship between them.

For example, in **Diagram A**, the two characters are at a distance from one another. This suggests a lack of intimacy and perhaps even a sense of distrust.

In **Diagram B**, the two characters are much closer, which suggests intimacy, trust and understanding between the two.

However, proxemics can also be used to deliberately undermine the expectations of these spatial relationships. Consider, for example, if the two characters in **Diagram A** are in love, but cannot be seen near each other. The distance between them is, therefore, charged with restrained longing and pain. Similarly, if the two characters in **Diagram B** are worst enemies, their proximity is charged with hatred and the possibility of violence.

Another important aspect to consider is not only the spatial relationships between the performers, but also between the performers and the audience. In **Diagram C**, one character is further away from the audience than the other. This proximity could either be used to build an audience's trust in a character (the hero, for example), or to let the audience in on the motivations of the villain (consider, for example, if the closer character told the audience he planned to murder the character in the distance).

Proxemics is a vital ingredient to think about when writing about performance or directing/devising new theatrical work.



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ACTIVITY 8

Space and Proxemics

For each of the following scenarios, explain how you would use space and proxemics to create a specific atmosphere. In your responses, consider how the seven states of tension can be applied between physical and spatial tension. You can also use scenarios from the texts of your choice if you wish.

Try quickly improvising each scene before writing to develop your ideas.

- 1) Two young lovers are about to kiss, but they cannot be close because one has a cold.



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- 2) Two worst enemies are trapped in a tiny boiler room.



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- 3) A villain murders a princess (and the audience knows that it's coming).



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MASKS AND MIME

Jacques Lecoq was most famous for his work with mime. For Lecoq, mime was not simply the comic gestures of a street performer (*trapped in a glass box, carrying an invisible sheet of glass, etc.*). Rather, mime referred to the broader body language of acting, an essential and integral means of communication. After all, while we do not always say what we mean, it is very difficult to hide our true feelings in our body language.

In order to focus his students on their bodies and their communicative abilities, Lecoq introduced masks into his classes. These masks, which often hid the performer's face and prevented them from speaking, required his students to use only their bodies to communicate meaning and narrative. He guided his students through a series of masks, from a plain white mask with a neutral expression, to a simple red nose, which exposed the mouth. In this way, Lecoq's students explored how to use their body as a theatrical instrument.

Some of the masks Lecoq introduced to his students were as follows:

Neutral Mask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Places emphasis on physicality and gesture to convey meaning. Gestures must be simple and exact so that they are easily understood.
Emotion Mask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performers must match physicality to given emotion. Alternatively, they must convincingly juxtapose physicality with emotion through their physical performance.
Commedia dell'Arte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each mask comes with its own conventions and character traits. Performers must embody the physicality of the character.
Red Nose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performers are at their most exposed. Must create their own character and expression.

ACTIVITY 8

Perform with Masks

Make some simple masks out of cardboard and paper. Design the following expressions:

- Neutral
- Happy
- Angry
- Worried
- Sad

Neutral Mask

Form a circle. One by one, each member of the class should enter the circle with a chosen emotion (e.g. happy/angry/lonely) which the rest of the class have to guess. The first person is chosen by your teacher. From then on, each performer will whisper an emotion to the person next to them until everyone in the class has been.

How can you communicate emotion without using your face? What sort of gestures can you use to communicate meaning to an audience?

Emotion Mask

In groups, practise performing with each kind of mask. Think about what kinds of physicality you can use to convey the emotion. Think about posture, pace of movement, facial expression, etc.

Describe each physicality below:

Happy:

Angry:

Worried:

Sad:

What is the effect if you perform the physicality of one emotion while wearing the mask of another?

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ACTIVITY 10**Watch It!**

Check out the National Theatre's playlist on Commedia dell'arte on YouTube ([g\(Available at \[zzed.uk/7911-commedia\]\(https://www.zzed.uk/7911-commedia\) or search 'National Theatre Discover' on YouTube Playlist'\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

Watch the videos on this playlist, paying particular attention to the videos entitled 'Commedia dell'arte' and 'Commedia dell'arte: Characterisation'.

What do you notice about the style of performance? How is comedy created? How

**ACTIVITY 11****Experimenting with Commedia**

1. Choose one of the following Commedia dell'arte characters and walk around

Magnifico – The head of state. Brainy and powerful.

Dottore – The doctor is an old know-it-all. He has a big belly and bamboozling medical gibberish.

Il Capitano – The captain brags about his exploits in war, but when it comes

Brighella – Brighella is deceitful and cunning. He is quick to a fight, and equates himself as a successful ladies' man.

Columbina – Columbina is a servant who juggles the affections of several of the only rational characters in the world of Commedia dell'arte.

Zanni – Zanni is a comic servant. He is very honest and eager to please, but with a bit of mischief.

How does your character walk? Remember that these are exaggerated stock characters, instantly recognisable.

Think about the following basic characteristics:

- **Magnifico** – head held high, slow measured movements, nose pointed downwards
- **Dottore** – belly first, pompous expression
- **Il Capitano** – light on his feet, ready to run at any moment
- **Brighella** – cocky, hips first, head high
- **Columbina** – hands on hips, walking quickly
- **Zanni** – wide-eyed, nose pointed upwards, scampering

2. Interact with other characters in the space. How do you as your character speak? How do you interact with other people? Think about status relationships.

