

## **Design Model**

### **Act Two Scene Seven**

**As a designer, outline your set design ideas for this extract. Explain and justify how this would help support the director's interpretation of this scene.**

#### *Introduction*

My design for the set would be presented on a thrust stage to allow for an intimate atmosphere for the audience and to create exciting visual opportunities. The epic theatre style of the play requires a generic set which allows for constant changes of location and time. 'The Meaning of Plays' is an important scene which presents the convicts as potential actors, discussing aspects of 'The Recruiting Officer' and exploring, through the subtext, the growing love between Mary and Ralph. As a director my interpretation of this scene would explore the growing confidence of the convicts and this would be reflected through a set which is open and brightly lit allowing for bold movement from the actors. The scene is set outside and I would seek to create a set which suggested the geographical aspects of the location – sandy ground and open skies which in turn suggest a bright, potential hopefulness for the future.

#### *Entrances and exits / relate to moments in the text*

I would create four entrances and exits. Two upstage right and left, and two downstage leading through the audience which would allow Mary to make an entrance as Jack Wilful in *The Recruiting Officer* and would demonstrate her confidence and enthusiasm in the role.

#### *Use of levels / location and design / relate to positioning of actors*

The downstage area of the stage is covered with sand to suggest the edge of the beach where I have located this scene. Upstage right and left are two raised levels with planks suggesting decking and primitive flooring of newly built shacks which were constructed by the convicts on arrival at Sydney harbour. The two areas offer a contrast in texture between sand and wood which symbolises the contrast between nature and the beginning of urban development. Two upright posts with wooden struts stand on each raised level to suggest both structured timber posts for houses, but also symbolic of trees in the outdoor scenes. The raised levels provide an area where Dabby and Arscott can linger in this scene, waiting for their chance to rehearse.

#### *Stage layout / design and colours / relate to key themes*

Along the edges of the stage I have painted designs based on traditional aborigine art which traditionally was used to explore stories of the tribes' past. These are painted in vibrant dye colours which demonstrate the traditional culture which is being eradicated by the colonisation by the British visitors who are acting above it.

*Backdrop / cyclorama / colour and design / relate to time and action of the scene*

I have a plain cyclorama as a backdrop. In this scene the flood lights are lighting the cyc with amber lighting to create a warm daytime atmosphere which reflects the growing warmth and camaraderie between the convicts as they become more confident in their roles in *The Recruiting Officer*.

*Set dressing and furnishings / relate to actors' movement in the scene*

I have included a barrel downstage and a crate on one of the levels as furnishings for the set. The actor playing Wisehammer would bring on the barrel at the start of the scene, and the actor playing Dabby would set the crate. Ralph could sit on the barrel as he reads the newly written prologue which would allow the others to move to the front of the thrust stage when Wisehammer pleads 'Don't do it, Mary.' The proximity of the actors to the audience on the thrust stage creates an intimacy which involves the audience in the action.

I would include a knotted rope hanging from the post struts which reminds the audience of the potential hangings which may take place in the colony. The hanging rope highlights the convicts' animosity towards Ketch, the hangman, which will ultimately destroy the rehearsal at the end of this scene.

*Lighting / relate to how it enhances the set*

Lighting would enhance the impact of the set as I would use gobos in the lights to create a dappled leaf effect which would reflect the tree lined coast of Australia at this time. The dappled lighting would be seen across the bodies of the actors, demonstrating their growing connection with the land they have come to inhabit.