



LAMDA Examinations

Teacher Support Material Graded Examinations in Performance

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Notice to Reader

This document has been put together to support teachers and learners who are preparing for LAMDA Graded Examinations in Performance. It is to be used in conjunction with the LAMDA Graded Examinations in Performance syllabus specification, valid from 1 September 2014.

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LAMDA Graded Examinations in Performance: Acting

Examination Structure

This qualification is available at four levels, in line with the Regulated Qualifications Framework:

Entry Level (Entry 3)

Level 1: Grades 1, 2 and 3

Level 2: Grades 4 and 5

Level 3: Grades 6 (Bronze Medal), Grade 7 (Silver Medal) and Grade 8 (Gold Medal)

LAMDA examinations in Acting are offered in the following formats: Solo (one learner) where the learner performs alone; Duologue (two learners) where the learners perform all scenes together; Combined (two learners, available at Level 1 and Level 2 only) where the learners perform one solo scene each and one duologue scene together.

Please note that for Duologue and Combined examinations, learners cannot change partners in the middle of the examination.

Costume

There is no specific dress code for LAMDA Acting examinations. Full costume is not permitted, but long practice skirts which help to indicate/suggest period may be worn together with small costume items such as scarves, hats, shawls, gloves or canes. Clothing and footwear should be suitable for the work presented and comfortable where possible, allowing freedom of movement. The learner(s) should not go barefoot unless the part demands it. Nudity is not permitted.

Props/Staging

Hand props are permitted but must be kept to a minimum so as to not overburden the learner(s). Stage sets should not be overly complicated as only a small amount of time is available in the examination for setting up scenes.

Use of the Performance Space

The learner(s) should try to avoid playing in profile for too long, especially in duologue examinations, as this masks facial expression.

The learner(s) should try not to place themselves too near the examiner's table for the duration of the scene as this limits their overall use of the performance space.

Focus and Eye Contact

The learner(s) should ensure that they perform their scene(s) with appropriate focus and eye contact.

When performing a direct address to audience, the learner(s) should focus on the imagined wider audience of which the examiner is a part, and not directly on the examiner.

When performing a duologue scene, both learners should be focussed within the world of their characters and, for each individual, on their duologue partner where appropriate, as the other character in the scene.

When a solo learner performs a monologue with an unseen character present, their focus should be within the world of their character and on the unseen character where appropriate.

When a solo learner performs a soliloquy or a monologue without an unseen character present, the learner's focus should be within the world of their character. Where the learner should focus specifically within the world of their character will depend on what the learner feels is appropriate for the scene.

Selecting Scenes: General Notes

Any published translation of non-English language text is acceptable.

The use of accent/dialect is not compulsory; however, the style and intent of the playwright should be reflected in the interpretation of a role.

The learner(s) must only play one character in their scene. Where the lines of other characters are omitted, you must ensure coherence so that the emotional fluency of the scene is maintained.

Scenes which are a direct address to audience should not be focussed solely on the examiner. The examiner should be included in a wider imagined audience.

When selecting duologue scenes, you should ensure that both learners have an equal balance of dialogue, giving them both the opportunity to develop the characters they portray.

The editing of published scenes is permitted, providing the coherence and fluency of the scene is maintained. Please note that you are not permitted to add your own dialogue to a scene, unless you are adapting it from a published novel.

The learner(s) should bring legible copies of all selections into the examination for the examiner. This is for prompting purposes, if it is required.

Selecting Scenes: Entry Level

For Entry Level Acting examinations the learner(s) must perform **one** own choice scene.

The scene must be selected from a published play or screenplay or a published collection of solo/duologue scenes or be adapted from the dialogue of a published novel. It must not be set in the *LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 3*.

The language of the scene should be simple and accessible, with vocabulary and sentence structure that conveys meaning clearly.

Selecting Scenes: Level 1 (Grades 1, 2 and 3)

For Level 1 Acting examinations the learner(s) must perform **two** scenes: one that has been selected from the appropriate section of the *LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 3* and one scene of their own choice.

The own choice scene must be selected from a published play or screenplay or a published collection of solo/duologue scenes or be adapted from the dialogue of a published novel. It must not be set in the *LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 3*.

The language of the own choice scene should contain a variety of expressive vocabulary and offer some opportunity for character development.

