

# Solo Theatre Piece (STP)

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## HL only - 35% of IB Theatre Grade

### **Submission Requirements:**

Ensure you submit the following 3 items:

1. A video file in .mov or .mp4 format of your performance, lasting between 4 & 8 minutes. The file size cannot exceed 500MB.
2. A report, maximum 3,000 words in .pdf format. Check that everything is legible and does not fall off the page *after* converting to pdf. (IB also allow .doc files, but I recommend PDF to ensure the layout remains exactly how you want it)
3. A separate list of references file in .pdf format.

### **First Steps**

You must select one *Theatre Theorist* that you have not studied before. Identify one or more aspects of his/her theory (I recommend no more than 2) and study these in great detail. A theatre theorist must be someone who has had a *considerable impact on their field* (i.e. directing, acting, lighting design etc.).

*A common pitfall is to choose a philosopher or writer - avoid these as it becomes difficult to see their theory in performance.*

There should be both primary and secondary sources, and such sources must be publicly and readily available. Examples of theorists include (image taken from IB Theatre Guide):

Theorist	Primary and secondary sources	Aspect(s) of theory	Potential theatre piece
Robert Lepage (b.1957)	Interview: "Connecting Flights" (1999) Book: <i>The Theatricality of Robert Lepage</i> by Aleksandar Sasa Dundjerović (2007)	Film projection	Solo theatre presentation of a monologue about the tsunami. Created, directed and performed by the student using film projection designed by the student.
Zeami Motokiyo (b.1363)	Book: <i>On the Art of No Drama</i> translated by Yamazaki and Rimer (1984) Book: <i>Zeami: Performance Notes</i> by Zeami and Hare (2011)	Quality of movement	Solo presentation of the dance from <i>Hagoromo</i> (The Feather Robe). Directed and performed by the student with costume designed by the student.
Konstantin Stanislavski (b.1863)	Book: <i>An Actor Prepares</i> (1936) Book: <i>Stanislavski and the Actor</i> by Jean Benedetti (1998)	Concentration and circles of attention	Solo presentation of a monologue from <i>The Dream Play</i> by Strindberg. Directed and performed with costume design by the student.
Julie Taymor (b.1952)	Book: <i>Julie Taymor: Playing with Fire</i> by Blumenthal, Taymor and Monda (2007) Book: <i>The Reemergence of Mythology, Fantasy and Fable</i> by Sabrina Stewart (2009)	Puppetry and storytelling	Solo presentation of one of Aesop's fables adapted for the stage. Directed and performed by the student using puppets.
Robert Wilson (b.1941)	Lecture: "1. Have you been here before? 2. No this is the first time" (2008) Book: <i>Robert Wilson: From Within</i> by Margery Arent Safir (2011)	Use of light	Solo presentation of an original piece of theatre without words based on <i>Macbeth</i> by Shakespeare. Directed and performed by the student using lighting designed by the student.

You are free to choose any person, and do not have to select from a list. More ideas at [https://docs.google.com/a/canacad.ac.jp/document/d/19AphIWRcea\\_o8YDr3GgRkf3hPzG5CHK42I9q-TYkQYc/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/a/canacad.ac.jp/document/d/19AphIWRcea_o8YDr3GgRkf3hPzG5CHK42I9q-TYkQYc/edit?usp=sharing)

Conduct research into:

- The theorist and his/her background
- The theory and how it was applied at the time, and since
- The context of the creation of the theory: what was going on in theatre at that time and place? What went before it? Why was this theory established?
- Context can be: cultural; political; social; personal; theatrical/theoretical

## Research

Consult a variety of sources. You attract marks for the range and quality of sources. For top marks, you must use “a range” of sources effectively. I suggest a *minimum* of five sources to meet this requirement. Types of source should also vary - e.g. books, interviews, email conversations, DVDs, live performance experience, journal articles etc. I suggest a minimum of three source types. You **must** cite sources in the body of the report: direct quotes, paraphrasing, and ideas or opinions from others put into your own words must be cited. Google the difference between *in-text citations* and *list of references* if you are not sure - both are needed.

