A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

TEACHERS’ RESOURCE PACK
AUTUMN 2010
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Welcome to the resource pack for the Citizens Theatre production of A Clockwork Orange, Autumn 2010.

This pack aims to give teachers and students an insight into the theatre making process and an introduction to some of the main issues the play explores. We hope that teachers and students in a variety of subject areas will find this pack useful, including Drama, English, Sociology, Politics and Psychology.

To this end, you can find Learning Outcomes from the Curriculum for Excellence that relate to A Clockwork Orange at the end of the pack.

The pack contains interviews with the director and assistant director, the designer, the choreographer and one of the actors. You’ll find practical drama exercises to pick and choose from and a selection of rehearsal photographs. There’s a range of useful contact numbers at the end of the pack to continue further research.

We welcome feedback on our work for schools so please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments on: 0141 418 6273 or by email: louisebrown@citz.co.uk

Best wishes,

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Publicity Photos by Tommy Ga-Ken Wan
Production Photos by Tim Morozzo
JEREMY RAISON | DIRECTOR

Why did you choose this play?

At the Citizens you’re always looking for an iconic classic text and because the Citizens has a reputation for doing something a bit different, this is one of the texts that felt right. It’s something theatres are very wary of because so many people have seen the film and so they come expecting to see the film on stage, but film and theatre are very different mediums. You couldn’t hope to copy the film because it’s so detailed and will have something like 70 different scenes – we had to find a theatrical language instead. And I have issues with the film; I think some of it is quite gratuitous and the way the music is used feels wrong; in the book the classical music is Alex’s music and the rest of the gang don’t appreciate it in the same way, but in the film the classical music seems to be used less discriminately. There’s also a real issue about how you stage the violence. In the book, because the language is so stylized, the violence doesn’t seem as real but when you show it, it becomes a very different thing. That’s been one of our challenges - how do you show the violence without revolting the audience and turning them off or making them so excited that anything after that becomes rather boring? Another issue was where it was going to be set, which is the same issue Burgess had. We didn’t want it to be set in the past or in the present and looked at setting it in some kind of future world. Burgess originally used the language of the Mods and Rockers but changed it because he thought that would date the story too much. He liked the language he finally chose because it made it seem more ‘foreign’ – it was written at the time of the Cold War between Russia and the West and the language has lots of Russian influences.

Where is it set?

We didn’t want to be specific so there’s a real range of accents. It could be any major city that has a cosmopolitan population. We looked at films like Brazil, which is one of my favourite films, and sets the future in the past – it has a wartime look to it. We looked at the film Children of Men which has a concrete world that we recognise but has cages everywhere so it has an off centre effect on an audience. Our production is set in quite a brutal world - even the auditorium will feel quite brutal, the way we’re treating the lights - but that’s the world Alex lives in. In the book it’s described as being a place where the police abandon the streets at night, where gangs are left to roam like feral beings.

We’ve ended up with quite a skeletal set - it has to be a prison, a stage, streets, different houses and a laboratory. With costumes we’ve looked at how you might clothe the Droogs - they’re such an eclectic bunch and they’ve created their own world for
themselves. One has a straight jacket, one has an adapted fencing jacket, they have these incredibly tight skinny jeans and pretty big boots. Alex has boxing boots, just to keep a lightness of touch to him. We’ve been writing a lot of our own music because you can very much date yourself with music unless you go back to the distant past, like Alex does with Singing in the Rain in the film. The classical music is timeless. We’ve created some industrial modern urban music which was made by the sound designer smashing bottles for two or three days, recording all the different sounds and then treating it. He’s made a percussive track which sounds rather wonderful and creates its own world.

Can you talk a bit about the playing style?

There are some sections of the play that are very physical and some that are closer to naturalism. The first section is very mime. By that I mean you’re in a bar but you don’t have chairs, you’re in a car and you have no car but you go on a journey, and people are ‘presented’: ‘Here’s Dim, he’s very dim’ and you find an image to show that. The actors do tend towards the naturalism and they’ll feel they’re being terribly broad when in fact they’re being not far off naturalism. The whole story is told through the words of Alex who might be creating in his head an idealised image of how it was, so you have to evolve a style that is how Alex remembers it.

How relevant is A Clockwork Orange today?

Violence never goes away. We did a show here called No Mean City in 2004/5 which was all about razor gangs in Glasgow in the 1920s – a brutal world; and this is the same. You get it every weekend here in Glasgow, particularly after Rangers and Celtic games. There’s a massive amount of violence that isn’t even reported anymore because it’s so commonplace. Violence is still clearly an issue, testosterone is clearly an issue. And then of course there’s Burgess’ comments that the young are just like that.

Yes, I read that in the last chapter of the book and in the play as well (‘being young is like being an animal’). What do you think about that?

Burgess slightly disowned the book. I think he thought that that moral was slightly too pat – the fact that you’re just violent for ten years or so and then grow out of it. And we know that some people don’t become good, they never grow out of it. Some people just become lifelong criminals. Burgess also had a pessimistic view of human nature.

And of course some young people never behave like that in the first place...
Yes, we know some people never get anywhere near that kind of behaviour. Even just to steal a sweet in a sweetshop feels like an ultimate crime for them. I would say though, that that IS the experience of people caught up in gangs - they almost don’t have a choice because of where they’re brought up or the people around them. Some people DO grow up and get out of that world but Burgess’ thinking was very influenced by specific groups like the Mods and Rockers...

I guess there’s lots of complicating factors that govern what you’re likely to do. If you’re in a place where you’re socially and economically without many opportunities you’re perhaps more likely to get involved in that kind of thing...

If you live in an area and a gang says ‘join us or we’ll beat you up’ then people may well join the gang. But this play is set in a future world – it’s not saying it’s this bad now, it’s what it could end up like.

And we have an anti hero who’s very charming. He does unmentionable things and then you’re meant to feel sorry for him and by the end you’re meant to root for him. But he has clearly killed somebody, raped somebody and been on this crusade of violence. Should you be able to forgive him? There’s a very good Anthony Nielson film about a character who is based on Jimmy Boyle and the question is, can you forgive someone who now seems to be doing very well, when his victims may be dead?

