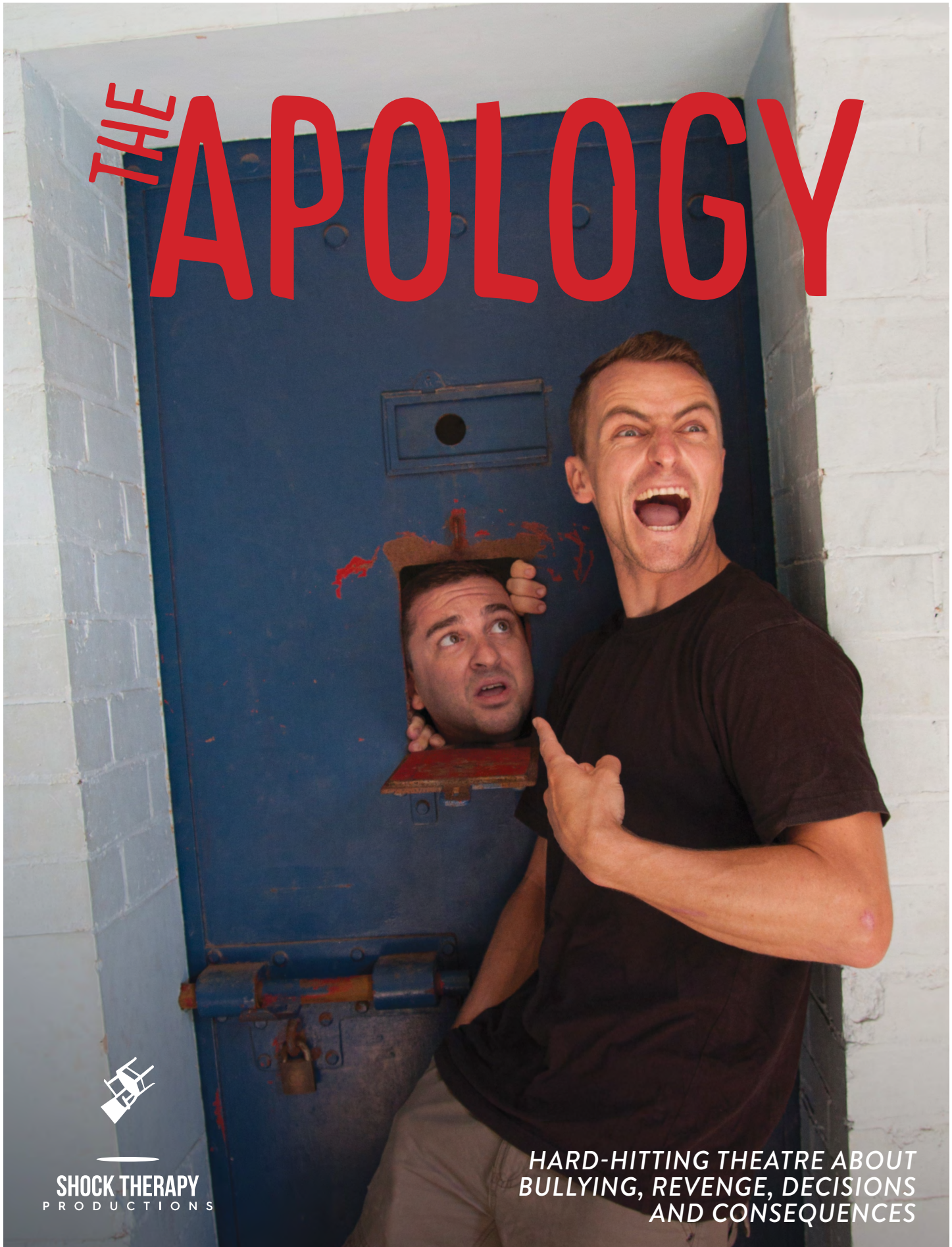


THE APOLOGY



SHOCK THERAPY
PRODUCTIONS

HARD-HITTING THEATRE ABOUT
BULLYING, REVENGE, DECISIONS
AND CONSEQUENCES

THE APOLOGY TEACHER'S NOTES

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY: STEFO NANTSOU
PERFORMED BY: SAM FOSTER & HAYDEN JONES



SHOCK THERAPY PRODUCTIONS

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Shock Therapy Productions was founded in 2015 by Sam Foster and Hayden Jones and has quickly established itself as one of the leading performing arts companies based on the Gold Coast. In this year, the company was awarded Accelerated Triennial Funding by City of Gold Coast for operational costs and to assist in the growth of the company. In 2018 this funding was renewed for a further 3 years.