## Practical Explorations

Once you have a theory, and narrowed down to 1-3 aspects of that theory, you must **practically experiment with the aspect(s) and your piece of theatre**. Record your reflections, challenges and progress in your journal at every step. Find practical activities and exercises that will work well with your chosen aspect(s). You should document the source of any you find, and document your use of all activities - including exercises you create to try out your chosen aspects. You must justify your choice of activities, and your decisions about what goes in your solo theatre piece, in your report. For top marks, you must use “a range of carefully selected and relevant” practical techniques in your explorations. I suggest a *minimum* of five different techniques to practically explore your chosen aspect(s), and where these techniques have a clear link to the theorist your work will be strengthened. Photos of you doing practical activities are helpful, and if used should be annotated and attributed.

### What Practical Explorations are not

The low-scoring Practical Exploration sections of reports tend to simply talk the examiner through the chronology of devising a piece of theatre. They tend to describe what the final piece looks and sounds like, justifying choices without explaining what practical explorations they took to get to these choices. Whilst watching videos and doing mind maps do count as practical exploration, low-scoring reports tend to rely only on these methods as tools for exploring a theory.

*The purpose of Practical Exploration is to play around with the **aspects of theory** in order to make decisions on enhancing your piece of theatre and its intentions. This link must be clear, and your report must include both sides of this link.*

### Your piece of theatre can be:

- An existing monologue/piece of theatre
- An adapted monologue/piece of theatre
- A newly created monologue/piece of theatre by you.
- Containing no text at all.

Whatever you choose, ensure the piece of theatre allows you to:

1. Explore the aspect
2. Enhance your piece of theatre using the aspect
3. Present the finished piece showing clear and visible use of the aspect.

Whilst you can use a designer's theory of light or sound, amongst other elements, as your focus, your final theatre piece cannot be performed by anyone but you. This means you still need to perform a piece of theatre - using your studied design theory to enhance your performance. Your report will then focus on how your design aspect has enhanced the solo theatre piece.

### **Design/Directorship**

Whilst you must approach this task from the perspective of performer, you must also make all decisions about design and direction. You can enlist the help of others, but you must make all decisions about what your piece should look and sound like.

### **Feedback**

You are *required* to gather feedback from others during your creation process. I suggest finding a peer mentor as your main 'creative buddy', though you *absolutely* should get feedback from other students and your teacher too. Your peer mentor should ask questions of you to prompt deeper thinking or to highlight gaps in your research; they may provide feedback on what they see. They can give you ideas or participate in practical exploration with you, but must not direct you or make decisions on your behalf. You must record all interactions with your peer mentor in your journal. You attract marks in your report for your reflections on these interactions, and how they shaped your own decisions and progress. It is what you do with feedback that counts (i.e. what action did you take to improve your piece as a result of feedback).

### **Final Theatre Piece**

Nobody else is allowed to appear in your solo theatre piece - this includes audience plants (people sat with the audience who are instructed on what to say/do at a certain time). Others may operate technical equipment or scenery changes, but only under your prior instruction. Your piece must visibly include your aspect, and should consider: Movement, Space, Voice, Body, Gesture, Lighting, Sound, Set, Costume. You will refer to moments within the video when writing the report.

### **Capturing Audience Response**

You must ensure you capture audience responses: questionnaires or a recorded talkback session will help. Plan your questions carefully: you will need their opinions to judge how well you met your stated intentions. Try to ask open-ended questions, and try not to ask leading questions. Questions such as, "How did this piece make you feel?" "Is there a change in the world you would like to make after seeing this piece?" are helpful.

### **Report**

Your report cannot exceed 3,000 words (excluding contents and list of references). It must be written in formal academic register, using first person where appropriate. Diagrams, photos and other images should be used when appropriate - always being annotated and the source cited (even if the source is you). Text which appears within a visual does not count towards the word limit, but blatant attempts to sidestep the word limit in this way are viewed dimly by examiners.