That brings us onto the Ludovico technique. You could perhaps forgive somebody who has made a choice that they didn’t want to behave like that anymore but Alex isn’t given the opportunity to make that choice, so it makes it harder for us to forgive him.

The book is about a government which is as evil as, or more evil than the person themselves. The Ludovico technique turns people into machine, leaving them with no freedom of choice. Alex is left as a completely defenceless individual and he tries to commit suicide. He’s pushed to the extreme.

It’s interesting that neither the government nor the people who look like they’re going to defend Alex [F. Alexander and the group opposing the government’s policies] see him as an individual. They see him as a tool to their own ends. I think that’s very true of governments today. I think what’s happening now economically makes no sense in terms of individual’s lives. It’s catastrophic for most people but it does something for somebody’s bottom line, which means it’s the rich who get much, much wealthier. That makes A Clockwork Orange very topical. Politicians are elected by the people to work for the people but governments clearly have their own agenda. Even prime ministers have their own agenda which the rest of their party don’t agree with at times. We have created a political system where people in positions of power can take any decisions they want and these decisions bear no relationship to what the people need.
Yes, in the book there’s a theme of the individual versus the state…Alex talks about the ‘self’ and that big institutions aren’t interested in the self.

Alex is difficult as a character – you can’t easily explain him. He’s described as coming from quite a nice house, nice family, but it’s depicted as a repressive society and although Burgess hasn’t made that a reason for Alex’s behaviour in the novel, certainly it’s there.

Is there a danger of the violence being glamorized in the play? What’s our attitude supposed to be to it? We see Alex committing crimes, but we still have to be on board with him as Our Humble Narrator

I think he messes with an audience’s heads because he is very charming. You dislike his actions but he is also undoubtedly charismatic.

And does that make the violence acceptable?

I don’t think that make it acceptable. I don’t think that’s what the piece is about at all. Alex’s violence isn’t condoned.

But equally the government don’t know how to deal with the violence. They ‘cure’ Alex then they reverse it so he’s back to what he was before. They don’t have any other way of dealing with such a character. How DO you deal with people like that? We’re doing this huge prison project at the Citizens which is looking at how you treat offenders and make them want to choose to live better lives. It’s a crucial issue.

People might say social problems need to be tackled in a different way, with people given more opportunities and self belief at an earlier age.

That’s obvious to me but the Conservatives would say bang them up and throw away the key!

What do you want the audience to come away thinking about?

I think the play will make people think about crime and criminality, how criminals are treated and how people get ghettoized and the consequences of that. Governments and those in power tend to abuse that power. I think finally you want to see Alex developing in some way. With the last chapter it becomes a very moral piece about finding peace within yourself.

In the novel Alex and the Droogs have evolved their own language Nadsat - how have you dealt with this language in the play so it doesn’t become an obstacle?

I think it’s an obstacle for the first few lines and then audiences are drawn in. The images made on stage support what’s being said. We can show what some of the words mean and of course the book can’t do that. Also there’s more use of the language at the start of the story, when Alex is with all the gang. Gradually an audience forget they are learning a new language. When he’s in prison he’s trying to be posh in the way he talks with the minister and later, when he’s let out, the language has evolved and people don’t talk like that anymore – he’s become dated himself.
Is it a boy’s play?

There’s one actress in it and she tends to be bashed or raped – there’s no active women in the story at all. At one stage I thought I’d reinvent it all and put women in the gang but it just felt wrong because the gang see women as objects.

Is this a misogynistic play? I know the gang attacks both men and women...

For Alex the advantage of attacking women is that they’re weaker and Alex is an opportunist. He and his gang are young boys who have no sense of what women are and have no respect for them. Alex is 15 in the book.

And has that changed by the end of the play?

Yes, Alex is wants to get married. He’s in a very different place and it’s the girl who says ‘hang on we’re only 17 and 18.’ Alex has changed.
What’s been your role as a trainee director on a Clockwork Orange?

The role of a trainee director is the role of an assistant director, so you are there to assist the director’s vision and to facilitate that going into action, working alongside the whole creative and technical team. My role has been to support and ask questions as well. Jeremy has led a very collaborative process so he has been asking everyone for their ideas to best create the production.

There have been members of the Citizens Community Company in the show as well. How well have they worked with rest of the cast?

They have been brilliant...really focused. The Community Company and the professional actors have gelled together and created an excellent ensemble. We all want to work together to create the best show possible.

How would you describe the term ‘ensemble’ to someone who is less familiar with what it means in a theatre context?

I use the word ensemble a lot because I think it’s one of the most important aspects of performance. It means that the focus is not all about the individual actors, it’s about a team of people coming together to create a performance, so we have to share the same language and the same world. Ensemble means a team. Theatre is like football, everyone knows their individual roles but the game wouldn’t work without having other people play too. You have to be aware of where you’re passing the ball, and in theatre that means passing the line, the action to someone else and knowing they’ll respond. We all have to know where our destination is – if it’s the net or the end of a scene. An ensemble shares the same aim and are playing for the same reasons.

In this piece everyone apart from Jay, who is Alex, plays about five different characters so no one can be precious about what any one particular character is trying to do and forget the bigger picture. Jay is the centre of that ensemble, it’s his story and everyone rebounds off of him. He’s only off stage for about two pages, so he can’t help but be part of the ensemble!

What is this play saying to a young audience?

The play is very violent and it’s an extreme world Alex lives in. We live in an extreme world now with various threats of terrorism...is this production a product of that world? The universal theme of violence and how you deal with that never goes away.

Alex makes a very controversial statement at the end when he says ‘I committed all these violent actions because I was young and you’re like an animal or wind up toy when you’re young.’ What do you think of that?

He IS like a wound up toy but does that excuse his behaviour? I think not. At the end he’s closer to recognising what he did and the wrong that he’s committed. I think this whole play is about choice and the consequences of your actions.
But I don’t think we ever see Alex choosing to do good for the right reasons. After the Ludovico technique, his choices are made as a result of being conditioned and programmed – because it would hurt him to do bad things. And at the end he chooses not to be bad because he’s grown out of it. We see no empathy in Alex.