Shock Therapy Productions aims to deliver Transformative Arts Experiences, and tell stories that are meaningful, thought-provoking, dynamic and entertaining, celebrating both the confronting and cathartic nature of performance.

Working across theatre, film and live events, Shock Therapy Productions aims to establish itself as a leading company in the delivery of high quality, relevant, multidisciplinary performance and a leader in the Arts and Culture Sector on the Gold Coast as well as Nationally and Internationally.

The company has produced a rapidly expanding catalogue of works, including a number of original productions, won 5 Matilda Awards, performed at venues and Arts Festivals in both Australia and Internationally and is proudly sponsored by the City of Gold Coast Council.

FOR ALL ENQUIRIES AND BOOKINGS

E: education@shocktherapyproductions.com.au
www.shocktherapyproductions.com.au

AWARD WINS

2017 MATILDA AWARDS
Best Independent Production
– *The Forwards*

2016 MATILDA AWARDS
Best Independent Production
– *Viral*

2015 MATILDA AWARDS
Best Independent Production
– *The Pillowman*

Best Director, Sam Foster
– *The Pillowman*

Best Supporting Actor, Tama Matheson
– *The Pillowman*

AWARD NOMINATIONS

2021 MATILDA AWARDS
Best New Australian Work
– *Undertow*

Best Independent Production
– *Undertow*

Best Sound Design
– *Undertow*

2017 MATILDA AWARDS
Best Actor, Sam Foster
– *The Forwards*

Best Actress, Ellen Bailey
– *The Forwards*

2016 MATILDA AWARDS
Best New Australian Work
– *Viral*

Best Actor, Sam Foster
– *Viral*

Best Audio Visual Design, Nathan Sibthorpe
– *Viral*



MEET THE CREATORS

HAYDEN JONES – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Hayden is a performer and contemporary performance maker, working across a range of forms including theatre, installation, immersive experiences and cross art-form collaborations. He has worked as an Actor, Director, Writer, Producer and workshop facilitator, for some of Australia's most recognised and innovative arts organisations. He is a co-founder of Shock Therapy Productions.

Hayden also has an extensive background working in Youth Theatre, Children's Theatre and Theatre-in-Education, writing and directing shows for young people, and touring nation-wide performing and teaching workshops.

SAM FOSTER – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Sam is a storyteller, performer and theatre maker. He is an award-winning Actor, Director, Writer, Producer, Stunt Performer and Stunt Rigger as well as being a Physical Theatre Performer, Movement Director and workshop facilitator. He is the co-owner and co-founder of Shock Therapy Productions.

Sam works in theatre, film and large-scale events and has worked for a number of companies and festivals throughout his career. His career has taken him to New York, London, Namibia, South Africa, Denmark, Norway and India as well as all over Australia.



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SYNOPSIS

Inspired by a true story of a high-school student who took revenge on a classmate who had been bullying him after his father advised him to “fight back”, *The Apology* is a searingly honest look at the repercussions of taking revenge and the long term effects that bullying can have.

Ray Bones is being hassled by ‘the Eneme’. When a year-nine excursion to the Boggo Road Goal goes awry, Ray’s dad encourages him to pick his moment and fight back. *The Apology* ricochets through a five-year period where the bruises of bullying refuse to heal. Told from an unbiased perspective, this powerful production explores bullying, mateship, alcohol fuelled violence, revenge, decision-making, consequences and family dynamics.

Two actors, Sam Foster and Hayden Jones, play 18 different characters, skilfully changing between each one, without ever leaving the stage or changing costume. Fuelled with intensity, *The Apology* fuses physical theatre techniques, multiple role-sharing and live music into a visceral and dynamic piece of theatre. *The Apology* is an example of Shock Therapy Production’s signature style of doing as much as possible with as little as possible.