Don't use real language when you interact: Use Grammelot – a style of theatrical speech that is like the Sims' speak!



3. Get into a circle. In the middle of the circle, two actors should begin improvising a scene. Only two characters can be on stage at one time. At any moment, someone claps. This freezes the action. The person who clapped then takes the place of one of the characters. They clap again, and the scene resumes with the new character.

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ACTIVITY 12

A Red Nose

This time, all you need is a simple red nose! While a red nose still distinguishes you from yourself, it makes you far more exposed! The communication of meaning is entirely yours.

Using everything you have learned so far, create a character. Employ the same expressive communication techniques you practised with masks. Use tension and space to create a character.

Walk around the space developing your character. Are they happy/sad/worried? Use facial expressions to communicate their feelings.

After some time developing your character, get into groups and improvise together. How do your characters interact? What are their characters like? Do your characters have higher status?

As a class, discuss how you can apply these performance techniques to your own work. How do you use them? How do you apply them in class.



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ACTIVITY 13

Tracking Your Development

It is a good idea to keep track of how your ideas have developed. When they were in your extensive workshop and rehearsal notes to track how the project has evolved. Consider writing 200 words about how your performance ideas have developed.

- What was challenging/liberating about developing your performance methods?
- How could you use tension and space in your own work? Consider pieces you have created including devised performances, extract performances or theoretical explorations.
- What did you learn from performing with masks?
- How do you plan to apply what you learned to future projects?



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APPLYING LECOQ'S THEORIES

You have studied Lecoq's theories. It's now time to see how you (and Complicite)

Complicite have applied Lecoq's theories of performance to all of their work, from performances employed in *A Minute Too Late* (1994), which used exaggerated physicality, to the poetic ensemble movement of the company's more recent work and *A Disappearing Number* (2007). By exploring tempo, space and the power of shows with a rich theatrical language, they challenge the traditional reliance on the

Building a Character

A Complicite character might consider the following when building a character:



TENSION

At what state of tension is the character at any given moment in the scene?

SPACE

How does the character inhabit the space? Where should the character be in relation to the audience?

PROXEMICS

In what way can the distances between characters be used to communicate meaning?



JUXTAPOSITION

How can movement, physicality, and proxemics challenge and undermine the expectations of an audience?

ACTIVITY 14

Character Work

Pick a character from a text that you are studying in class. Walk around the space, walk, think about the physical characteristics of that character. How do they move themselves? What is their natural state of tension?

Start with an exaggerated physicality, as if you were performing the character work. Then, gradually tone down the performance until you are just walking as yourself. How does the character move from nothing to exaggerated? What is possible for your character?

Remember to take notes on what you discover!



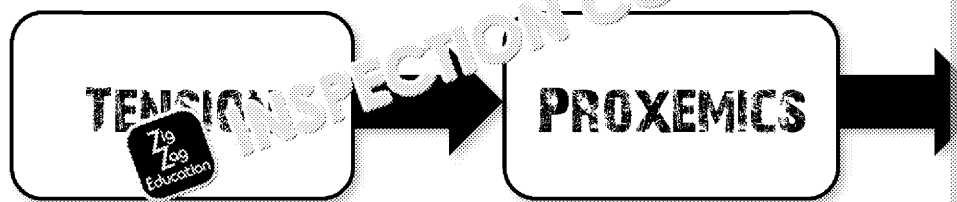
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Developing a Scene

The basic principles of Lecoq and Complicite can also be applied while rehearsing. Working with very dialogue heavy, it is still vitally important to think about physical communication through movement.

Whenever you work on a scene, keep in mind how the following physical aspects mean of communication:



You should also consider, where possible, how physical performance could be used. That theatre is primarily a visual form (theatre comes from the Greek 'theatron' which means to see). Complicite always look for the simplest way of communicating an idea. More often than not, a physical/visual element.

ACTIVITY 15

Rehearsing a Scene

Return to the *Great Expectations* extract in Section 4, Activity 5 of this resource. In your rehearsal, keep in mind the following:

- **Tension.** At what state of tension is Pip naturally? How does this change when he meets the convict? Or when he meets the convict? At what state of tension is the convict? Does this change?
- **Space.** How big is your performance space? How can you use distance and proximity to create dramatic effect? How can you use proxemics to create tension in the scene between Pip and the convict?
- **Mime.** Can you use physical gestures to communicate meaning? Can you perform alone? Can you choreograph a moment of clown-esque performance between Pip and the convict meet?

ASSESSMENT TOP TIP

i **Edexcel AS Level: Component 1 (Exploration and Preparation)**
 While exploring, interpreting and preparing your key extract for performance, think about 'characterisation, use of stage space and spatial relationships' (Edexcel, 2016). Activities 14 and 15 provide great opportunities to develop your performance from your performance text. Why not swap the *Great Expectations* extract and start prepping for your assessment?

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Complicite's Production Design

Complicite are famous for their imaginative and technically complex production design. The projection of *A Disappearing Number* (2007) to the rich aural world of *The Encouragement* always create a memorable and magical theatre experience.

What is most impressive about Complicite's design is the way it integrates so seamlessly with the performance of the company. A Complicite production design not only supports the performers, but becomes an integral part of the way the show develops. For Complicite, performance and design go hand in hand.