That’s particularly true of the film. It ends with Alex being an absolute horror and you know he’s going to go out and do the exact same again but now he’s protected by the government! In the book he’s realized ‘what sort of future will I have if I keep on going down this route?’ I think we all make mistakes when we’re a young and realize if we carry on like that we’re going to end up in oblivion, so you choose to do something better. We couldn’t have a happy ending for Alex – the audience would be raging - but we want to show there’s some humanity within this person. I have a friend who is an actor and he says the reason why she performs is because theatre celebrates humanity. This play doesn’t give any good reasons for the way Alex is or any easy answers, but it’s certainly going to provoke a lot of discussions I hope!

One actress plays a variety of characters, all of whom get battered or raped within minutes of being on stage. As a woman yourself, what’s your response to the way the women are portrayed?

It’s a very masculine piece. I think what Nicola [Roy] has tried to do is find moments where the female characters are empowered which is really important. For example she plays Dr Branom who is a very strong woman. Remember also that this whole story is told from Alex’s point of view and this is his opinion of women. That’s why they are portrayed in such an objectified way, where Alex is either really dismissive or looks at them as sexual objects. We do also have the twist at the end where things change because of a woman...

Does this play make light of violence against women or does it make light of violence in general?

I think it’s important to remember that we see violence against male victims as well as against women in this piece, and that the people who commit violence, ie Alex, are themselves violated. What we’re trying to show is a world where violence is normal but not make it acceptable in any way. At the core of the play there’s also the idea of corruption. Whether you are the Police, the government, the scientists or the Droogs there’s a struggle for power – and that breeds violence too.

I think this piece is all about choice; choice being taken away from you, then getting that power of choice back and learning from that experience. Your actions are still your choice whatever the circumstances you find yourself in.
What is the designer’s role in the production process?

I think a designer’s role is to create a world for the characters and help to tell the story. It often involves solving problems for a director as well! You’re involved early on in the whole process, you get the script and read it and then meet with the director. At that stage I’ll usually bring photos or sketches as well, just as ideas and they’ll say yes that’s interesting or no go and start again!

Sometimes directors don’t come with an idea and you go off and create a world, a concept for the production and so you’re telling them how to stage it, almost. But there’s some directors who have a clear idea what they want to do. They might say think about this or that period in time, or they’ll have a photograph or something that starts off the design process.

With Clockwork Orange what kind of world did you want to create?

We didn’t want to go anywhere near the film because that’s so iconic, but Jeremy said he also wanted to make iconic images on stage. We talked about it being set in the not too distant future, somewhere a bit dystopian, where everything’s gone to seed. Not post apocalyptic but a world you can almost relate to.

I went off and watched some films like Children of Men, Brazil and Bladerunner - set in the future but not with space ships and hover cars – and came back with some ideas and pictures. We liked the idea of an industrial landscape, a concrete jungle all gone to rack and ruin and covered in graffitti…a bit like now really!

What’s the next bit of the design process?

I make a model box which is basically a 1/25th scale model of the space you’re actually designing for. It’s made of cardboard and polyboard, which is a foam that’s quite light. Then you fit your stage design into this model box, which means the director can see the space in relation to walls or anything else you’re going to design. You can see how big the space on stage actually is and if you have to store bits of set off stage you can see how much room you’ve got in the wings for that. It’s all about finding interesting acting spaces for the director to use.

The model box is also used in the theatre’s workshop so people making the set can see the paint finishes, because you paint the model exactly as you want the set to look like in reality.

And how long does it take to make a model box?

Maybe a couple of weeks, it depends how complicated it is. The Clockwork Orange model box took two or three weeks I would say.

When you’re designing the set do you think about the effect of theatre lighting?

I always put a light in the model so you can see what it looks like lit. Different textures of materials give different effects when they’re lit. With this show we want lots of lights in it, strip lights, cold lights, warm light, and bearing the effect of all these in mind was integral, as I had to design lights inside the set itself.
I had a meeting with Charlie Balfour [the lighting designer] for the show and I had a set of storyboards with me. These show how you link all the scenes together, how all the set changes happen and how the show develops. I had drawn the storyboard with the impression of light and shade so Charlie and I then talked together about lighting - we want a light there, what kind of light will it be, what kind of effect will that have? Often we’ll all meet together with the director and you’ll go through all this with the model box there as well.

What decisions have you made about costume? Jeremy was telling me about the different types of boots the Droogs are wearing.

We were trying to get away from Doc Martins and that skinhead look. At the moment the youth of today are wearing very tight drainpipes so we’ve got the Droogs in black jeans and boots which everyone seems to be wearing now. There’s all that Emo/Goth eclectic fashion going on and the Droogs are an eclectic bunch. And there’s a slight Elizabethan feel to their costumes as well. When Anthony Burgess wrote the book he was quite interested in Elizabethan language and theatre.

Yes, the language Alex uses is kind of archaic, almost Shakespearean sometimes...

...So the costumes for the Droogs are a nod to that period as well. One of the characters has a ruff, one has a doublet, one has a strait jacket. Alex is a bit more of a dandy so he wears a tailcoat with a Fred Astaire feel to it. We wanted to create a different character for each Droog through what they were wearing instead of them all looking the same. Because of the Kubrick film they’ve all got these cod pieces and bowler hats. In the books they’re described as being these dandies so we’ve tried to make their costumes something a bit odd and a bit strange.

Do you think you’ve been more influenced by the book or the film?

A bit of both really. I know the film really well. It’s one of my favourite films because I like the design and the feel of it, but Jeremy didn’t want to go down that road - we wanted to go the opposite way to the film. So I read the book and that’s been a bit more influential I guess along with the other films I talked about before.

Any other important influences on your design?

As designer you start by collecting random images that feel right for a character or for the world. It might be a paint detail or a bit of rusty metal. With a Clockwork Orange there’s so many locations to think about...the casino and the Korova milk bar... I spent some time looking at type faces and shapes of letters. There’s all the Russian influence in the book, which was written at the time of the Cold War, and the Droogs’ language that’s based on Russian, so some of that influence comes out in the lettering.