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Written and Directed by: Stefo Nantsou

Performed by: Hayden Jones and Sam Foster

Duration: 50 min + 10 min Q + A

Warnings: Suitable for students grades 7–12

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Performed by: Sam Foster and Hayden Jones

Directed and Written by: Stefo Nantsou

The Apology was published by Playlab in 2009 and is on Education Queensland’s Recommended Reading List.

VIDEO FOOTAGE

***The Apology* – Trailer**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmLt7dTueV0>

CURRICULUM LINKS

GRADES 7–12

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

The Arts (Drama, Dance, Music), HPE, English, HASS, Pastoral Care

DRAMATIC LANGUAGES AND PERSPECTIVES

Elements of drama: Role, character, relationship, tension, space, movement, time, situation, mood

Skills of Performance: Acting, Directing, Design, Performance Technologies

Perspectives: Brechtian Epic Theatre, Physical Theatre, Comedy, Contemporary Dramatic, Australian, Hyperrealism

Dramatic conventions: Multiple roles, direct address, non-linear narrative, task-based performance, mime, monologue, live music

Themes & Ideas: Young people and authority figures, young masculinity, mateship, moral codes, power, self-control/determination, choices, conflicts and resilience, peer pressure, civics and citizenship, family dynamics



IN THE CLASSROOM

Before the performance

ACTIVITY 1

Look at the poster image (above/cover) and watch the trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmLt7dTueV0>

What do you think this performance is about? Write down your ideas.

ACTIVITY 2

With the class read the synopsis and discuss.

1. Have you seen a play about bullying or revenge before?
2. What are your expectations of *The Apology*?
3. Do you think it will be funny? Sad? Confronting? Boring and predictable?
4. Do you or your friends know of any instances of bullying that have gone too far?

ACTIVITY 3

1. In small groups have students discuss whether they have seen or heard of any bullying problems in your school.
2. Think about different types of bullying scenarios and devise a short (no more than 2 minute) play that shows this.
3. Present to the rest of the class and discuss the possible consequences of bullying for the victim and perpetrator.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE – RESPONDING

After viewing the performance of *The Apology* answer the following questions.

1. What do you believe was the key message of the play?
2. How did the actors communicate changes in character, scene and action?
3. What impact did the music have on the drama?
4. Try to recall the plot. What stages led to the eventual climax?
5. While movement was a main focus for this performance why was language also integral to the performance?
6. What dramatic conventions has Shock Therapy Productions used to relate the play to young people?
7. Put simply, symbols are items that represent something else. They can be evident in a play in many aspects of the production including props, language, movement/ action, blocking etc. List some examples of symbols used in *The Apology* and state their significance to the drama.
8. This performance aims to educate and entertain the audience. Do you believe that this production effectively achieves this aim? Why?
9. Do you believe that the actors developed a strong connection with the audience? As a member of the audience what kind of emotions did you experience during the performance?
10. What do you believe is the best aspect of *The Apology*?
11. Shock Therapy Productions' policy is to avoid sending moral messages or supplying the audience with answers on how they 'should' think about a topic. How does *The Apology* leave audiences to make up their own mind? Can you think of an alternative ending where a clear moral message was sent?
12. Shock Therapy Productions shows focus on the acting and storytelling rather than elaborate on elements of staging and production. However, the physical action of the actors is a vital part of the storytelling style? How does the staging contribute to the production? Discuss the minimal use of props and scenery and comment on how these enhance or take away from the performance?

EXPLORING BRECHTIAN EPIC THEATRE

The Apology is distinctly non-realist in style and uses many Brechtian techniques to achieve this.

Brecht did not like the theatre of realism. He employed the use of techniques that remind the spectator that the play is a representation of reality and not reality itself.

Within the Brechtian style, actors frequently address the audience directly out of character (“breaking the fourth wall”) and play multiple roles. Brecht’s style is to use non-linear, fractured plots, where the events of an episode are not necessarily a result of the preceding episode and the action spans many locations and time frames creating a montage effect.

Costume is sometimes incomplete and fragmentary e.g. a tie and briefcase for a businessman and sets are sometimes non-existent or fragmentary (either partial sets or one object representing many of the same).

Brechtian Epic Theatre is social activist theatre asking the spectators to make change in their own world outside the theatre walls.