I try to push the boundaries. So for all of the story, you are realising in

As with anything Complicite do, the key ingredient is collaboration. Unlike regular productions, where the design team is largely separate, a Complicite designer must be in the rehearsal room at all times, contributing to what happens. This means that the performers can integrate design into the show from the start.

ACTIVITY 1

Design Collaboration

Split into groups. Each group should then divide into performers and designers.

The performers must improvise a short scene, e.g. going to the doctor's, while the designers should then sketch out a quick set design, making sure you include anything the performer does. If a performer mimes knocking on a door, the design should include a door.

The designers should discuss their ideas with the performers and consider any changes. The performers should then re-improvise the scene, keeping in mind the design elements that the designers have introduced. How has the scene improved? Do you have a firm idea of the set in mind?



After some rehearsal time, present your scenes and design sketches to the rest of the class. Discuss how you came to decisions and how performance and design influenced each other.

ASSESSMENT TOP TIP

i

Edexcel A Level: Component 1 (Devising)

If you are an A Level design candidate for Component 1 using Collaborative Devising, you must apply their methodology as you 'work collaboratively to devise an ensemble' (Edexcel specification, 2016). Make sure you are in the rehearsal room while the rest of the company devise. Work closely with the performers and introduce elements of design to support the rehearsal process. AO1 design marks ('Create and develop ideas and communicate them') are awarded for 'theatre-making process, making connections between dramatic text and design'. Make sure you record all this in your portfolio!



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⁹ O'Mahony, J 'Anarchy in the U.K.', *Guardian*, 2005. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com>

SET AND PROP DESIGN

Complicite adapt their set designs to the demands of the show that they are working on. Sometimes their designs are specific, such as the realistic lecture theatre used in *Disappearing Number* (2007). Sometimes their designs are more abstract, such as the **anechoic wall** used in *The Encounter* (2015). Whatever the set might be, it must support the thematic and narrative world of the play and enhance the performance for the company.

KEY WORDS

Anechoic Wall A wall designed to absorb sound waves



ACTIVITY 2

Design in Focus

Read through the interview with Michael Levine, the designer for *The Encounter*, available at zzed.uk/7911-levine

How does Levine's design simultaneously support and juxtapose the world of the play?

Complicite are not afraid to leave technology in full view on stage. For example, in *The Encounter*, the actors read into microphones from scripts which were placed on stands, all of which were visible to the audience. Similarly, a camera was visible at one side of the stage, filming the performance and showing the resulting footage on a screen.

The effect of a design such as this is an *epiphany* in which the artificiality and theatricality of the production is brought to the audience's attention. The production is not pretending to be realistic. Instead, it is *complicit* in the meaning-making process, embracing the theatricality of the stage and the audience's imagination to fill in the gaps.



In keeping with this sense of complicity with the audience, props and items of set design are often repurposed for different purposes. For example, in *The Master and Margarita* a kiosk was transformed into a bar by repositioning it and adding sound effects. In the same production, a horse was created by combining chairs and projection. Complicite trust its audiences to accept the reinvention of objects and spaces with the inherent theatricality of their storytelling techniques.

ACTIVITY 3

Adaptable Props

Get into a circle and place a chair in the middle of the room. One by one, each person in the circle and interact with the chair, repurposing it through their performance. For example, *the chair and deliver a political speech, the next person might sit on the chair over and over again.*

How many different ways can you use the chair? What other everyday objects can be repurposed in this way?



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ACTIVITY 4

Set Design Sketch

Using the set design ideas you have developed above, sketch out a Complicite-inspired set design. This extract printed earlier in this book is for another text you are studying in class. How can you apply technology to your set design?

Draw an aerial sketch or a detailed end-on illustration. Label your illustration clearly.

NOTE: Complicite have always used an end-on stage configuration as this best supports the creation of

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PUPPETRY AND OBJECT THEATRE

In keeping with their use of adaptable props, Complicite have also used puppetry to tell stories. In some cases, this has been a conventional puppet operated by puppeteers, such as the giant cat used in *The Master and Margarita* (2011). On other occasions, they have brought everyday objects to life. For example, in *The Street of Crocodiles* (1992), books were turned into birds by the performers. In *Mnemonic* (1999) the 5,300-year-old Iceman was a book chair manipulated by the company.

Again, this overtly theatrical piece relies on a complicity with the audience, a mutual agreement to suspend our disbelief and accept that books can be birds, and broken chairs can be prehistoric people.

While developing your ideas, why not think about using puppetry to tell your story?

ACTIVITY 5

Watch It!

Watch the Gyre and Gimble masterclass on how to bring a puppet to life (available on YouTube. Search 'National Theatre Discover' and 'Bringing a Puppet to Life')

What do you learn about manipulating a puppet? How could you apply the principles of weight to everyday objects?

ACTIVITY 6

Bird Books

In Complicite's *The Street of Crocodiles*, books were transformed into birds. Grab a book and watch the following videos of birds in flight. Think about how you could recreate what you see.

- Watch the following videos of birds in flight. Think about how you could recreate what you see.
- How do you create a realistic sense of flight? Think about speed, direction and weight.
- Try working as an ensemble to create a flock of birds. Who is leading? How do they interact?
- Can you devise a short play about the bird books? What's the story?