The design has to help the audience to go on a journey, to take them on a ride I suppose.

To see original set and costumes designs by Jason, visit citz.co.uk/whatson/info/a_clockwork_orange_design
Why is there a choreographer for A Clockwork Orange?

The very first thing Jeremy had in his head when he started to look at this play was that he didn’t want gratuitous violence. He didn’t want it to be all fight directed so that the violence became samey. He told me that he went to Iran and saw a production of Othello where the actors weren’t allowed to touch and he liked the idea that you could charge something with electricity between people without them having to actually touch. So he thought having a choreographer would be a brilliant idea to sculpt the action and work outside the box with the movement so it had a very particular style.

Having seen some of the fight scenes where the actors react but aren’t making physical contact, I think that makes it really interesting to watch.

Well we’ve come back to the idea that we need a real fight move sometimes to hit home, but with some of the fights, particularly between the gangs, we wanted them to be much more heightened and other worldly, and quite glamorized by Alex and the people involved in them. Those fights tend to be more distanced physically. What’s great is that you don’t have to worry about actor safety when they’re separate so you can use knives and chains. If we were doing those fights for real we couldn’t have anyone near the chain Dim swings around his head for example, and you’d have to very specific about how you used the two knives and the razor. Because of this technique we’ve been able to make it incredibly violent without the actors ever touching.

It also means that you can see what people are actually doing, which is harder in stage fighting where there’s lots of contact

And you can see both sides of the fight because both actors are separate. There’s a moment where Jay as Alex uses his britva - his razor - and Derek drops his knife in response and you can see both actions. And there’s a final moment in that fight where Alex is holding up one of the gang members with his razor to his neck and the actors are standing in a sort of diagonal line across the stage from each other – it’s really dynamic and we want to push that style and go further with that. In the rehearsal room we always go back to naturalism because it feels better for the actors, but what we have to say continually, is that it might feel better but there’s something much more interesting in not being as naturalistic.
Has the violence become glamorized as a result?

We don’t want to glamorize it and the play itself manages not to glamorize it. Alex does get his comeuppance in the end. But this is one of the arguments people have always had with this piece – how do you show people doing this kind of thing and not glamorize it? Given that the characters doing it enjoy it so much.

At the same time there has to be something in Alex that makes us want to carry on watching this person’s story. We think now there needs to be slight cracks in him earlier so that we see a little bit of the real Alex underneath. We want to find out what makes him tick.

How closely have you worked in the rehearsal room with the director?

Jeremy and I have never worked together before so it’s been a case of us finding our boundaries and finding when I can step into his work and when he can step into what might be considered my work. We balance each other quite well temperamentally - he’s very gentle and nurturing in his style of directing whereas I tend to be, ‘come on lets jump around and do it!’

I tend to do the warm-ups and I always do exercises which will feed into the work. I’m a big believer in anything you do during warm ups must clearly feed into the work for the actors so movement is not this mystical thing where everyone thinks ‘that’s probably doing me good but I don’t know why’. The kinds of exercises I do might be about fixed point, freezing but not freezing, being aware of what I call ‘naturalistic faff’ which is what I’m doing right now with my hands as I speak. When that naturalistic faff comes into a piece which is quite physical it can make it very difficult for the audience to watch, so it’s about taking those bits out. We’ve tried to be very specific physically. For example the Droogs have very particular moments when they sit or when they move. Doing that for a whole piece can be too much to watch but it is important to be specific physically, just like you’re specific with the text or with where you come on and off stage - it’s exactly the same thing.

My role was to take a lot of material from the actors. I would give them some ideas and then ask them to come up with their own concept, for example, of fight over a distance and what they could do. We got a big variety! We had people who stood completely still and it was all about eye contact. Then we had Derek and Shaun who threw themselves into this amazing fight although they were on opposite sides of the room, and it was really massive, dynamic and fantastic. So there was a huge range of stuff and my job mainly was to sculpt what I was given from the actors.

Physical movement has to come from some form of truth. You can’t just say, ‘we’ll march round the space and come to a fixed point here’ it has to come from a real impulse from the actors, maybe exaggerating what they feel at that point or how other people in the space relate to each other. I did a lot of work with the Droogs on developing a group mentality so they could move together as much as possible and make that seem entirely instinctive.

In a way, ‘choreography’ is the wrong word to describe the job. It’s all things physical and on this particular project the lines have blurred massively between Jeremy and myself. Choreography makes it sound like I only did the dancing!
How would you describe the style of this production?

From my point of view the most similar thing I’ve come across in style is pantomime but this is without the over the top humour, because it’s all about this guy and how he remembers things. The way we’re going about it, is to make it very much larger than life and to make ourselves almost caricatures. As we get towards production week we’ll be brought back but in the meantime it’s trying to get the extremes, playing different characters and taking them all up to a heightened exaggeration. Initially we started doing the fight scenes quite stylized and we were worried it might get a bit like Harry Potter - the magic of a beating rather than actually taking one. And one or two of us I don’t think had been in a fight before so it wasn’t like real fisty cuffs. But when it’s a big group, two gangs fighting and you’re only seeing one of the gangs, there has to be a degree of it being stylized. It goes into slow motion and then back up to speed and hopefully it will portray the violence but without that kind of graphic blood and guts.

There’s so much violence in the novel isn’t there?

Some of the most distressing, graphic parts of the novel have been trimmed. People familiar with the novel might be expecting those bits but the story still holds within itself, without the rape scene taking place exactly as it does in the book.

You play F Alexander whose wife Alex rapes in front of him. How do you begin to get into that character?

The way I try and play characters is that I think, what would I do in this situation? That’s a struggle having a wife and two kids myself. Do I make it as easy for her as I can, by just getting it over and done with, or do I fight, and maybe make it worse for her? And whichever one I do, I have to live with the consequences. That causes a certain amount of turmoil and disruption in F. Alexander’s head. I think as a husband and a father I would most probably take the ‘let’s just get through it’ approach, rather than make it be any more brutal, especially when there are four of them. This is what I’m thinking but I don’t know. It’s a horrific situation and you hope and pray it would never happen to you. In a way you hope and pray that you’d be able to fight tooth and nail but what would be the consequences of that?