QUESTIONS

1. What do you think is meant by ‘non-realist style’?
2. Did you think the actors switching from one character to another was effective?
3. Did the use of the minimal set tell the story clearly enough?

CURRICULUM DEFINITION OF EPIC THEATRE

A form of drama often presenting a series of loosely connected scenes that avoid illusion and often interrupt the story line to address the audience directly with analysis, argument, or documentation; the intention is to appeal to an audience’s intellect by using ‘alienating’ or ‘distancing’ effects, causing the audience to think objectively about the play, to reflect on its argument, to understand it, and to draw conclusions; plays may include songs that support the message of the play, storytellers and narrators, projection, placards, film sequences and actors directly addressing the audience.



EXPLORING PHYSICAL THEATRE

Physical theatre can incorporate dance, acrobatics, text, AV and music to communicate a story. A physical language is developed by the group of performers and the performance is created through improvising around certain themes and set tasks.

Text, music, costumes, and scenery are included in layers selectively. The context in which all of these elements are blended is determined by the message the performers wish to communicate.

QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the ways that Shock Therapy make their shows physical?
2. Do you think the physicalization of the story made it interesting to watch?
3. What were some the ways that the actors physically changed characters?
4. In pairs, improvise a brief scene based on an everyday situation (such as catching the bus to school). Keep the scene short.

Discuss ways that you could incorporate some elements of physical theatre to make the scene more engaging for an audience.

For example, both actors might lean in the same direction at a certain point in the dialogue. Keep rehearsing the scene so that you can perform it without the physical action causing you to drop your character.

Try and have the scene flow and the action appear normal.

5. Share your ideas with the class.
6. Find a short section of script and follow the same pattern. Choose 3 or 4 random elements of physical theatre to incorporate.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE – CHARACTER STUDY

Characters in *The Apology*

The play has just two actors playing 18 characters.

ACTOR 1

ENEME
RAY'S FATHER
MR BUCKLEY
MS O'DANIELS
THE PRINCIPAL
MEDIA INTERVIEWER
PROSECUTOR
NAMELESS

ACTOR 2

RAY BONES
JOSH WALKER
BILLY 'BEANBAG' BLACKBURN
FRANKIE 'THE WOG' ZULAMOVSKI
'CHRISTIAN' CALLAN REECE
FREDDIE 'NO-NOSE' GLANVILLE
PETE 'THE KILLER' RODRIGUEZ
NICHOLAS 'NIKKI EYES' HOWARD-REITH
JIMMY 'THREE-TIMES' TIPICH
KEITH

QUESTIONS

1. What did you think of this dramatic technique?
2. Was it effective?
3. How did it influence the dynamics and structure of the play?
4. What challenges did playing several characters in quick succession present?
5. What strategies could you use for differentiating between the characters?

STUDENT ACTIVITY – REVIEW THE PRODUCTION

WRITE YOUR OWN REVIEW OF THE PRODUCTION.

Shock Therapy Productions values students' observations of their program and performances. They welcome written students' responses which may be emailed to: admin@shocktherapyproductions.com.au

1. Did you enjoy *The Apology*?
2. Why?
3. What was good or effective? What was bad or didn't communicate with you?
4. Did the rest of the audience enjoy it?
5. Was the plot communicated clearly?
6. Was the acting good? (What is good acting?)
7. Set and costumes: Credible? Bad or good? Too much or too little? If the set and costumes play too much of a part in the drama, this is considered an imposing or negative thing.
8. Was the play convincing, dull, funny, hilarious, dark, mediocre? Why? Why not?
9. Was the script/play credible?
10. Did you learn anything from the production or did you change your mind about an issue or character?

SCRIPT EXCERPT

Two boys standing outside the principal's office. Eneme stands victorious. Ray stands hunched over, bleeding and defeated. Eneme is then called into the office first. Ray stands alone. He becomes aware of all the school's population walking past him and laughing.

RAY

Twenty minutes later we're out the front of the principal's office and by then the whole school knew what'd happened. People found any excuse to walk past the office to see what was going on. Especially the boys who were all laughin' at me. I had blood all over me. Huge gash over the eye. Nose all smashed. I'd fought back, and I'd lost. Complete humiliation.

Eneme comes out of the principal's office.

ENEME

Your turn.