You should try to ensure that the own choice scene differs from the set scene in theme, setting, character and/or mood, enabling the learner(s) to display some contrast.

Selecting Scenes: Level 2 (Grades 4 and 5)

For Level 2 Acting examinations the learner(s) must perform **two** scenes: one that has been selected from the appropriate section of the *LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 3* and one scene of their own choice.

The own choice scene must be selected from a published play or screenplay or a published collection of solo/duologue scenes or be adapted from the dialogue of a published novel. It must not be set in the *LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 3*.

The language of the own choice scene should contain some subtlety in vocabulary so that there are opportunities for character development.

You should try to ensure that the own choice scene differs from the set scene in theme, setting, character and/or mood, enabling the learner(s) to display some contrast.

Selecting Scenes: Level 3 (Grades 6, 7 and 8)

For **Grade 6** the learner(s) must perform **two** scenes. The first scene must be selected from a play written during one of the following periods: Ancient Greek and Roman, Elizabethan and Jacobean, Restoration and Post-Restoration, or 1800 to 1980. The second scene must be selected from a published play, television or film screenplay published post-1980.

For **Grade 7 and Grade 8** the learner(s) must perform **three** scenes. The first scene must be selected from a play written during one of the following periods: Ancient Greek and Roman, Elizabethan and Jacobean, or Restoration and Post-Restoration. The second scene must be selected from a play written during the period 1800 to 1980. The third scene must be selected from a published play, television or film screenplay published post-1980.

If a non-English language text is selected for the Ancient Greek and Roman period, Elizabethan and Jacobean period or Restoration and Post-Restoration period, translations of the original play into English must be used – modern adaptations are not allowed. For example, Jean Anouilh's adaptation of *Antigone* would not be an appropriate choice for the Ancient Greek and Roman period as it is not a translation of the original, but a play *inspired* by the original text and set in a different time period.

At this level, the learner(s) are required to study the plays from which their scenes have been taken in preparation for the Knowledge element of the exam. As a result, stand-alone monologue and duologue scenes are not appropriate for this level. They also do not allow the learner(s) the opportunity to understand their character's role within the context of the play as a whole, which is important at this level. Scenes from one act plays and plays

consisting of a series of linked monologues/duologues are permitted, providing there is enough material in the play to enable the learner(s) to fulfil the Knowledge requirements of the exam.

Selected scenes should differ in style, theme, setting, character, mood and/or period to enable the learner(s) to display range and ability.

Selected scenes should enable the learner(s) to engage with complex emotions and universal themes.

The content and language of the scenes should be technically challenging in terms of vocal range and characterisation.

It is important to remember that a learner's speech, movement, gesture and body language should reflect the time in which the scene is set.

Selecting Scenes: Useful Sources

It is a good idea, when selecting own choice scenes, to put together a portfolio of pieces that you can use over time with different learners and at different grades. To put together a portfolio of own choice scenes, consider the following:

- progression between grades
- suitability for different age groups
- variety and balance of characters, for example boys, girls, animals
- variety of situations
- appropriate length
- appropriate use of language
- variety of period
- equal balance and contrast between characters in duologue scenes.

If you are adapting an own choice scene from a published novel (suitable for Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 exams only), here are some handy hints to remember:

- look at the overall shape of the scene; a scene has to have a strong beginning and a firm ending with a clear journey in-between
- dialogue can be lifted from text but thoughts can also be turned into dialogue providing the style of writing is sustained
- characters should be clear
- when adapting duologue scenes, ensure that both learners have an equal balance of dialogue, giving them both the opportunity to develop the characters they portray
- think about the stage directions which will be included in the scene
- it is important to always consider the background context leading up to the scene.

LAMDA offer the following publications which are useful for sourcing own choice scenes:

LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 1 (suitable for Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2)

LAMDA Acting Anthology – Volume 2 (suitable for Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2)

First Folio Speeches for Men (suitable for Level 3)

First Folio Speeches for Women (suitable for Level 3)

Solo Speeches for Men (1800-1914) (suitable for Level 3)

Solo Speeches for Women (1800-1914) (suitable for Level 3)

Great Speeches from European Drama (suitable for Level 3)

These publications are available to purchase through LAMDA's online shop:

www.lamda.org.uk/store/shop/publications

Other useful sources for own choice scenes are:

Samuel French theatre bookshop in London: <http://www.samuelfrench-london.co.uk>

Dramatic Lines Publishers: <http://www.dramaticlines.co.uk>

Oberon Books: <http://www.oberonbooks.com>

Level 2 Knowledge: Reasons for the Choice of Staging

For the Knowledge section of Level 2 Acting examinations (Grades 4 and 5), the learner(s) must discuss the reasons for the chosen staging in each scene. In order to answer this question, the learner(s) should be able to identify what staging they have used for each scene, and the rationale for choosing to stage the scenes in this particular way. For example, is their choice of staging related to the mood of the scene, to the character's feelings and their situation, or to the character's movement (or lack thereof)? Answers should also take into account whether there is another character present in the scene (this could be an unseen character or a learner's Duologue partner) and the learner's awareness of their imagined audience. To confirm, it is acceptable for a learner to use a scene that requires only simple staging, as long as they can discuss not just what staging has been used but the rationale behind their choices.

Staging should not be confused with the character's movement. Staging is the positioning of the performance within the space provided. For example, the scene could be performed upstage, downstage or centre stage, or the staging could vary throughout the performance. It is not a requirement to have a stage set, such as tables, chairs or other items, in order to discuss staging.

Grade 7 Knowledge: Writer's Style and Period of Writing

For the Knowledge section of Grade 7 Acting examinations, the learner(s) must discuss how the writer's style and period of writing influenced the performance of one of their chosen scenes (selected by the examiner).

The writer's style of writing is how the writer's thoughts are expressed in literary composition, the specific characteristics of the scene selected and the play that it has been taken from, plus the characteristics of any other work by the same writer (if appropriate). This would include choice of words, syntax and genre.

The writer's period of writing is the period in which the writer was writing, looking specifically at the style of writing and key literary movements of the period as a whole, and how the writer being discussed fits into this. For example, was their style of writing experimental or innovative for the period and/or was it in keeping with other playwrights of the time?

The learner then needs to discuss how the above influenced their performance of the chosen scene. This may have some relevance to the learner's use of posture, stance, movement, gesture etc. in their performance, depending on the scene and writer selected.

Grade 8 Knowledge: Selecting a Practitioner

For the Knowledge section of Grade 8 Acting examinations, the learner(s) must discuss the key principles and influences in the process of acting for **one** of the following practitioners: Constantin Stanislavski, Bertolt Brecht or Jerzy Grotowski. The following précis are not exhaustive but you may find them useful:

Constantin Stanislavski (1863-1938)

- Stanislavski was a Russian actor and theatre director. He was known as the ‘father of modern theatre’, whose system of acting became the backbone of twentieth century theatre craft.
- System: based around an actor ‘living the part’ but always staying one step away from complete belief. Techniques involved a ‘round the table’ analysis –a process in which actors and their director would share their thoughts on the script and characters until a clear understanding was formed. Different ‘objectives’ would be found for each character, and themselves. An example would be, ‘What if I was in the same position as my character?’ Actors frequently employ his basic strategies without realising it – exploring character and action from both the ‘inside out’ and the ‘outside in’. The main techniques of his ‘system’ include Units, Objectives, Given Circumstances, the Through Line and Emotional Memory. Whilst this originally focused on the creation of the embodiment of truthful emotions, his later focus was on the physical actions which evolve, inspiring truthful emotion. This also involved improvisation and discussion. The focus still remained on reaching the subconscious through the conscious.
- Stanislavski said of his System, ‘Create your own method. Don’t depend slavishly on mine. Make up something that will work for you! But keep breaking traditions, I beg you.’
- Stanislavski’s aim was to have all actors performing as ‘truthfully’ as possible, relying on full commitment to objectives and physical actions, rather than artificial reproduction of emotion.

Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956)

- Brecht was a prolific playwright and the co-creator of an influential theory of theatre – the Epic Theatre. His theatrical reforms arguably make him one of the most influential figures in the world of theatre during the twentieth century.
- His belief was that the theatre’s main function was to educate rather than to entertain; ‘It is the noblest function that we have found for theatre.’
- He was involved in the creation of new theatre forms, such as ‘Epic Theatre’, wherein a play should not cause the audience to emotionally identify with the action observed, but provokes reflection and a critical view of the actions on the stage. He wanted audiences to fine tune their critical perspective so that social ills could be recognised through the medium of theatre and effect change on the wider ‘stage’ of the world.