In rehearsal the Droogs are being played as more brutal towards F. Alexander to make it impossible for him to fight. I think his madness towards the end of the play is caused by the fact that he neither did fight nor stop it happening. That’s the crux of what I’m grasping for him as a character. Should I have fought to my death to protect her? Would that have been an easier way to go? There’s a look between him and his wife during the rape scene, and you see the pleading and pathetic-ness of both characters not being able to do anything about it ...the love they have for each other and his total inadequacy.
It’s a pivotal scene in terms of what happens in the rest of the story

The violence in the rest of the book, that’s nothing compared to what happens there. It’s my scene and for me personally that’s the scene that the whole play hinges on.

Tell me what other characters you play in A Clockwork Orange

I play the governor of the prison Alex ends up in, a brutal police sergeant who has his own form of vengeance and discipline, and a doctor, a mentor of Dr Brandon who looks with favour on what she is trying to achieve by reversing the Ludovico technique.

What do you do to make all these characters different?

Any kind of show that I’m in I’ve played lots of parts: Othello, Hamlet, Wee Fairy Tales, No Mean City – quick characters where you’re going from one to the other. With each one it’s about trying to believe where you are and believe in who you are.

If I have a problem with line learning, which I’ve always done, I write the lines out, write them out, write them out, and then go back to the beginning and write them out again. If I don’t believe what I’m saying then the lines won’t come. I can’t explain it in any logical sense, I can’t sit down with a director and say ‘I feel this, I feel that,’ about the character but I can feel it in my heart. When it’s in my heart, the words just roll off my tongue. Look at Shakespeare, people are a bit threatened with the language, but as soon as you know WHY you’re saying it and you feel it, it just flows. It’s a beautiful language and it just makes sense. As long as you’re telling the truth and you feel it, then the lines will come. That’s the same with every character I’ve played. I have to believe I’m F. Alexander and really feel what he would feel - his emotions. A lot of people do method acting and become that character. I don’t. I just totally believe for that instant that’s who I am. To be able to do that is a real gift

It takes a lot of work! You have to believe the story of each character. When I get a play I never read the book it’s based on or watch any films of the story. I like to find out what it means to me right here and now. You watch the film and you’re getting someone else’s opinion and interpretation of the characters. If you don’t do that, it gives a fresh approach because you haven’t got anybody else’s influence apart from what you bring to it. Jeremy refers quite a lot to the novel of A Clockwork Orange as he did when we were rehearsing The Sound of My Voice. That’s another book I never read till after the performance and then I could see some of the things he was talking about, but it wasn’t where I was at as an actor in rehearsal.

At the end of the novel Alex says he was young when he committed all his crimes, and that’s something young kids do. How much truth is there in that?

Well, I was a bit of a dick myself when I was younger. There were things that we did as kids, fighting and gangs that was part of your identity, who you were. Fortunately I found drama. My head master said to my mum that I’d end up either owing a casino or in prison. My school reports were always ‘Billy spends far too much time distracting others and seems to delight in it’. It was all attention seeking. The way to get recognised was either to be the toughest in the school or as I later found out, to be the entertainer.
To get peer recognition I hung about with older boys and to hold my own, particularly being small in stature, you had to be a fighter. Looking back I was probably a bully too and that’s something I don’t like. I have two daughters at school just now – one at primary, one at secondary. There’s no bullying that I can see in either of these schools and there’s none of the fear of teachers that we had. It’s a very different climate.

What impact do you want A Clockwork Orange to have on people?

In terms of the characters I play, it’s seeing the after effects of what happens to someone in those circumstance, someone whose been subjected to the terrible trauma of rape and losing a loved one. I know there’s a victim support initiative now where victims can get talk to the perpetrators of whoever committed the crime against them.

That’s called Restorative Justice and it’s used in youth justice in Scotland.

The play and the novel conclude with Alex saying ‘I’ve grown out of it now’ as though it’s excusable...and I think that’s rubbish. I’m not one for ‘an eye for an eye’ and I don’t agree with the death penalty but I think the way we’re dealing with criminals nowadays needs to change. I know there’s reasons why these things happen, you look at people’s upbringing and an abuser has probably been abused themselves but there must be a different way of approaching how we respond to that sort of crime today.

What have you enjoyed most about this production?

Learning from these other guys - their fresh talent, their understanding of the script. Whatever job I go to, I think right, what can I steal and use in my own portfolio? I can learn off anybody on that stage just watching them in rehearsal, the way they go about things. And these guys are off the book in the first week! There’s so much more you can do in rehearsal when that happens.

From an actor of your great experience, that’s really interesting

In this business you just watch and learn because there’s always something you can add to your own toolbox. Because of the style of this piece you have to lose inhibitions very quickly - it’s a great learning experience. Also, because I’ve worked a lot with Jeremy before, I know I can trust him. Some of his stuff I don’t agree with, but I know at the end of the day he creates a safe environment and he’ll let an actor try out anything more or less. That’s the beauty of the rehearsal process. Jeremy creates a very gentle environment where everybody’s opinion is valued.
ACTIVITIES
FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The Curriculum for Excellence Outcomes that each activity helps students to
achieve are listed in reference form below. These Outcomes are described in full
on pages 21-22.

First Impressions…
**CfE Outcomes:** LIT 3-01a/ LIT 3-02a/ LIT 3-07a

Ask the group to brainstorm what the main themes of the play are from their initial impressions of
having seen it. Write these down on flip chart.
Put students into small groups and allocate a word from the list to each group. The students’ task
is to create an image to represent that word. Encourage them not to think about this in relation to
the play, but to spontaneously respond to the word itself.
Look at each image created and ask:
• If this was a moment from the play itself, at what point in the action would this be?
• Who from the image best represents each character?
• Which of those characters best embodies the theme of the image?
• Could there be another interpretation? Could this be another moment with other
characters?
Encourage as many ’readings’ of the image as possible to enable students to think critically about
the ideas in the play.

