

Curriculum Links – The Muddy Choir

The Muddy Choir provides multiple opportunities for creative learning across a number of subject areas. Outlined below are specific curriculum links to **GCSE Drama, English, Music and History**. In addition to the performance, students will have the opportunity to take part in a Q & A session with the actors and a workshop, both of which will provide different ways of engaging with the story and its characters. Detailed online resources will be available to all schools, providing follow-up sessions to develop the students' understanding of the performance and the ideas it explores.

GCSE Drama

AQA Exam board:

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/drama/specifications/AQA-8261-SP-2016.PDF>

Component 1: Understanding Drama

Knowledge and Understanding

Through watching the performance of *The Muddy Choir*, participating in the workshop, taking part in a Q & A with the cast and accessing our online resources, students will be enabled to develop and consolidate their existing knowledge in the following areas:

- **Characteristics of dramatic works:** Genre, structure, character, form, style, language, sub-text, character motivation and interaction, the creation of mood and atmosphere, the development of pace and rhythm, dramatic climax, stage directions and the practical demands of the text.
- **Social, cultural and historical contexts:** the social, cultural and historical context in which the performance texts studied are set.
- **How meaning is interpreted and communicated:** Performance conventions, use of performance space and spatial relationships on stage, actor and audience configuration, relationships between performers and audience, design fundamentals, the design of props, the design of costume, the design of sound, both live and recorded, performers' vocal interpretation, performers' physical interpretation of character.
- **The roles and responsibilities of theatre makers in contemporary professional practice:** Roles: playwright, performer, lighting designer, sound designer, set designer, costume designer, director, stage manager, theatre manager. The interviews in the resources include details of the activities undertaken by these professionals on a day-to-day basis and the aspect(s) of the rehearsal/performance process each is accountable for.

Live theatre production

Students must have experienced live production as an audience member as part of their course. They should be able to discuss a variety of aspects of one production giving a personal analysis and evaluation of the theatrical elements and how successfully meaning was communicated to the audience.

In watching the performance of *The Muddy Choir* and through accessing the accompanying resources, students will have the opportunity to consider:

- how the play has been interpreted in the production seen and what messages the company might be trying to communicate
- the skills demonstrated by the performers and how successfully meaning was communicated to the audience by the performers
- the design skills demonstrated in the production and how successfully meaning was communicated to the audience through design.

Component 2: Devising Drama (practical)

This is a practical component in which students are assessed on their ability to create and develop ideas to communicate meaning for theatrical performance, apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance and analyse and evaluate their own work.

In regard to devising stimuli - extracts of the script, aspects of the sound design, songs, characters, statistics that arise from the post-show discussion or exercises that students participate in during the workshops could all be rich and evocative starting points for devising.

Component 3: Texts in Practice

This component is a practical component in which students are assessed on their ability to apply theatrical skills to realise artistic intentions in live performance.

Using the accompanying script provided for *The Muddy Choir*, students and teachers may select appropriate sections from the text in order to study and present 2 key extracts.

Edexcel board

http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/Drama/2016/Specification%20and%20sample%20assessments/gcse_drama_spec_L1_L2.pdf

Component 1: Devising

In regard to devising stimuli - extracts of the script, aspects of the sound design, songs, characters, statistics that arise from the post-show discussion or exercises that students participate in during the workshops could all be rich and evocative starting points for devising.

The Muddy Choir can be used as a stimulus for practical exploration. The production and workshop will focus on a number of the explorative strategies for this unit including hot-seating, marking the moment and role play.

Component 2: Performance from Text

Using the accompanying script provided for *The Muddy Choir*, students and teachers can select appropriate sections from the text in order to:

- Interpret and explore these extracts
- Perform or realise a design of these key extracts

Component 3: Theatre Makers in Practice (Section b: Live theatre evaluation)

Students will have the opportunity to watch a live production and to interpret, understand and respond to the making and performance of the play through analysis and evaluation.

The Muddy Choir meets the criteria by:

- not being prescribed text from Component 3
- demonstrating a range of production elements, for example costume, set, sound
- presents opportunities for students to analyse and evaluate the work of key theatre makers, performers, directors and designers
- provides opportunities for students to use subject-specific terminology.