ACTIVITY 7

Bringing an Object to Life

Each member of the class should find an object from around the room, anything from a chair to a book.

How can you bring this object to life? Think about breath, focus and weight.

How do these objects interact with each other? How can they communicate? Spend time with your object, making it move and interact with others. Then come back to a group and discuss what you have done. How could you carry this over to your own performance project / production concept?

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LIGHTING DESIGN

For a company who are so interested in overlapping worlds, times and spaces, lighting is a highly important tool. Complicite use light to both delineate separate spaces and to blur the boundaries between different times.




Complicite also use subtle changes in lighting to bridge the divide between the real world and the theatrical experience. In both *Mnemonic* (1995) and *The Encounter* (2015), the show began with a performer coming on stage while the house lights were still on, sometimes even as the audience were still entering. This performer addressed the audience in a conversational way, introducing the show and discussing the experience that they were about to have. Then, through gradual change in lighting, the show subtly became more theatrical, and the main body of the show began. This technique overcomes the jarring distinction between real life and the show that a simple blackout would have created.

ACTIVITY 8

Thinking about Lighting

Consider a text you are studying or a performance you are preparing in class. What occur in the text? How could you communicate these through lighting? Is there any if such an overlap is not specifically written into the text? How could you achieve it? *For example, you might cross fade between two different lighting states, or you might cross*

Consider the questions above and fill in the table below, detailing your Complicite

Time/Location 1	Lighting State: Colour/...
	
Time/Location 2	Lighting State: Colour/...
	
Time/Location 3	Lighting State: Colour/...
	

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PROJECTION DESIGN

Many of Complicite's shows have made use of **projection**. In *A Disappearing Nun* were projected across the stage. In *The Master and Margarita* (2011), the actors and these images were livestreamed and projected onto the back of the stage.

KEY WORDS

Projection Projecting images onto the stage using multimedia technology

Projection can be used to create powerful visual images. For example:

- Live-streaming recording offers different angles on the stage – for example, the
- Setting indicated through projection.
- The internal emotions of a character can be communicated through projection. A volcano explosion might indicate a character's anger!

ACTIVITY 9

Using Projection

How else might you use projection? What other visual effects could you achieve? further the narrative of a play?

Key Elements to Consider

When planning and working with projection, the following design elements should

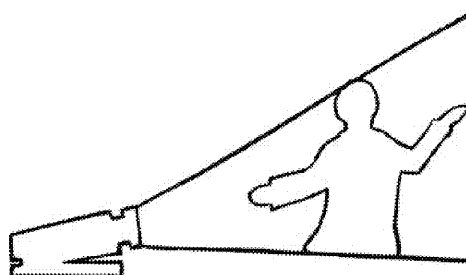
Will you use projection to light the space? What shadows are created by the projection?

IMAGE

What images will you project? Will they be still or moving images? Realistic or abstract?

SCALE

How big do you want the projected image to be? How much of the stage should it cover?



PERFORMANCE

How will the performers interact with the projection?

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ACTIVITY 10

Experimenting with Projection

NOTE: You will need a projector for this activity.

Set up a projector and project some moving images on the wall. Experiment with

Scale – Move the projector closer to the wall and then further away. How does this work with the size adjustment controls on the projector. How big/small can you make the

Surface – Try projecting onto a range of surfaces. How is projecting on a wall different from, for example, projecting images onto people. What effect does this have? What happens if you project under the feet? What is the effect of having people move in front of the projection?

Light – Try turning all the lights off and lighting the space using only the projector. How can you use shadows to create powerful visual images?

ACTIVITY 11

Designing Projection

Return to the *Great Expectations* extract in Section 4, Activity 5 of this resource (or any other extract that you choose).

In groups, discuss how you might use projection to enhance a performance of this extract. Will they be still images or moving images? How will your performers interact with the projection?

After some discussion time, present your ideas to the class. Discuss and justify your decisions in writing.

ACTIVITY 12

Put It into Practice

NOTE: You will need a video camera and a projector for this activity.

In groups, pick one moment from the *Great Expectations* extract (or the text you choose) and discuss ideas and how you might achieve them in practice. Make sure you choose images that are easy to source/record yourself – simplicity is always more effective!

Example Ideas:

- You might project the words ‘Also Georgiana Wife of the Above’ while describing her.
- You might record and project actors portraying Pip’s mother and father.
- You might project an indication of setting, e.g. *grass/trees*.
- You might project an upside-down church when Pip is held by the convict.

Now put these ideas into practice! Source or record the images you need and then perform the projection into a performance of the text. Remember to consider the important elements of the text.

After some rehearsal time, show your performance to the rest of the class. Discuss what you think worked well and what you could improve.

ACTIVITY 13

Taking It Further

If the technology is available, you could also experiment with live-streamed images. Use a video camera connected to a screen with a cable, or using video calling. What effects can your performers live? How can you use live-recording to create powerful visual effects?



ACTIVITY 14

Writing It Down

It is important to accurately describe and justify your projection design decisions. your design for Activity 7, detailing how your designs were practically achieved decisions. Justify your answer in relation to the text and the work of Complicite.

Lined writing area with horizontal dotted lines and a vertical dashed line on the right. Includes two 'Zig Zag Education' logos and 'INSPECTION COPY' watermarks.