- Strategies: he required the actor to 'show' his character – not just identify with him. He used techniques to remind an audience that the play is a representation of reality but not reality itself. This was an 'Alienation' or 'Distancing' effect. Brecht obtained this by including direct address to the audience, changing tenses of the text into third person or past tense, speaking stage directions out loud, the use of song, montage or series of still images, unnatural stage lighting effects and explanatory placards. He therefore highlighted the constructed nature of the whole play as a totally 'theatrical event'. He used a technique known as 'breaking down the fourth wall.' This meant that the audience was not simply a spectator, but mentally involved in the issues presented (Stephen Berkoff).

Jerzy Grotowski (1933-1999)

- Jerzy Grotowski was a Polish theatre director and a leading figure of Avant Garde Theatre within the twentieth century. He was born in Rzeszów in Poland.
- He authored *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968), in which he declared that 'theatre should not, because it could not, compete against the overwhelming spectacle of film and should instead focus on the very root of the act of theatre: actors in front of spectators'.
- Grotowski was a theatre revolutionary. He enabled us to rethink theatre's role within contemporary culture. One of his central ideas was that of the 'poor' theatre. When he created the term he was trying to understand a theatre in which the fundamental concern was the work of the actor with the audience, rather than the sets, costumes, lighting or special effects. Grotowski believed these were just trappings that might enhance, but were not the fundamental aspect of the true meaning that theatre should generate.
- 'Poor', for Grotowski meant stripping away all that was unnecessary and leaving a 'stripped' and vulnerable actor. Grotowski realised his ideas by creating a creative laboratory where he could apply the principles he believed in. He rid the Company of costumes and staging and worked with black sets. His actors rehearsed in plain black and endured rigorous exercises designed to give them full control over their bodies. Grotowski believed that what he needed was not so much an actor who was a gymnast but rather a performer who had moved beyond the moment of the body to the spiritual 'self' beneath, the moment where the actor transcends physical tiredness and moves into the euphoria within.
- Grotowski was interested in what the actor could do with his or her body and voice without excessive aids. The visceral and immediate experience between audience and performer was paramount. It was this approach that overturned the prevalence of the traditions of exotic costumes and elaborate staging that had driven European theatre from the 19th century. He did light the set for some public performances, but this was also secondary. Grotowski himself wrote that 'by gradually eliminating whatever proved superfluous, we found that theatre can exist without make-up, without autonomic costume and scenography, without a separate performance area (stage), without lighting and sound effects'.
- Grotowski was an atheist, yet he added to the concept of 'poor theatre' the idea of the priesthood or sacredness of the actor. When the actor entered the sanctity of the performance space a special event occurred, much like Mass held in a Catholic

Church. It was in this space that the 'holy' relationship between actor and audience occurred, the audience challenged to think and be transformed by theatre.

- Grotowski believed that the actor could bring the sacred ritual of theatre to themes of social transformation to an audience, the audience then taking on a pivotal role within the theatrical performance, and this then resulted in theatre becoming more than entertainment, rather it became a pathway to understanding. Grotowski was a pioneer of political theatre and the majority of his work was heavily imbued with political or social themes.
- Grotowski always maintained that theatre could never compete with cinema. Cinema offered a very different experience to theatre that, although not as immediate, was still capable of guiding its audience through realised imagery. However, he wanted to take a different approach; to bring to a theatre audience something that was more confronting, challenging and experiential. It was a theatre not based so much on image (as in cinema or television) but on the presence of the actor.
- Grotowski wrote and published his work, becoming renowned and receiving numerous invitations to work in the most prominent drama schools, theatre companies and universities in Europe and America. Most of these he declined, preferring instead to stay with his actors in his small 'laboratory', in relative obscurity. For Grotowski, it was the work and his journey that was most important.

LAMDA Graded Examinations in Performance: Devising Drama

Examination Structure

This qualification is available at four levels, in line with the Regulated Qualifications Framework:

Entry Level (Entry 3)

Level 1: Grades 1, 2 and 3

Level 2: Grades 4 and 5

Level 3: Grades 6, Grade 7 and Grade 8

LAMDA examinations in Devising Drama are offered in the following formats: Solo (one learner) where the learner performs alone; Duologue (two learners) where the learners perform all scenes together.

Please note that for Duologue examinations, learners cannot change partners in the middle of the examination.