Who Commits the Worst Crime?
**CfE Outcomes:** HWB 3-01a/ LIT 3-07a / LIT 3-09a

Ask for three individuals to represent Alex, The Minister of the Interior and F. Alexander and ask
the rest of the group - which of these characters commits the worst crime? Each individual in the
group chooses who to stand next to. Tease out people’s responses and ask students to explain and
justify their reasons.

Making a Personal Connection to Violence
**CfE Outcomes:** HWB 3-02a / HWB 3-04a

Assure students that they will not have to in any way share the answers to the questions you are
going to ask them.
• Think of a time you hurt someone physically or emotionally. This could be recently or in the
distant past, as long as the memory remains vivid.
• In your mind’s eye, recreate in detail what happened
• What went through your head just before it happened? Try to recall the sentence / the words
• What went through your head as it happened?
• What went through your head just after it happened? An hour after it happened?
• Looking back ask yourself – were your actions justified? Was that the right choice?
When is Violence Justified?
CfE Outcomes: HWB 3-01a / HWB 3-04a

Is violence ever justified / ever the right choice and, if so, when? Ask groups to show a situation where they feel violence is justified, enacting the moment before it happens using dialogue and freezing at the moment the violence occurs.

Tease out the reasons the group think this violent action is justified. What can the whole class agree on in terms of when violence is justified? In those situations, what degree of violence is acceptable?

Is the state controlled violence of the Ludovico technique justified because of what it sets out to achieve, i.e. the reform of an offender like Alex?

Does the Ludovico technique actually ‘reform’ Alex or just prevent him from being able to follow his impulses? Read the section in Mike Nellis’ article describing real aversion therapy techniques that the fictional Ludovico technique is based on.

'What I do, I do because I like to do'
CfE Outcomes: HWB 3-01a / HWB 3-04a / HWB 3-08a / LIT 3-02a / LIT 3-09a

Alex says:
‘Oh my brothers, the biting of toe nails over what is the cause of badness is what turns me into a fine laughing malchick. They don’t go into what is the cause of goodness, do they? I’m serious with you, do you doubt me? No, I do what I do because I like to do.’

Can that be true? Is it ever that simple?

Use the technique of Role on the Wall to explore this. In groups students are given a large sheet of paper on which to draw the simple outline head and shoulders of Alex – no detail is needed. Ask them to consider the question - what reasons could there be for Alex committing this kind of violence? Responses are to be written around the outside of the figure. They might include:

Background / lack of opportunity / violence in childhood / bullying / oppression / fear / abuse / lack of opportunity / social expectation / peer pressure / gang membership / addiction / lack of self esteem / to be accepted.

Within the figure, ask students to write words describing the kind of emotional response these external forces might have on whoever experiences them.

Groups share their ideas and discuss: are people born with a predisposition to hurt or offend others or is that behaviour created as a result of life experiences? If you are prey to these life experiences do you have no choice but to offend? How much choice do you have?

What to Do With Alex?
CfE Outcomes: HWB 3-03a / HWB 3-08a / LIT 3-02a / LIT 3-06a

Alex has committed a series of apparently unprovoked attacks. He says it’s because he likes it. Bearing in mind the results from the task above, what is the best course of action for Alex to stop this behaviour happening again?

Ask students in groups to create a short TV advert, to deter people their age from committing violent crime. It should show the consequences for a young person the day after the crime has
been committed: at school / out of school, on the way home / at home. The last image should show where they think this young person will be in 5 years time.

See the section titled ‘What would Happen to a Young Offender in Scotland’ which explains what would happen today to someone who committed the offences Alex does.

The Voice of the Victim

CfE Outcomes: HWB 3-01a/ HWB 3-03a

’A Clockwork Orange’ is told from Alex’s point of view as the main character. This means we don’t hear much from his victims.

Ask individuals to assume the role of F. Alexander or Mrs Alexander (just before she died) and to write a short statement that they would like to say to Alex. This might include comments on the effect his actions have had on them and those they love, how they are feeling, questions they might have, remarks about his behaviour. This writing should be anonymous – students can type their statements if they wish and then place them in a hat.

One student assumes the role of Alex who sits silently in the centre of the room. Other students take it in turns to pick a comment from the hat and to read it to Alex. They can choose where to position themselves physically in the space as they address Alex.

When each student has read, ask the student playing Alex how he / she felt during that process AS Alex. What impact has this exercise had on our understanding of the consequences for Alex’s victims? What difference would it make to the play if we heard more from the victims?

Find out about the process and use of Restorative Justice and the work of Victim Support and Rape Crisis. See the Credits and Useful Contacts section of this pack for more details.

How Violence is Portrayed

CfE Outcomes: HWB 3-01a / HWB 3-04a

In his interview, Director Jeremy Raison says: ‘There’s also a real issue about how you stage the violence. In the book, because the language is so stylized, the violence doesn’t seem as real but when you show it, it becomes a very different thing. That’s been one of our challenges - how do you show the violence without revolting the audience and turning them off or making them so excited that anything after that becomes rather boring?’

Think of a film or piece of theatre where violence was portrayed quite realistically, perhaps in graphic and bloody detail, where you saw the effect on the victims, physically. (Examples might include Saving Private Ryan, Natural Born Killers or the Saw series)

Compare this to a film or piece of theatre where a violent action happened but it was a lot ‘cleaner’. There was little realistic detail, you didn’t feel the force of the action or see the physical, psychological or emotional effects on the victim. (Examples might include Pirates of the Caribbean or [pre-Daniel Craig] The James Bond series of films)

Ask two volunteers to enact a moment from a staged fight:

• Version A – We see the range of emotions in the victim before they are attacked and the aggression of the attacker, the blow land on the victim as realistically as possible and their physical and emotionally response.
• Version B - The same scene but played in less acting detail with the actual violence making almost no real impact on the victim – there’s the quick recovery we’re familiar with from certain kinds of films and TV programmes.

What impact does each of these experiences have on the audience? Does version B make us take it all less seriously – does it make violence more acceptable as a part of day to day life AND as part of our entertainment culture?

