

Performance Model

Act One Scene Ten

As a performer explain and justify how you would perform the role of Wisehammer in this scene in order to reveal your interpretation of the character.

Character in context of the play

This is Wisehammer's second appearance in the play. Prior to this the audience saw him broken and sick in the hold of the ship bound for Australia. In this scene I would want to present a contrasting image of a man who is coming to terms with his new environment and the friendships he is cultivating.

Motivation

While he is performing menial, laborious tasks, there is still a sense of freedom as there is no guard present and he is able to pause the work and 'hover' over Mary as she writes. As a contrast to the first scene I would have a broader stance and stand confidently watching Mary copying the text. My motivation in this scene would be to impress Mary with my learning as I am beginning to feel affection for her.

Initial decisions about performance skills

As she writes I would lean over her shoulder and stare intently at her face and hands. I would bite my lip to indicate a sense of nervousness but my voice would be calm and assured as I echo the last words of her sentences and mull them over out loud. There would be a hint of irony in my voice, almost a half laugh as I deliver the line 'you die for your country, your country doesn't want you, you're thrown out of your country.' As a Jew, Wisehammer has always been an outsider in England, but the shared convict experience puts him on a par with Mary and allows him to talk openly and frankly with her which would be reflected in my relaxed posture and gentle tone of voice.

Direct decisions about performance skills on specific lines

I would deliberately pause after the line, 'It means ready to overlook faults' to allow the idea to sink in that I am prepared to forgive her prostitution on the ship if we were to have a relationship. On the line 'You have a beautiful hand' I would move from behind her and crouch down in front of her looking her directly in the eyes to demonstrate my genuine feelings.

Action and response on key words and lines

When I protest that I am diffident about writing up the scripts for Lieutenant Clark, I would be careful not to sound arrogant and would shrug my shoulders in a self-deprecating manner. When I say the line 'Shy is not a bad word, it's soft' I would smile at Mary and gesture towards her to indicate a respect for her personality. I would place a finger to my lips as she says the word 'shame' to suggest she has no need to use that word particularly about herself.

Final moments and interpretation of character for the audience

I would then stand and look away on the next line, placing a stress on the words 'Lonely' and 'loveless' to emphasise that I am referring to myself. I would nod my head as Mary says the word 'Love' and when she laughs I would join in as I say the word 'Laughter' looking directly at her. This would convey my growing love for Mary and establish my interpretation of Wisehammer as an articulate, gentle man with genuine affection for Mary Brenham.