Costume

There is no specific dress code for LAMDA Devising Drama examinations. Full costume is not permitted, but long practice skirts which help to indicate/suggest period may be worn together with small costume items such as scarves, hats, shawls, gloves or canes. Clothing and footwear should be suitable for the work presented and comfortable where possible, allowing freedom of movement. The learner(s) should not go barefoot unless the part demands it. Nudity is not permitted.

Props/Staging

Hand props are permitted but must be kept to a minimum so as to not overburden the learner(s). Stage sets should not be over complicated as only a small amount of time is available in the examination for setting up scenes.

Use of the Performance Space

The learner(s) should try to avoid playing in profile for too long, especially in duologue examinations, as this masks facial expression.

The learner(s) should try not to place themselves too near the examiner's table for the duration of the scene as this limits their overall use of the performance space.

Focus and Eye Contact

The learner(s) should ensure that they perform their scene(s) with appropriate focus and eye contact.

When performing a direct address to audience, the learner(s) should focus on the imagined wider audience of which the examiner is a part, and not directly on the examiner.

When performing a duologue scene, both learners should be focussed within the world of their characters and, for each individual, on their duologue partner where appropriate, as the other character in the scene.

When a solo learner performs a monologue with an unseen character present, their focus should be within the world of their character and on the unseen character where appropriate.

When a solo learner performs a soliloquy or a monologue without an unseen character present, the learner's focus should be within the world of their character. Where the learner should focus specifically within the world of their character will depend on what the learner feels is appropriate for the scene.

Structuring a Devised Scene: General Notes

It is very important that all devised scenes have a clear structure. There should be a strong beginning, middle and end. There should be a clear line of development throughout the scene towards a climax and individual characters within it should be well defined.

If the scene uses a title or an object as a stimulus, the link should not be tenuous. The stimulus must play an important part in the development of the scene.

In duologue scenes it is important that both devised characters have roles that are equally balanced.

Using Music/Sound Effects (Grade 5)

For Grade 5, the learner(s) are required to use some music and/or sound effects as the stimulus for their second devised scene. The music and/or sound effects must be included in the performance.

Music and/or sound effects can inspire the creation of a situation, or support a characterisation. It can be used at the beginning of a devised scene to help set atmosphere, for example sounds to create a sense of mystery or the hustle and bustle of a busy market place. It can also be used in the middle or at the end of a devised scene – sound effects can be particularly effective in the middle of a devised scene once character has been established. The lyrics of a song may be used in a devised scene to present a theme, such as wealth or love. It is often effective if the same refrain is repeated at different moments during a scene, to emphasise either specific points in the drama or to be associated with a particular character.

The learner(s) must provide their own sound equipment for use in the examination room. This may be operated by a technician. If a technician is used, they are only permitted to remain in the room for the portion of the examination for which s/he is required. It is recommended that the technician is not the learner(s)' LAMDA teacher.

Improvisation (Level 3)

At Level 3, the learner(s) are required to present an improvised scene based on a word stimulus provided by the examiner at the time of the examination. The learner(s) will be given one minute to prepare the scene prior to its performance. Word stimuli will consist of objects at Grade 6, articles of clothing at Grade 7 and abstract titles at Grade 8.

LAMDA Graded Examinations in Performance: Miming

Examination Structure

This qualification is available at four levels, in line with the Regulated Qualifications Framework:

Entry Level (Entry 3)

Level 1: Grades 1, 2 and 3

Level 2: Grades 4 and 5

Level 3: Grades 6, Grade 7 and Grade 8

LAMDA examinations in Miming are offered in the following formats: Solo (one learner) where the learner performs alone; Duologue (two learners) where the learners perform mimes individually and mime scenes together.

Please note that for Duologue examinations, learners cannot change partners in the middle of the examination.

Costume

There is no specific dress code for LAMDA Miming examinations. It is recommended that the learner(s) wear appropriate footwear and clothing that allows ease of movement. Nudity is not permitted.

Props/Staging

Props are not permitted for use in Miming examinations. However, tables and chairs are permitted for the purposes of staging a mime or mime scene.

Use of the Performance Space

The learner(s) should try to avoid playing in profile for too long, especially in duologue examinations when they are performing a mime scene, as this masks facial expression.

The learner(s) should try not to place themselves too near the examiner's table for the duration of the mime/mime scene as this limits their overall use of the performance space.