When do you see the effects of violence on characters in our production of A Clockwork Orange? On which characters don’t we see the full effects of the violence inflicted on them?

In her interview, choreographer Ella Vale says: ‘The very first thing Jeremy had in his head when he started to look at this play was that he didn’t want gratuitous violence… but with some of the fights, particularly between the gangs, we wanted them to be much more heightened and other worldly, and quite glamorized by Alex and the people involved in them. Those fights tend to be more distanced physically.’

What theatrical techniques were used in these scenes and how effective were they? Think about movement/use of the stage/lighting/sound effects.

Ella makes the point, that as it’s Alex telling us about the fighting, he will tend to glamorize himself and the Droogs. Are they glamorous figures and does that matter?

Explore the physical technique of action without contact which was used in some of our fight sequences. Ask students in pairs to stand with a considerable amount of space between them, and reacting to each other’s actions to create:

• A boxing sequence
• A fight sequence that involves weapons
• A paired dancing sequence

Explore the best distances and angles between the two players for maximum effect. Working individually, try the technique of fighting with, and reacting to, an invisible opponent which is what happens when the Droogs fight Billy Boy’s gang. To make this work, think about variety of response, size of reaction, changes of pace, use of levels. Using either of these techniques, create a gang fight sequence using the whole group.

Write an essay about the production style of A Clockwork Orange

CfE Outcomes: LIT 3-01a / LIT 3-06a / LIT 3-07a / LIT 3-26a / LIT 3-28a

Refer to all the interviews in this pack to help you. Explore some of the artistic choices made in terms of:

• Performance style
• Stage design
• Costume
• Use of sound and music
• Use of lighting
• Use of projection
CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE
OUTCOMES AND EXPERIENCES

Met by watching, thinking and talking about A Clockwork Orange

HEALTH AND WELLBEING
Mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing

HWB 3-01a I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them.

HWB 3-02a I know that we all experience a variety of thoughts and emotions that affect how we feel and behave and I am learning ways of managing them.

HWB 3-03a I understand that there are people I can talk to and that there are a number of ways in which I can gain access to practical and emotional support to help me and others in a range of circumstances.

HVB 3-04a I understand that my feelings and reactions can change depending upon what is happening within and around me. This helps me to understand my own behaviour and the way others behave.

HWB 3-08a I understand that people can feel alone and can be misunderstood and left out by others. I am learning how to give appropriate support.

LITERACY ACROSS LEARNING

Listening and Talking

LIT 3-01a I can regularly select and listen to or watch texts for enjoyment and interest, and I can express how well they meet my needs and expectations, and I can give reasons, with evidence, for my personal response.

LIT 3-02a When I engage with others I can make a relevant contribution, encourage others to contribute and acknowledge that they have the right to hold a different opinion.

LIT 3-04a As I listen or watch I can:
- Identify and give an accurate account of the purpose and main concerns of the text, and can make inferences from key statements
- Identify and discuss similarities and differences between different types of text
- Use this information for different purposes

LIT 3-06a I can independently select ideas and relevant information for different purposes, organise essential information or ideas and any supporting detail in a logical order, and use suitable vocabulary to communicate effectively with my audience.
LIT 3-07a  I can show my understanding of what I listen to or watch by giving detailed, evaluative comments, with evidence, about the content and form of short and extended texts.

LIT 3-09a  I can respond in ways appropriate to my role, and use contributions to reflect on, clarify or adapt thinking.

LIT 3-26a  By considering the type of text I am creating, I can independently select ideas and relevant information for different purposes, and organise essential information or ideas and any supporting detail in a logical order. I can use suitable vocabulary to communicate effectively with my audience.

LIT 3-28a  I can convey information, describe events, explain processes or concepts and combine ideas in different ways.
Background

Anthony Burgess [1917-1993] wrote his dystopian novel A Clockwork Orange in 1962. Partly because of the strange way in which it was written – in the first person, as if by a violent young man using the argot of a youth subculture ("nadsat") in a near future Britain - it was not particularly well received and did not sell well. Stanley Kubrick’s film of the novel in 1972 was immensely successful and hugely popular with young adult audiences, although deeply controversial among film critics and politicians because of its somewhat comic depiction of extreme violence, especially against women. The success of the film, which could not replicate the first person voice in which Burgess had written, drew the novel back into focus and gradually the genius of its strange style and the importance of its themes began to be appreciated. Superficially, except for a missing last chapter in which the violent young man gives up crime, the film had been selectively faithful to the events of the novel, and Burgess initially approved of it. Subsequently, however, as the controversy about the film grew – even though Kubrick withdrew it from circulation in Britain between 1973-2000 because he feared that it was indeed inciting young people to real violence - Burgess came to believe that the film had distorted the meaning of the book. He tried to reclaim this in a series of articles, in the introduction to a later American edition of the paperback, in a radio play for the BBC and in two "plays with music". The first, in 1987, was written to supplant various pirate versions of a Clockwork Orange play which had come to his attention, the other version for the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1990, was envisaged (unsuccessfully) as a kind of modern Les Misérables. Productions of Burgess's play create multiple opportunities to re-visualise Burgess' story – to reclaim it from the all too iconic images bequeathed to contemporary culture by the film – and to restate and redefine his themes for twenty first century audiences.
The Ludovico Technique

Why does the prison chaplain object to the use of the Ludovico Technique? Do you think he is right?

There really is such a thing as aversion therapy, although it was perhaps taken more seriously in the mid-twentieth century than it is now. Burgess saw his novel (and the film and play) as a critique of the ideas of Russian psychologist Ivan Pavlov and American psychologist B. F. Skinner, who both believed that human beings could be conditioned into goodness and conformity. Find out about their use of aversion therapy and consider your own attitude towards it. Is there something politically and ethically unacceptable about what they were trying to do in their respective societies?

In the play the Minister of the Interior seems to be happy with the Ludovico Technique so long as it reduces violent crime. Is there anything wrong with his attitude?

