

Describe how one or more actors in a particular scene or section used their vocal and physical acting skills to create engaging characterisation. Analyse and evaluate how successful they were in communicating their character to the audience.

You should make reference to:

- the use of voice
- physical skills
- the actors' use of space.

On the 29th November 2016, I went to see Stephen Malaratt's creative adaptation of Susan Hill's Novel: 'A Woman in Black'. This exhilarating thriller was performed at the Victorian-style fortune theatre which was perfect for the context of the play. The performance included two actors (Chance and Fox) that worked together to keep the audience on the edge of our seats. I am going to evaluate how Chance, who played the young Mr Kipps, the young solicitor, used his physical and vocal skills to create a nervous and terrified man during Act 2 of the play where Chance is being haunted by the Woman in Black at Eel Marsh House and is struggling to cope so he decides to talk about it with the locals. This is my favourite part of the play as Chance's engaging characterisation kept me anticipating what was to come.

In the middle of Act 2 when Chance, as young Mr Kipps is visited by Sam Daily, who gives him a dog as companion, he says "a Woman in Black with a wasted face". He performed this line with a slow pace, pause after 'with' and emphasis on 'wasted' by raising volume. Also, he looked directly into the audience, centre stage, breaking the fourth wall and he slowly stroked his face upwards with the back of his hand. I felt the growing shock in the audience as Chance confirmed what we saw creating suspense and anticipation as I waited for when she will appear again. Chance's engaging characterisation of a worried man was effectively portrayed to the audience as I was captivated in his extraordinary performance. My intense involvement in this scene, caused by the Chance's outstanding performance, made me feel deep concern for the character as he seemed to be developing an unstable mental state.

Also, in the middle of Act 2, Chance worked alongside Fox, who played Sam Daily, in the scene where Daily goes to Eel Marsh house to greet an anxious Mr Kipps to give him a dog. The actors created a dog in our imaginations when Fox said "I have, take her, bring her back when you're done". Chance stood centre stage and followed Fox's hand with eyes creating the movement of the dog from stage left to stage right. Chance bent down and stroked the dog with his palm slowly moving from left to right. His innovative performance effectively portrayed engaging characterisation of an imaginary dog. Another moment when Chance created the imaginary dog, Spider, was when he was in the marsh. Chance yelled 'spider' with a loud volume, panicked tone and heavy emphasis on the 'i' sound by elongating it. He stood upstage centre with a shocked facial expression (furrowed brows and a frown) while reaching his hand out in front of him slowly clenching his fist. This inventive performance

was mesmerising for the audience and Chance's exquisite use of physicality to effectively portray the dog as an engaging character enabled me to feel connected with Spider and go on a long emotional journey. This scene is concluded with Chance saying "there, there Spider" in a comforting tone at a quite low volume while breaking the fourth wall by looking into the gods. The outcome of this event had me leaning back in my seat as there was a huge sense of relief among the audience despite the dog being imaginary. Therefore, Chance's engaging characterisation caused hearts to pound and tension among the audience.

Another moment in Act 2 where Chance captivated the audience with his engaging characterisation of an emotionally strained and terrified man was when he was found by Keckwick after a nightmare. He performed the line "the trap, the pony and trap" with a confused tone, slow pace and a pause after "the trap". He started by sitting centre stage and slowly got to his knees facing the audience then rose to standing with an unsteady stance. I experienced the suspense as I was worried for Mr Kipps who seemed petrified and anxious. Later on in the scene, tension and fear grew among the audience as there was complete silence and then the music box began to play so Chance paused stage right and slowly turned around to look stage left, he gingerly crept towards the door then suddenly ran behind the gauze and fell to his knees while shutting the music box abruptly. Chance's engaging characterisation of a man desperate to keep his sanity had the audience immersed in the action. His terrified character was effectively portrayed to the audience with an aura of shock and anxiety. His exceptional use of pauses and abrupt movements created knife-cutting tension. When the music ended I felt great relief however I feared for the character as I didn't know whether the Woman in Black would appear, building the dramatic tension.

v. good

The final scene and the climax of dramatic tension left me undergoing fright and anxiety. When Fox said the line "I did not see a young woman", Chance slowly moved his hands to his knees with a bent posture, his jaw dropped, he slowly looked around then suddenly stood up straight. This engaging characterisation of a traumatised man was spine chilling for the audience. His shock and terror were a reflection of our own reaction which left the audience with suspense. The lack of acknowledgement for the Woman in Black in the bows emphasised Chance's brilliant reaction as I felt like she was lurking around just like the anticipation.

Chance's engaging characterisation of a terrified and intensely anxious character was effectively portrayed to the audience in this section. His use of vocal and physical skills including his use of physicality and manipulation of pauses created suspense, tension, shock and anticipation. His reactions to the shocks were intense and relatable which made his character come to life. Therefore, chance's engaging characterisation in the late stages of the play left me on the edge of my seat waiting for the next excruciating thrill.

Excellent piece of work!
Precise, detailed & analytical.