Miming Technique

Words must not be mouthed by the learner(s) in their mimes/mime scenes as this detracts from the importance of the movement alone. A mime/mime scene should incorporate the following technical skills:

- clear and accurate movements
- controlled and coordinated movements
- expressive facial reaction.

Specific requirements on Miming technique will be detailed in the Assessment Criteria for Technique at each grade.

Structuring a Mime Scene: General Notes

The learner(s) should ensure that their mime scenes are clearly structured. Mime scenes should demonstrate the following:

- a well-defined storyline, with a beginning, middle and end
- involvement with the character(s), place and situation
- an understanding of the place and period in which the characters live (Level 3).

Mime often has to be presented with a physicality that is 'larger than life' in order to make the simplest of actions clear to an audience using a vocabulary consisting of only gesture and movement.

The Difference between a Mime and a Mime Scene

A **mime** is a concentrated moment showing the mood and movement of one particular activity. At its simplest it could be 'eating a banana' or 'walking across pebbles'. It can involve the creation of a character, but this character must be focused on one occupation. An animal can be depicted, showing its shape and natural moves. It is always a solo piece. Marcel Marceau called such mimes his 'exercises' but in performance, for example *The Cage* or *The Mask Maker*, they kept his audience enthralled.

A **mime scene** is a series of activities that create a piece of drama. This can range from a simple episode, for example looking at the exhibits in a museum, to a more complicated scene in which museum exhibits come to life. It can show conflict between characters. It may be abstract or tell a story, be comic or poignant. A mime scene needs to use space theatrically to portray the illusion it is creating. The scene should take the audience on a journey.

Miming a Mammal, Bird or Reptile (Grade 5)

At Grade 5, the learner(s) are required to perform a prepared mime depicting a mammal, bird or reptile of their own choice. The learner(s) will be expected to research the personal characteristics of their chosen mammal, bird or reptile which will then inform the performance of their mime through appropriate stance, movement, gesture(s) and facial expression. Please note that for this mime insects may also be included and a mammal may be interpreted as a human being, for example an old man/woman or a baby.

Miming in Slow Motion (Grade 6)

Slow motion is the continuity of movement at a slow, steady pace and this continuity can be difficult to sustain. However, once it is mastered it is indispensable to a mime artist who can use it in many ways, for example to get him/herself in and out of dream sequences.

To help develop the technique of moving in slow motion, ask the learner(s) to be aware of walking normally while feeling the air push past every part of their body. They can then imagine a thick fog curling around them. It gradually becomes even thicker, changing to liquid and they must feel the energy needed to push through water. To slow the learner(s) down further the liquid can become pea soup or custard, which becomes harder and harder to move through until it eventually becomes concrete.

As they move, the learner(s) need to be aware of any part of the body that wobbles and allow the liquid to be thicker around that area. Eventually the whole body will be able to sustain the slow continuity of movement.

Miming to Music

Music can be a most helpful introduction to mime. It can inspire the creation of a situation, support a characterisation and sustain a complete performance. Rhythms and evocative emotional qualities can guide the learner(s) away from self-consciousness and help them to find movement and create moods with greater confidence.

Try to use music and sound effects with mime to create a satisfying whole. Strong rhythms can be an effective accompaniment to a comic situation. Lyrical music can support and help develop an abstract mime. The performer must know their music perfectly so that every change of emphasis supports the movement. In order for a piece to be a complete blend of timing and sensitivity, the learner(s) need to build each movement in response to the music.

If the learner(s) have developed a character and possible situation idea then it may be interesting to play some different pieces of music and ask the learner(s) to choose which piece might best fit the idea. Alternatively, you may propose a piece of music and see what this evokes in the learner(s) minds. For example, *Walking to Regios*, a track by Isaac Hayes, provides the inspiration for a devious character. This piece of music clearly takes that character and their actions across a cityscape – it is furtive, searching and it concludes with a meeting and possible conflict.

Film music such as the soundtracks for *Chocolat* or *Amelie*, and classical music such as Holst's *Planets Suite*, can be useful.

Using a Full Face Mask (Grade 8)

Masks have been worn in performance for centuries, from the actors in Greek theatre to players in the commedia dell'arte and contemporary cartoon characters. They can help the body to suggest a whole range of expressions, some realistic, others highly exaggerated and they can be used to develop the physicality of characters.