THE PRINCIPAL

I'm very disappointed in you Ray. This school's reputation....duty of care.... appropriate behaviour....appropriate ways of conflict resolution.... appropriate....not appropriate... appropriate inappropriate...and what's more... it's not appropriate.

RAY

Yes sir. No sir.

THE PRINCIPAL

Appropriate, inappropriate, appropriate. Alright Ray?

RAY

Yes sir. No sir. Yes sir.

THE PRINCIPAL

Now, I've already rung your father. He's on his way down. After yesterday's incident at the Gaol I understand you're already on a 'contract' with Mr Buckley. I don't want to have to get the Department involved again, Ray. You leave me no alternative Ray. Appropriate, inappropriate, appropriate, do you know what I mean, Ray?

RAY

Yes sir, no sir, three bags full...

THE PRINCIPAL

You're behind on all your subjects which is not appropriate, you're not handing anything in which is inappropriate...it might be easier all round if you repeat a Year. Repeat a Year. Repeat. Appropriately repeat. What do you think, Ray?

Ray doesn't respond.

THE PRINCIPAL

Is violence your only form of communication, Ray?

RAY

My father told me to fight back, sir.

THE PRINCIPAL

Your father said that?

RAY

Yes sir.

Tense pause as the principal looks sternly at Ray.

THE PRINCIPAL

Well we'll just see what your father has to say about that allegation, Ray. That is a serious charge, and may lead to some very unfortunate ramification.

Principal Leaves.

RAY

Dad arrived at the school and him and the principal had this huge fight. Family Services was called in, they'd always been on our case about stuff, Mum and Dad had split a few times and there'd been custody battles and major hassles. He copped the blame for what I done. He copped the blame for everything. They told him that it was probably better I stay with my Mum, that she was a better influence, and he yelled at the Services woman and he shouted at the Principal for interfering and then there was restraining orders and he couldn't come near the school...it all got worse from then on.

Ray Cries.

I failed everything that year and they made me repeat. I started missing classes, and then I use to not go at all and then they found out and then I was old enough to leave school anyway, left Mum's, went out on mi own. Crashed at mi sister's place some times. She was livin with this junkie guy by then. All these people used to come to the house to score of him. I never touched the shit. I just crashed there. I couldn't give a stuff where I was, didn't matter..., and then, outta the blue, I saw the Eneme walkin down the street on the other side of the road...he sees me and gives me this little wave and a smarmy smile, like nothing had happened, like I was his old mate from up the road and he walked on his merry way, and I remember I vowed on that day...I wouldn't be in this position if it wasn't for him, and I made a pledge with myself that I would one day seek revenge...that that guy would receive the sword of vengeance in an utterly and most appropriate way.

STUDENT ACTIVITY – RESPONDING TO THE SCRIPT EXCERPT

1. In pairs, read the previous excerpt from *The Apology*.
2. With your partner, analyse the excerpt and make estimations about the characters based on how they relate to each other. Record these using the Character Analysis Sheet.
3. Rehearse the scene. As you rehearse, make sure you portray the characters and their relationship with the choices you have made for each character.

HAVE SOME PAIRS PRESENT TO THE CLASS.

As they present see if you agree with the portrayal.

After each presentation, discuss how the performers represented their characters.

4. Make a prediction about what you think will happen next in this scene.

Discuss with your partner what happens in the next part of this scene, and possible endings and consequences.

Return to rehearsing this excerpt with your partner. This time improvise one of your alternative endings.

Make up suitable dialogue and action.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS – PRINTABLE

CHARACTER NAME

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Voice
- Posture
- Distinguishing features
- Walk
- Physical description

EMOTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Beliefs
- Ambitions
- Interests
- Major events in their life

OBJECTIVE/OBSTACLE

- What drives your character?
- What stands in their way?

FEEDBACK FORM

Please complete this form and email to: admin@shocktherapyproductions.com.au

Name of School:

Today's Date:

Your Name:

Position:

Your email address:

What elements of the Performance did you enjoy the most?

Did the performance relate to your teaching syllabus? How?

Are there any parts of the performance that you didn't enjoy? Why?

What was some of the feedback from students?

Did the performance meet your expectations?

What parts of the Teachers Notes did you use?

What benefits do the Teachers Notes provide for your teaching practice?