Your report should be structured as follows:

1. Title page. (Not part of your word count).
2. Table of contents (Not part of your word count).
3. Subheading: **“The theorist, the theory and the contexts.”** (You could even further section this into “Theorist’s Context” - “Aspect’s Context”)
  - a. Explain (give reasons and/or causes) the context of the theorist. Context can be:
    - i. Cultural - what other art, music, religion, ways of life were there around the theorist?
    - ii. Theoretical - what other theatre theories were there around the theorist and/or what theories was your theorist influenced by, either positively or negatively?
    - iii. Biographical - date of birth, mother’s job etc usually have no relevance, but sometimes an event/situation in the theorist’s personal life does impact more obviously on their theory.
    - iv. Socio-Political - was the theorist living in an oppressed state? Living through a humanitarian crisis?
  - b. Explain (give reasons and/or causes) the main theory of your theorist, and explain how this theory fits into the theorist’s context - what was going on around this theorist that is relevant to their practice?
  - c. Explain (reasons and/or causes) your aspect(s). Bring in other aspects where relevant, but don’t spend too many words on these. Also explain the context of the aspect(s). Aspect context can be:
    - i. The overarching theory.
    - ii. Other people’s theories (e.g. is this aspect a rebellion against established practice?)
    - iii. Cultural - what was the prevailing way of life?
    - iv. Political - oppression? Corruption? Humanitarian crisis?
    - v. Context of theorist.
  - d. A range of sources is a minimum of 3, BUT I recommend at least 5 to show depth.
  - e. For them to be considered ‘effective’, your sources should fit into your explanations of theory and aspects.
  - f. The best-used sources reinforce and justify your own observations of the theory, or add an “Oh!” moment for the reader.
  - g. Sources that provide irrelevant biographical information, or appear to be ‘shoe-horned’ in to your report are considered ineffective.

4. Subheading: **“Practical explorations and the development of the piece.”** (You could even further section this into “Practical Explorations and Reflections” - “Artistic Intentions, Informed by Explorations” - “How Feedback Impacted my Creation Process.”)
  - a. *State your artistic intention and intended impact on audience. You can introduce (but not describe in detail) your piece of theatre. It’s fine if these intentions adapt over the course of the creation process.*
  - b. *Talk us through your range of practical techniques, sourced (see section above on what this entails).*
  - c. *What you learned from each activity - both about yourself and about how the piece can be impacted. E.g. was there a particular movement or moment that came up through an activity that you directly inserted into the piece. Link it to your artistic intention.*
  - d. *Make clear links between practical explorations and artistic decisions. Link these connections to your artistic intention.*
  - e. *Include how received feedback impacted different stages of development. The complete chain should look like this: Describe the feedback; evaluate the usefulness of feedback; describe your action in response to feedback; evaluate the modifications you made as a result of your feedback. Link this to your artistic intention.*
5. Subheading: **“Analysis of my practical application of the selected aspect(s).”**
  - a. *This should be a brief section - it is a signpost for the examiner rather than a directly assessed section.*
  - b. *Do you recognise where you applied your selected aspect(s)? Point to specific examples from the video to show that you understand where you have applied your chosen theory.*
  - c. *If your selected aspect(s) involve internal processes (e.g. an emotion recall) that is not visible, point out the moment, explain what you did internally, and analyse your external response.*
6. Subheading: **“Evaluation of the solo theatre piece and my personal reflections.”**
  - a. *To what extent did you meet your artistic intentions? Refer back to them and use specific moments from the video to back up your opinions.*
  - b. *What impact did your piece have on the audience? How do you know (refer to talkback!)? Was it what you wanted? Explain why/why not.*
  - c. *Reflect on learning: What challenges did you face, and how have you become a better creator of theatre by overcoming them? What have you learned about yourself in this project? About theatre? How will this learning change your theatre practice in future?*
7. List of references, entitled ‘References.’ (Not part of your word count). *Your school’s preferred style.*
8. Bibliography containing other sources consulted, but not directly cited in the report. (Not part of your word count).

For point 4, your second section, clearly state what your directorial vision is: what do you want to create; what impact do you want to have on your audience; what kernel do you want to scorch on their memory? Your practical exercises can then be justified with how you hope to achieve this intended impact.