The Minister of the Interior also wants to reduce prison overcrowding, as cheaply as possible – ie without building any more expensive prisons. What happens to Alex in prison before he undergoes the Ludovico Technique? Is it the kind of place that is likely to change his (or anyone's) behaviour for the better? How closely does this resemble life in modern prisons, do you think? Should we seek better alternatives to prison and if so, what might they be?

Mr Deltoid and the Prison Chaplain

Mr Deltoid is a probation officer – a type of social worker who supervises offenders in the community, either as an alternative to prison or after a period of imprisonment. Social workers are usually thought of as helpful and supportive. How would you describe Mr Deltoid's attitude to Alex?

Why does the prison chaplain object to Dr Brodsky’s Ludovico Technique? The chaplain believes that the prisoners, like people generally, should try to be good in this life out of fear of damnation after death. Does a belief in hell help to make people virtuous? What does make people virtuous?

The Victims of Alex's Violence

What characteristics would you say the various victims have in common? Is there anything different about Billyboy and his gang, who the Droogs fight early on in the play? Does that make the violence inflicted on them more acceptable?

Are the victims in the play portrayed as fully rounded characters? Do you think the audience thinks much about their fate or is all attention on Alex’s fate? Given that the story is concerned with the destruction of Alex’s freewill is it right that we think so little about the victims’ freewill and how Alex’s behaviour restricts this?

P. Alexander, whose wife Alex raped (and who subsequently dies) tries to take revenge on Alex after the "reformed" boy’s release from prison. What’s wrong with revenge? Is it any less ethical than the Ludovico Technique? If you had been P. Alexander, with a docile, will-less Alex in your clutches, what would you have done? Any one of us may have understandably vengeful feelings, but is it (morally) right to act upon them?
Reforming Alex

One way that Alex stands out from other people in the play – including his fellow Droogs – is through his appreciation of classical music especially Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. It is often claimed that the experience of art civilises people – and creative arts programmes have been introduced into prison in the hope that they will help offenders to reform. Is there any way in which Alex’s love of music makes him a better person, or helps him to become one?

By the age of 15 Alex has already committed [gang] rape and murder, as well as numerous other serious assaults. Even as he appears to give up crime at the end of the play, he seems to have no remorse about what he did. Do you have a problem with this?

Modern criminologists are doing a lot of research on the ways that people give up crime, and what might be done to help them do so. Ex-prisoners have long been writing memoirs and autobiographies explaining how they gave up crime. Explore what this research says.

The Moral Lessons of A Clockwork Orange

Burgess believed that goodness is only goodness if it is a freely undertaken moral choice. The play suggests that in order to preserve the all-important human freewill – so that people may be genuinely good - we have to risk and tolerate extremes of evil behaviour as well. Do you agree with this point of view?

On the face of it, there are no actively good people in A Clockwork Orange. Alex’s behaviour is despicable, the probation officer is mean and ineffectual, Dr Brodsky uses science and technology for repressive ends, the prison chaplain is clear-eyed about the Ludovico Technique but is ambivalent in other ways, the Minister of the Interior is cynical and unscrupulous. In writing the play, what do you think Anthony Burgess was trying to get us to think about?

Anthony Burgess wrote his novel A Clockwork Orange in 1962 – almost a half century ago. In what ways can the play be staged to bring out contemporary issues? Or is the play – whose themes are the same as the 1962 novel – now out of date?

MIKE NELLIS is a supporter of the Howard League for penal reform.

Check out their websites at:
howardleaguescotland.org.uk
howardleague.org
In Scotland a young person aged 8-15 would be dealt with by The Children’s Panel, although if they committed a very serious offence such as rape or murder, they would be dealt with by the High Court.

For less serious offences the Children’s Panel can require the young person to:

a) Be supervised by a social worker for a period of up to three years. The intensity of the supervision can vary according to the needs and risks posed by the young offender. The most intensive may include electronic tagging, a form of remote surveillance which keeps you in your home overnight

b) Reside in a children’s home or to be fostered with a substitute family

c) Reside in secure accommodation - ostensibly a place of treatment rather than punishment – but you are locked in

If the High Court finds an older juvenile (like Alex) guilty of murder, he would probably be given the young person’s equivalent of a life sentence. The judge may set a minimum sentence before the person can be considered for parole. The chances are that the offender would be placed in secure accommodation until his sixteenth birthday, then transferred to Scotland’s young offender institution, HMP Polmont. He would eventually be released on parole, and supervised by a social worker.

A serious sex offender of whatever age (such as a rapist) would be placed on the Sex Offenders Register. When he was released from prison he would be supervised by MAPPA – Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements.

At age sixteen, young people are treated as adults by the Scottish courts and for crimes like burglary, assault and car theft can be sentenced to any of the following, as well as prison:

• Probation order - counselling, guidance and support, and challenges to one’s offending behaviour - by a social worker for up to three years.

• Restriction of Liberty Order - electronic tagging for up to 12 hours per day – (usually overnight) for up to 12 months.

• Fine.

• Drug Treatment and Testing Order – an intensive programme for offenders who want to get clean, and break drug habits which prompt them to steal.
USEFUL LINKS

RAPE CRISIS SCOTLAND
Confidential advice / support to anyone affected by sexual violence.
rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

THE R.O.S.E.Y. PROJECT
A service that offers awareness raising workshops for boys and girls around sexual violence in schools and youth groups.
roseyproject.co.uk

VICTIM SUPPORT SCOTLAND
Confidential advice / support for victims and witnesses of crime.
victimsupportsco.org.uk

THE HOWARD LEAGUE
Working for safer societies and humane and rational reform of the penal system.
howardleague.org and howardleaguescotland.org.uk

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
Gives victims the chance to tell offenders the real impact of their crime, to get answers to their questions and to receive an apology. It gives the offenders the chance to understand the real impact of what they've done and to do something to repair the harm. Restorative Justice holds offenders to account for what they have done, personally and directly, and helps victims to get on with their lives. restorativejustice.org.uk and restorativejusticescotland.org.uk

CREDITS | A CLOCKWORK ORANGE

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Shaun Mason
Nicola Roy
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Plus members of the Citizens Community Company