ASSESSMENT TOP TIP

As part of the process for Component 1 of the Edexcel A Level qualification 'intermediate work on text and practice', exploring 'deconstruction of communication' (Edexcel specification, 2016). Activities 4-9 would develop design ideas for your devised performance. Why not swap extract with an extract from your chosen source material?

SOUND DESIGN

Alongside visuals, the aural experience of an audience is the most important aspect of designing a Complicite show. The company have always made use of engaging and complex sound design to support the rhythms of their performances.

Whether it be the vivid aural world of *The Encounter* (2015) or the original composition of *A Disappearing Number* (2007), sound is of central importance to any production design for a Complicite show.

ACTIVITY 15



Watch

Watch Simon McBurney and Nitin Sawhney discuss sound design for *A Disappearing Number* (Available at: zzed.uk/7911-number or search 'Barbican Centre' and 'Simon McBurney on A Disappearing Number')

How were the themes of the play incorporated into the sound design? What does this tell you about equally important theatre language?

ACTIVITY 16

Listening and Recreating

In *The Encounter*, Simon McBurney recreated the sounds of the rainforest through percussion. The sound of a river lapping against a boat was created by slowly rotating a half-full glass of water.

Close your eyes and listen to the world around you. Make a note of all the sounds you hear. Think about how you could recreate these sounds using everyday objects and your body. Test your ideas in the table below. Try creating sounds that could exist in one of the texts you're studying.

Real Sound	How to Recreate
e.g. rain on the window	e.g. clapping

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Disembodied Voices

Complicite have also used sound to blur the boundaries between the real and the imaginary. In *Complicite* (1999) and *The Encounter* (2015), the live words spoken by an actor were seamlessly blended with recorded sound, without the audience being aware of when the transition took place. This raises questions about how much we can trust what we experience, and whether there is such a thing as objective truth, both of which were important themes in the play *Beware of Pity* (2015), one actor spoke the lines of a character into a microphone while another actor portrayed them physically, creating an unsettling, disembodied voice effect that suited the disturbing nature of the character. By combining both live and recorded sound in this way, Complicite create vivid and surprising aural experiences.

ACTIVITY



Sounding Off

In groups, look at the following extract from Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* as his soul over to the devil, Faustus waits for the devil to come and drag him to hell.

As you rehearse the speech, experiment with a range of different sound options. Try speaking before the speech is taken over by the other performers. Faustus could whisper words or keep his mouth still. If you have recording equipment / a mobile phone, try recording the speech and then playing it back during the scene. You should also produce sound effects for the devils! After some rehearsal time, present your scenes to the class and discuss how they sound. What effect did different decisions in this scene create and how could you improve your own work?

FAUSTUS. Ah, half the hour is past! 'twill all be past anon
 O God, if thou wilt not have mercy on my soul,
 Yet for Christ's sake, whose blood hath ransom'd me,
 Impose some end to my tormentant pain;
 Let Faustus die, or live a thousand years,
 Or burn a thousand, and at last be sav'd!
 My tormentant end is limited to damned souls!

In this scene, time is passing so fast that God cannot allow him to die.

[The clock striketh twelve.]

O, it strikes, it strikes! Now, body, turn to air,
 Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell!

In these lines, Faustus is desperate to escape his fate by turning into air.

[Thunder and lightning.]

O soul, be chang'd into little water-drops,
 And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found!

Enter DEVILS.

My God, why look'st thou not so fierce on me!
 Let me to bed, and serpents, let me breathe a while!
 Hell, gape not! come not, Lucifer!
 I'll burn my books! — Ah, Mephistophilis!

In this scene, Faustus is desperate to escape his fate by turning into water.

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COSTUME DESIGN

As with other aspects of Complicite’s production design, costumes are made in response to the demands of the show. Sometimes they are a vivid and colourful indication of time and place, such as in *A Disappearing Number* (2007). At other times they are designed *not* to attract attention, such as the understated colours of McBurney’s clothes in *The Encounter* (2015), which directed attention towards the aural world he was creating rather than his outfit!

When making costume design decisions, you should consider what the intended effect of the production is and how you can best support this through design.



ACTIVITY

Complicite Costume

The best way to justify your own costume design decisions is through an understanding of costume designs. Look up images of the productions below and make notes about their effects.

<i>MNEMONIC</i>	<i>A DISAPPEARING NUMBER</i>
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<i>THE MASTER AND MARGARITA</i>	<i>ENCOUNTER</i>
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Collaboration and Influence

COLLABORATION

Collaboration is at the heart of Complicite's work. As they say on their website:

The Company is famous for making its work through intensive periods of research, bringing together performers, designers, architects, writers, artists and specialists from diverse backgrounds.

In fact, the only permanent member of Complicite's artistic team is Simon McBurney. The company's success is due to the input of collaborators is essential to the creation of its productions. Complicite's collaborators are diverse and specialised, ranging from theatre professionals to academics to scientists and mathematicians.

ACTIVITY 1

Expert Opinion

Take another look at Complicite's online resource about developing *The Encounter* (available at: zzed.uk/7911-encounterresource)

How many different people contributed to the development of the project? What was their input to the overall success of the production?