GCSE English Language

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/english/specifications/AQA-8700-SP-2015.PDF>

http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/English%20Language/2015/specification-and-sample-assesment/9781446932414_GCSE_2015_L12_EngLang_Issue-2.pdf

AQA Exam board:

Unit 1: Critical reading and Comprehension: The performance and accompanying text of *The Muddy Choir* could be used by the students to compare the usefulness and relevance of this presentational style for the subject matter. Students could be asked to write a letter from one of the boys to a family member or friend outlining what is happening and what their hopes are for the future. Particular attention could be paid emulating the vocabulary and form used by the characters.

Unit 2 Writing: students could write a theatre review or a factual piece of writing inspired by *The Muddy Choir*, requiring them to inform, explain or describe aspects of the production and the idea it explores. In doing so, students will be required to think about how to adapt their style to fit audience and purpose.

Unit 3 - Part C: Spoken Language: The language used in *The Muddy Choir* is specific to its historical context ie.1917. Students could undertake an investigation into the language used in the performance in the way in which it helps to build characterisation, location/situation and convey meaning. Students can also explore how it differs from modern speech, paying attention to detail and shifts in vocabulary and slang. The production could also form a stimulus for an assessed role-play, presentation or discussion. The accompanying workshop would also develop practical communication skills and confidence.

Edexcel Exam board:

Component: Fiction and Imaginative Writing

Section B: Imaginative Writing. The performance and accompanying text of *The Muddy Choir* can be used to help students understand a range of prose fiction.

In order to practice writing for impact, students could compile a review; create a newspaper article or put together a contribution to a news programme, based on *The Muddy Choir*. In doing so, students will have the opportunity to develop their skills in selecting, organising and emphasising facts, ideas and key points, create emotional impact and use language creatively, imaginatively and persuasively.

Component: Spoken Language Endorsement

The performance and workshop will provide a rich stimulus for further work involving speaking and presentation. This could include engaging in debates regarding the choices of the characters and the decisions they made, or creating a live news report, where students could adopt roles of journalists and broadcast from the trenches. Through these tasks, students will be enabled to present and listen to information and ideas, respond appropriately to the questions and expressing ideas using Standard English.

GCSE History

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/history/specifications/AQA-8145-SP-2016.PDF>

AQA Exam board:

Paper 1: Understanding the modern world

BA Conflict and tension: The First World War, 1894–1918

This wider world depth study enables students to understand the complex and diverse interests of the Great Powers and other states. It focuses on the causes, nature and conclusion of the First World War and seeks to show how and why conflict occurred, and why it proved difficult to bring the war to a conclusion. This study also considers the role of key individuals and groups in shaping change and how they were affected by and influenced international relations.

Students will have the opportunity to complement their factual study of this period with a more empathetic understanding of individuals involved in the conflict. In historical terms, the action of the play unfolds in the lead up to the Battle of Passchendaele and students will be able to gain insight into the soldiers' perspective of events.

Edexcel Exam board:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/history-2016.html>

Paper 1: Thematic study and historic environment

Option 11: The British sector of the Western Front, 1914–18: injuries, treatment and the trenches

The context of the British sector of Western Front and the theatre of war in Flanders and northern France: the Ypres salient, the Somme, Arras and Cambrai. The trench system - its construction and organisation, including frontline and support trenches. The use of mines at Hill 60 near Ypres and the expansion of tunnels, caves and quarries at Arras. Significance for medical treatment of the nature of the terrain and problems of the transport and communications infrastructure.

Students will have the opportunity to complement their factual study of this period with a more empathetic understanding of individuals involved in the conflict. In historical terms, the action of the play unfolds in the lead up to the Battle of Passchendaele and students will be able to gain insight into the soldiers' perspective of events.

GCSE Music

AQA Exam board

<http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/music/specifications/AQA-8271-SP-2016.PDF>

Unit 1: Understanding Music

Students will be enabled to gain experience of listening and appraising music within the context of theatrical performance, with a particular focus on Harmony, Tonality and Structure. Students will be given the opportunity to experience live folk music sung a capella.

Edexcel Exam board

http://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/Music/2016/specification/Specification_GCSE_L1-L2_in_Music.pdf

Component 3: Appraising

The purpose of this component is to assess students' listening and appraising skills through the study of music across a variety of styles and genres.

By watching The Muddy Choir, students will gain experience in listening to and appraising music - considering the use of musical elements, identifying key musical features, relating music to the context in which it was created, identifying conventions used in different times and places and to obtain practice in expressing and justifying opinions and preferences.