The plain white mask is used to completely take away facial play and encourage the performer to focus on their body language. In a full mask, the performer needs to be physically precise and to connect with the audience through gesture.

To focus on communicating in a mask, the learner(s) need to warm up well so that the body is flexible enough to show the tiniest detailed gesture or the greatest effort of strength. Physical control can be used to create rhythmic, precise movements which help the progression of mood and thought.

To help develop these techniques, the learner(s) can be asked to create a statue or freeze of a particular reaction, such as shock or surprise. As you count down from five to one, the learner(s) transfer all the emotion and expression out of their faces and into their bodies, so that every part of the body is communicating the shock, apart from the face where there is no feeling at all.

It is important for the masked performer to be aware of the fourth wall (the audience in an end-on configuration) and keep their mask towards the audience as much as possible. By

watching others in mask, the learner(s) can observe how the slightest change of angle or difference in gesture may communicate a different action or emotion and how all of the body has to be committed to communicating a clear message.

Commedia dell'Arte (Grade 7)

Commedia dell'arte is a form of Italian theatre containing stock characters, masks, farcical action and scenes full of beatings, acrobatics and comic stage business. It was originally performed by strolling players, who improvised short simple scenes and had the freedom to mime and clown. Many of the characters are still recognised today. For example, Pulcinella became the puppet Mr Punch, Arlecchino is recognised as Harlequin and the simple servant Pedrolino was the inspiration for Pierrot.

Other stock characters were Pantalone, a rich old miser whose red breeches were passed down to us as pantaloons and finally pants; Il Capitano the swaggering soldier; Il Dottore the fraudulent doctor; Scaramuccia, a type of Robin Hood and Columbina, the witty bright servant. The only unmasked actors played the Innamorati, or lovers, who were not caricatures. In a typical scene, a beautiful girl is seated holding and sniffing a bunch of roses. Sad Pedrolino sees her and falls for her; he then hides as Il Capitano enters. He is followed by the cruel Pulcinella, who is also after the girl. The servants Arlecchino and Columbina come to save her and then her father, Pantalone, rushes in. This results in a huge chase. Someone is hurt and so Il Dottore enters to help. Eventually after much 'business', Pantalone takes his daughter away and all leave the stage. Pedrolino returns to the seat and finds a single rose that she has left behind.

Today in Venice the traditional masks and costumes of commedia can be seen and bought.

At Grade 7, the learner(s) must perform a prepared mime scene based on one commedia dell'arte mime character selected from a list provided in the syllabus. They are also required to discuss commedia dell'arte and the reasons for their choice of character in the Knowledge section of the examination. Please note that learners are not advised to wear a commedia dell'arte mask or a mask in general for the performance of the commedia dell'arte scene, as there is a requirement in the assessment criteria to communicate the personal characteristics of the character through appropriate stance, movement, gesture(s) and **facial expression**. If a face mask is used for this scene, it will impede the learner's ability to meet the assessment criteria for the examination in full, as the examiner may not be able to fully assess the learner's use of facial play.

Whilst dialogue cannot be used in prepared mimes and mime scenes for LAMDA Miming examinations, it is permitted for the learner(s) to use grammelot, or gromalot, in their commedia dell'arte scene at Grade 7. Grammelot, or gromalot, is a style of language which dates back to 16th century commedia dell'arte. It incorporates elements of gibberish with macaronic and onomatopoeic elements.

Grade 8 Knowledge: Selecting a Practitioner

For the Knowledge section of Grade 8 Miming examinations, the learner(s) must discuss the influences on the development and presentation of mime for **one** of the following practitioners: Charlie Chaplin, Marcel Marceau, Etienne Decroux or Jacques Lecoq. The following précis are not exhaustive but you may find them useful:

Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977)

- His life is the epitome of the rags to riches story.
- Born in South London, his parents both worked in the music halls. They separated and he lived in poverty with his mother. At age seven he was sent to a workhouse, at nine his mother was committed to a mental asylum and by 14 he had to fend for himself.
- He registered with a West End theatrical agency and his potential for comic review was noticed. By 18 he was an accomplished comedian. Touring with Fred Karno's prestigious comedy company, he went to America and was spotted by a film company. He never looked back. Before the First World War he had become the most famous film star in the world. In these silent movies, mime was the means of communication.
- Over the years he was a mime artist, a film director and a composer but he is primarily remembered for his early role as *The Tramp* which brought the art of mime, slapstick and visual comedy routines to a huge audience. *Kid Auto Races at Venice* was the Tramp's debut. Four years later in *A Dog's Life*, Chaplin brought more pathos to his character and made him a sort of Pierrot or sad clown.
- In *The Mime Book*, Claude Kipnis says 'perhaps the greatest influence upon contemporary Mime has been Chaplin. His body is always ready to move in any direction, and his physical flexibility, in turn, suggests a psychological flexibility. It is impossible to like mime and not to like Chaplin'.
- He was knighted in 1975 and died two years later in his Swiss mansion.