ASSESSMENT TOP TIP

i Simon McBurney says 'Theatre is a magpie that steals from other arts'. This gives you licence to borrow things from production techniques and apply them to your own devising work! When you go to the theatre, enjoy about the production and how you might apply these techniques. You should also borrow techniques directly from Complicite, as Edgcomb says 'some key moments from a practitioner's oeuvre in the performance'. This will also impress the examiners and bag you some AO2 points ('realise artistic intentions in live performance'). Just make sure you reference your portfolio!

ACTIVITY 2

Collaborators

Pick one of the following names and prepare a five-minute presentation on their main achievements? How have they collaborated with Complicite? Include photos if appropriate.

- John Berger (writer)
- Es Devlin (set designer)
- Gareth Pendergast (sound designer)
- Blind Summit (puppeteer)
- Christina Cunningham (costume designer)

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¹⁰ Espiner, M, 2000. 'Nothing Stays Still, Each Show Must Change', *Independent*. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/features/nothing-stays-still-each-show-must-change-638362.html>

INFLUENCE

As one of the most important theatre companies of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, Complicite have naturally had a huge impact on the way theatre is made. Theatre has become more text-orientated as a result of the work created by Complicite and other similar companies. Other theatre companies have adopted their focus on movement and technological innovation.

ACTIVITY 3

Spotting Influence

Research the following companies and identify how they have been influenced by description, images and videos and consider choice of subject, performance and

- 1) Kneehigh (www.kneehigh.co.uk)

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- 2) Headlong (www.headlong.co.uk)

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- 3) Theatre O (www.theatreo.co.uk)

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Exam Preparation

AS LEVEL COMPONENT 1: EXPLORATION AND PERFORMANCE

For this component, you are required to study and practically explore a performance or group performance or a design realisation of an extract of a text, in which you play the role of your chosen practitioner. This component will be assessed through a practical performance which documents and analyses your work.

Component 1 is worth 96 marks and accounts for 60% of your total qualification. Your performance or design realisation is worth 32 marks. The final 16 marks are made up of two dialogues. You do not need to apply the methodology of a practitioner to your work.



Practical Performance Tips

You can apply the methodology of Complicite to your rehearsal process and performance.

- **Place the emphasis on collaboration.** Everyone must have a say in the rehearsal process. All ideas should be considered, even if they don't make it into the final piece.
- **Make theatre that you want to see.** Discuss what you love seeing in the theatre. Theatre is meant to be fun and engaging, and if you are enjoying the rehearsal process, your performance will be better.
- **Experiment with movement and physicality.** Work on the way your characters move. Try pushing the extremes and then dial it down to a more believable/effective level.
- **Integrate technology from the beginning.** If you plan to use projection or sound, integrate it from your very earliest rehearsals. In this way, the performance and design will be more cohesive.
- **Steal.** Theatre is a magpie art! Borrow techniques from other practitioners. Justify your decisions in your portfolio - and thank Simon McBurney for your inspiration.

Portfolio Tips

You must record your rehearsal process for your portfolio. A good way to keep track of the process is to fill out a table such as the following during/after every rehearsal.



Rehearsal Date:			
Rehearsal Objectives	Rehearsal Notes	Complicite Theories Applied?	Evaluation
<i>e.g. Block Hamlet and Gertrude Scene.</i>	<i>e.g. Hamlet should come down S.L. on his line 'nay but to live in the rank sweat...'</i>	<i>e.g. Applying Complicite focus on proxemics and movement – Hamlet moving away from his mother suggests emotional distance.</i>	<i>e.g. Gertrude's movement is believable to find her motivation for her movement.</i>



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A LEVEL COMPONENT 1: DEVISING

For this component, you are required to develop an original performance from a text and work of a theatre practitioner as your point of departure. This component is worth 40% of your total qualification. Your portfolio is worth 60 marks and the devised performance realisation is worth 20 marks.

Luckily, Complicite is primarily a devising company and so their theories can be easily applied. Remember that the process is just as important as the finished project, so ensure you use Complicite's techniques throughout the process, rather than simply recreating their style.



The key elements of the Complicite devising process are:

- An attitude guided by the principles of Lecoq (le jeu / disponibilité / complicité)
- A creatively stimulating rehearsal room (costumes / mood boards, etc.)
- Breaking down text into its component parts
- A focus on the many ways of telling a story (narration, movement, visuals)
- Designers must be actively involved in the rehearsal process

Key Questions

Below is a list of key questions to consider when devising a Complicite-inspired performance. Print out large posters and attach them to your rehearsal room wall, along with other key questions to use for inspiration.

How can you use **tension** to communicate meaning?

How will you use **space and proxemics**?

Deconstruct your text. What key moments/lines/themes could inspire your devised narrative?

How might you use **movement** to tell the story?

Can **props** be adapted through performance?

How will you use sound to create a rich **aural world**?

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A LEVEL COMPONENT 3: THEATRE MAKERS IN PRACTICE, SECTION C PERFORMANCE TEXT

In Section C of the Component 3 exam, you will be required to assume the role of a theatre practitioner and would reimagine a complete performance text for a contemporary audience in the practitioner's methodology and practice. Component 3 is worth 80 marks and accounts for 40% of your qualification. Section C of Component 3 is worth 24 marks.

You will be given the choice of two questions, which ask how you would apply your knowledge of the methodology and practice of either direction of performance or production design in an extract from a performance text. You should also refer to the original performance conditions of your chosen text in your answers and how these inform your decisions for your overall production concept.

- 1) If your question asks you about aspects of performance, you might apply Complicite's methodology to your text in the following ways:
 - **Movement and Mime.** Are there aspects of the script that could be communicated through movement and mime?
 - **Space and Proxemics.** The space between characters can communicate their relationship. Proximity can suggest intimacy while physical distance can suggest tension.
 - **Physicality and Tension.** The way characters hold themselves is also telling. How will they hold a lot of tension in their bodies!
- 2) If your question asks you about aspects of production design (e.g. lighting/sound), you might apply Complicite's methodology to your text in the following ways:
 - **Adaptable Sets and Object Theatre.** Design sets that can serve multiple purposes and allow for smooth transitions and exciting theatrical moments.
 - **Projection.** Projected images can be used to light up the space and further enhance the story. Think about what images you will project and how you will project them.
 - **Innovative Sound.** Sound can help to transport audiences to faraway places. Think about what play is set and how you can create this setting through sound. Consider how you can produce created sounds performed live by performers.

EXAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS

Your exam question may follow a similar structure to the examples below. Use your practice (your teacher may specify certain extracts that you should look at). Give your answers and write your answers.

- 1) As a director, how would you apply the methodology of your chosen production design in [a 100-line extract from your chosen text]? In your answer, refer to your overall production concept and the original performance conditions of your chosen text.
- 2) As a director, how would you apply the methodology of your chosen production design in [a 100-line extract from your chosen text]? In your answer, refer to your overall production concept and the original performance conditions of your chosen text.

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Teacher's Notes and Answers

Who is Complicite?

Activity 1: Watch It!

Students may notice the following in Complicite's showreel:

- A rich visual quality
- Effective use of lighting and projection
- Ensemble movement and physical theatre
- Use of puppets
- Dance
- A film

Activity 2: Theatre in the 80s

- 1) Thatcherism was a term used to describe the policies of Margaret Thatcher. It meant transferring public services to the private sector.
- 2) Thatcherism affected the theatre industry because arts funding was cut. Theatre like businesses and so sure-fire successes such as musicals were increasingly profitable.
- 3) The Arts Council is a government-funded body who are responsible for supporting the arts across the country. They offer financial support for the arts industry through grants.
- 4) The changes to the theatre industry in the 1980s led to a rise in a more visual style of theatre. The playwright was less important, and the conventional route of making theatre (to a theatre who develop the show) was replaced by theatre companies making their own shows. This was certainly a product of this artistic atmosphere.

Activity 3: Who is Jacques Lecoq?

- 1) Lecoq was born in Paris in 1921.
- 2) Before working in theatre, Lecoq was a sportsman and a physiotherapist. He studied the way the human body moved. This influenced his movement-based approach to theatre.
- 3) Lecoq's main theories of theatre were to do with the performer's body. For Lecoq, the body was the primary tool of communication. Lecoq theorised that the tension in a performer's body and the way a performer moved around the space were central to the communication of meaning.
- 4) At the Lecoq School in Paris, Lecoq made his students experiment with movement and gesture to express their emotions. In this way, the performers were forced to use their bodies to communicate.

Activity 4: Who is Simon McBurney?

- 1) McBurney was born in Cambridge in 1957. He studied English Literature at Cambridge.
- 2) Alongside his theatre work, McBurney has acted in film and television.

Activity 5: Complicite

Complicite's name suggests a sense of complicity – both between the performers and the audience. It is a play on the word 'complicity' and the suspension of disbelief.

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An Overview of Complicite's Work

Activity 1: Tracing Complicite's Development

The first stage of their development lasts from their conception until roughly 1989 until roughly 2007. The final stage runs from 2007 until the present day. This activity could be completed as homework.

Complicite's Key Shows

Street of Crocodiles

First Performed: 6th August 1992

Summary: *Street of Crocodiles* is an adaptation of the writings of Bruno Schulz. Schulz depicts local life. His narratives are often surreal and fantastical, slipping between reality and imagination. *Crocodiles* centres on the life of a Polish family.

Main Themes: Imagination, reality, memory, identity, class

Mnemonic

First Performed: July 1999

Summary: Inspired by the discovery of a 5,300-year-old corpse in the mountains by the Iceman, *Mnemonic* is made up of several interweaved narratives all dealing with memory and identity. One man tries to find out about their father, another looks for the reason his girlfriend left him. They all try to determine what happened to the Iceman all those years ago.

Main Themes: Memory, reality, identity

A Disappearing Number

First Performed: 28th March 2007

Summary: Inspired by the relationship between the Indian maths prodigy Srinivasa Ramanujan and professor G H Hardy, this play also featured interwoven narratives. In the 1910s, Ramanujan works with Hardy. Meanwhile, in the present day a man follows the route of his father to his lover, to discover what happened to her.

Main Themes: Time, identity, family, memory, mathematics

Beware of Idiots

First Performed: 19th December 2015

Summary: A young Austrian officer becomes intimate with a local rich family. His relationship with the daughter Edith leads to a number of terrible consequences, including the young girl being killed and the soldier travelling to the First World War.