Marcel Marceau (1923-2007)

- Born in Strasbourg to a Jewish family, he fled with his parents to Limoges when France joined World War II. His father was taken to Auschwitz. Later Marceau joined the French Resistance and helped to smuggle children across to neutral Switzerland; he started to mime as a way of keeping them quiet.
- In 1946 he attended drama school in Paris and studied under Etienne Decroux, quickly becoming an acclaimed mime artist. By 1948 he had created *Bip*, the white faced 'clown'. Bip's misadventures were limitless and through them Marceau became an international star. His one man show toured the world and audiences loved his mime 'exercises', such as walking against the wind, as much as his characters and stories. Of his famous *Youth, Maturity, Old Age and Death*, one critic said 'he accomplishes in less than two minutes what most novelists cannot do in volumes.'
- He opened his own school of mime in Paris and established the Marceau Foundation to promote mime in the USA. Television and film helped to spread his 'world of silent art.' In the film *First Class* he played 17 roles. His final world tour concluded in Australia in 2006. He has been honoured throughout the world. In his own words from *The Mime*, 'when a mime artist sustains his dramatic action with the inspiration of his thought, the sensitive response he induces is the echo of his soul, and the gesture becomes a silent inner song.'

Etienne Decroux (1898-1991)

- Decroux was born in Paris to a mason and a cook. He cared deeply for his parents and spoke of his father as a 'moving statue'. He grew up loving the circus. Until 25 he had many different manual jobs including plumbing and farming. Then because he had political aspirations, he decided to have voice training to help him eliminate his working class accent. His life changed when he began to study under Charles Dullin and he quickly became obsessed with using the body as the primary means of expression. He was a contemporary of Charlie Chaplin and also a film and theatre actor, but he is remembered most for his inspirational teaching methods.
- He began by being fascinated by the sculptures of Rodin and developed body training that was based on isolations. He also worked on the artists' centre of gravity and management of balance. He brought these ideas together calling them 'Corporeal Mime'.
- He is known as the 'Father of modern mime', having created the art of dramatic movement.
- His 'Corporeal Mime' gave prevalence to the trunk over other parts of the body and he said that uncontrolled uses of the face and hands made them 'instruments of a lie'. The influence of Greek sculptures and Rodin's work are evident in Decroux's later teaching, where attitude became more important than gestures.
- His work continues to stimulate and inspire as it spreads the 'word' of mime.

Jacques Lecoq (1921-1999)

- Born in Paris, Lecoq loved sports at school and at 17 became a gymnast. He was especially adept on the parallel bars and the horizontal bar and he worked to understand the geometry of movement. As his love of physicality developed he became more aware of the movement of the body through space. He defined the rhythms of athletics as a kind of poetry. In 1941 he entered a physical theatre college where he met Jean Conty, an international basketball player. Conty's great friends were Antonin Artaud and Jean-Louis Barrault who were well known actors. Their influence kindled Lecoq's interest in theatre.
- Fascinated by movement for theatrical performance, he worked with Comediens de Grenoble. This led to eight years in Italy becoming the mime master of Teatro Piccolo de Milano, one of the last great companies still practising Commedia dell'Arte.
- With this very special blend of skills he was able to develop teaching methods to create mime, movement and physical theatre. In 1956 he opened his famous school in Paris – L'Ecole Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq.
- His aim was to nurture the creativity of the performer. His training involved an emphasis on masks to aid awareness of physical mannerisms. He encouraged playfulness, togetherness and openness in his students. His influence can be seen across Western physical theatre and his theories still predominate the mime scene. His methods are now referred to as 'Mime for the Actor'.



For further support on LAMDA examinations in Miming, please refer to *Mime Matters*, an online LAMDA resource.