Main Themes: Pity, class, race, reality

Activity 3: Responding to *The Encounter*

- 1) Students may suggest the act of wearing headphones makes the experience more powerful as a performer seems to be speaking to you directly.
- 2) The method of storytelling is suitable because it transports us to an exotic world, reality and existence and also reflects the focus on telepathic communication that goes straight into someone's mind.
- 3) Complicite are highly innovative and creative, using technology. Their design of the narrative of the play.

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Complicite's Artistic Intentions

Activity 3: Performing Memory

Students should be encouraged to think of positive or neutral memories. Steer students away from upsetting memories as these may distract from the purpose of the task!

Complicite's Rehearsal Process

Activity 1: Watch It!

Having 'no endgame' can be helpful as it gives the performers up to explore things with freedom to improvise and see what interesting things leads to more engaging and varied work.

Having 'no endgame' could also be difficult as you could explore things forever with no focus, especially trying to create something over a short space of time – consider how many years to devise and refine!

Activity 3: Watch It!

Theatre as a compositional piece is a helpful idea to introduce how Complicite work by bringing together several things – performance/lighting/sound, etc. – to create a total process, in which a play is written and then performed, Complicite's composing is a process of collaboration and refinement.

Activity 5: Workshopping a Text

To make this Activity work more closely with what your students are studying you could use extracts of their texts rather than the chosen extract from Great Expectations.

Complicite's Performance Style

Activity 2: Identifying Tension

A completed table should look like this:

Tension Level	Description
5	On edge, ready for fight or flight, like a startled cat.
4	Inquisitive, moving all the time, interested in everything around you.
3	Standing tall and neutral. Simple, direct movements.
2	Relaxed everyday posture, head up, shoulders back.
7	Full of tension. Your movements have completely taken over. You can hardly breathe.
1	No tension whatsoever. Completely relaxed on the floor.
6	Full of intense emotion (terror/grief/hilarity). Can't control your movements.

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Activity 8: Space and Proxemics

Example student answers:

- 1) I would have a distance between the two lovers. The lover who does not have a passionate level of tension, because they are so distraught at not being able to be one with the disease would be relaxed, having accepted the situation. When the other, however, the ill lover would become suspenseful, warning them and creating a distance between them.
- 2) The enemies would begin at suspense, trying to remain calm in this stressful situation. They would position their bodies as far apart as the constricted space allows. As pressure builds, so too does the tension, leading to a tragic level with both characters, with rage and fighting.
- 3) I would have the villain on the stage, nearest the audience. The princess would be positioned further back, making her seem small and helpless while the villain seems big and threatening. The distance of complicity with the villain, which increases the tension as the princess comes closer to what is about to happen. As the distance between the two characters gets smaller...

Activity 10: Watch It!

Due to the length of the videos for the students to watch this could work well as a homework task to do to prepare for the work on Commedia. If there isn't time to watch all the videos...

Complicite's Production Design**Activity 2: Design in Focus**

Michael Levine's design supports the world of the play as it places the emphasis on sound production. However, it also juxtaposes the world of the play because it is a rainforest environment that Loren is navigating.

Activity 9: Using Projection

You could prerecord parts of the play and play them out a performance. You could also juxtapose the content/themes of the play with projection. You could integrate projection into the production to *turn a television on*.

Activity 15: Watch It!

The Indian production reflected the play's focus on mathematics and sequences. The elements of production should be integrated: production design is just as important as the script. Elements must communicate the themes/narrative of the piece.

Collaboration and Influence**Activity 1: Expert Opinion**

McBurney first spoke to experts that included Jess Worth, Rebecca Spooner, Rita Cosgrove, and Takuma Kuikuro. They all provided insights into the cultural, political and historical context of the play.

McBurney then collaborated with designers Gareth Fry and Michael Levine to create the production. He also began workshopping the piece with co-director Kirsty Housley.

Activity 3: Spotting Influence**1) Kneehigh**

Kneehigh's work crosses a number of disciplines and relies on many collaborators for the stage. Their productions use a lot of projection and other elements of play like puppetry. They also encourage a sense of complicity with an audience, in which the audience members take responsibility for suspending disbelief and conjuring imagined worlds.

2) Headlong

Headlong are a highly successful British theatre company. Their productions use a lot of movement and technology. They have adapted classic texts, such as *Doctor Faustus* and *Macbeth*, and new plays, such as *Enron*, which have received international acclaim. Like Complicite, they have many collaborators.

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3) Theatre O

Theatre O combine movement, text, puppetry and music to create visually rich and adapted and reinterpreted classic texts including Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* and *Brothers Karamazov*. Their visual and movement-based approach owes a lot to

Exam Preparation

A Level Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice Section C: Interpreting a Performance

Example Exam Questions

1) Indicative Content:

Answers will vary depending on the text and extract written about, but students should refer to the following:

- Use of lighting and projection
- Lighting closely changing with the actions of the performers (with reference to working methods – designers involved from early in the process)
- Non-naturalistic, poetic lighting used to help tell the story
- Reference to visual poetry and John Berger
- Use of house lights during performance
- Use of lights to delineate or mix different spaces and times

2) Indicative Content:

Answers will vary depending on the text and extract written about, but students should refer to the following:

- Highly physical performances
- Use of mime
- Use of puppets and object theatre
- Playfulness and ensemble work (*Le Jeu – Comportement – Disponibilite*)
- Use of spacing and visual poetry

For further guidance on content and how to assess students' responses, please see this question provided by Edexcel.



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