

**Theatre cover sheet: practical performance proposal HL only**

Submit to: **Examiner**

Arrival date: **30 Apr / 30 Oct**

Session: .

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- Write legibly using black ink and retain a copy of this form.
- Complete this form in the working language of your school (English, French or Spanish).
- Complete one copy of this form to accompany each practical performance proposal submitted.

Subject: Theatre

Level: Higher

Candidate name: \_\_\_\_\_

Candidate session number:

**Instructions to candidates**

Check that your candidate session number is on each sheet of paper used in your practical performance proposal and attach this cover sheet to the front of your work.

Complete the following information:

What is the prescribed performance stimulus you have used? Hagia Sophia

Section 1—approximate number of words: 247

Section 3 (HL only)—approximate number of words: 1095

**Candidate declaration:** I confirm that this work is my own work and is the final version. I have acknowledged each use of the words or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

Candidate's signature: .....

Date: .....

**For completion by the teacher:** I confirm that to the best of my knowledge, the material submitted is the authentic work of the candidate.

Teacher's name: ...

Teacher's signature: .....

Date: .....

**For completion by the examiners**

Examiner's name and code:

Examiner's  
total mark

Total  
0–25

**5**

Senior examiner's name and code: \_\_\_\_\_

Senior examiner's  
total mark

**IB Theater Higher Level**

**Practical Performance Proposal**

**And Rationale**

## Section 1

### **Practical Performance Pitch:**

My concept is about the human struggle between religion and freedom. It is about a man who has already realized that he is and will always be a prisoner of his beliefs, and he is trying to make everyone realize their fate too. The Hagia Sophia has a history of changing beliefs, stimulated from this, my concept focuses on how even after changing one's beliefs the fate of man remains the same. The production elements that are essential are lights and props. The lights are two overhead spotlights, cast from an angle to one defined point; this is where the man will be. The lights were stimulated from the lights streaming into the eastern side of the Hagia Sophia. There will only be one prop, shackles. These shackles are what connect the audience to the performance. The man presents his shackles to the audience to show that everyone is a prisoner of their beliefs; no matter what religion they believe. The lights and the shackles create an eerie feeling, making the audience feel uncomfortable as the man is trying to make them aware of their fate. Theater of the Absurd plays a part as this play focuses on the meaninglessness of life, and no matter how much we try to change, we still remain the same; we are bound by our belief system. The purpose of my concept is to make the audience leave questioning their own beliefs, and questioning the amount of freedom they actually have.

Word Count: 247

**Rational:**

### Section 3

The play I created was influenced specifically by the stimuli I chose, Theater of the Absurd, and performances I have seen. Each aspect of my play was purposefully chosen to clearly emphasize my overall concept, and ensure that the message is conveyed to the audience.

The history of the Hagia Sophia is extremely important to how I created this play. The Hagia Sophia has a history of religious conflicts. The Hagia Sophia is located in Istanbul, Turkey, and it was built around 532 and 537 AD in the historical capital of Constantinople of the Byzantine Empire. It was primarily “the seat of the Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople and a principal setting for Byzantine imperial ceremonies” (“Hagia Sophia”). From 1204-1261, Constantinople was under Latin occupation, and the Hagia Sophia became a Roman Catholic Cathedral. The Byzantines then recaptured Constantinople in 1261. In 1453, the Turks conquered Constantinople, and the Hagia Sophia became a mosque. Finally, in 1935, the first Turkish President, and founder of the new Turkish Republic transformed the Mosque into a museum. (“Hagia Sophia”) During these changes, the building did not change; it only was renovated after a series of earthquakes. The idea that after so many changes in religion the actual building did not change stimulated my idea. No matter how many times you change your belief system whether it is from Catholicism to Atheism, you are still met with the same fate. You are a prisoner of your beliefs. You mold your way of life to the specific system you believe in, and you must abide by the social standards set by your belief system. The history of the Hagia Sophia represents pain, blood and war and these were all caused by a difference in religion. I took this negative aspect and highlighted it to show the repressing characteristics of religion.

While delving into the repressing characteristics of religion, I turned to all types of beliefs, not just orthodox religions. Look at Atheism for example, they do not believe in God and believing a specific religion, but Atheism is most definitely a type of religion as they have a certain way of life they need to abide by. They are not supposed to believe in God and as a result they have created their own form of moralities and values, and they live by it. Therefore, in modern day, when religion is not as strongly present in Western society, they still have a specific way of life that they follow, and it restrains them. This idea of being chained to one's values is what led me to the use of shackles. Being a prisoner, and forever bound to your way of life. It questions the freedom and liberty one has. Do we even have any freedom? Religion has chained us. Logically, there is no freedom when we are prisoners, but ironically we do have freedom because we had the choice to believe. Yet, though we do have a choice, it is humanly impossible to not have a belief system. Humans require structure and regulations otherwise we would not survive.

From this, it is evident that the tradition, Theater of the Absurd played a huge role in my concept. The absurdist theory that life is meaningless is prominent because my play focuses on the idea of being aware of one's inevitable fate- death-and that no matter how much you change, your fate remains the same. It is completely an absurdist idea. Using Theater of the Absurd as the basis of my concept, I am met with some conflicts. Since religion is such a controversial topic, how can I make the audience look past the fact that someone is criticizing their beliefs, and focus more on the overall message of being aware of one's fate regardless of their religious values? I thought that I should use Physical Theater to gain the empathy of the audience. The man is crumpled on the floor in the spotlight bound in shackles, in torn prisoner's clothes. Through his movements, one should feel the agony and anger the man is

feeling as he recounts his moment of awareness. He accuses the audiences by trying to move towards the audience, but is prevented from doing so by his shackles. The physicality should let the audience empathize, but also feel extremely uncomfortable as the man is trying to force a connection with them.

The production elements used in this play are related to achieving the desired outcome of the performance. The streams of light coming from the windows in the eastern side of the Hagia Sophia reminds me of the play *Les Misérables*; the overcastting shadows of the body, deepening the indentations of the face, giving this eerie tragic mood. I imagine a golden glow around the man as he is collapsed on the ground in misery. The production elements are critical to expressing the absurdist aspect of the play. Though the elements create a strong emphasis on the main character, the main purpose is for the main character to have a one-sided discussion with the audience. The whole absurdist idea is that the man has already become aware of his fate through his own experiences, and his duty is to share his experiences with the audience as a way to make them aware of their fate. He uses his shackles as a symbol of lack of freedom. He “throws his shackles” figuratively, to make the audience understand their lack of freedom. He does this multiple times throughout the performance to enforce the idea into the minds of the audience, alienating the audience as it is done in an abrupt manner. In his final attempt to unsettle the audience, he speaks directly to God, and he “takes his shackles” from God to show the direct connection between God and lack of freedom. From *Theater of the Absurd*, the audience does not necessarily understand the idea during the performance, they usually understand after they have questioned the message after the performance. Therefore, I want the audience to leave the performance feeling uncomfortable and I

want them to question what they saw, and in turn question their own beliefs and freedom.

Overall, Theater of the Absurd, Physical Theater, performances I have seen, society today and specifically the history of the Hagia Sophia directly influenced my play, and the concept behind it.

Word Count: 1,095

### Works Cited

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[karimloo-on-trading-the-phantoms-mask-to-play-jean-valjean-in-londons-les-miserables/](http://london.broadway.com/buzz/159717/ramin-karimloo-on-trading-the-phantoms-mask-to-play-jean-valjean-in-londons-les-miserables/)>.





## Section 2

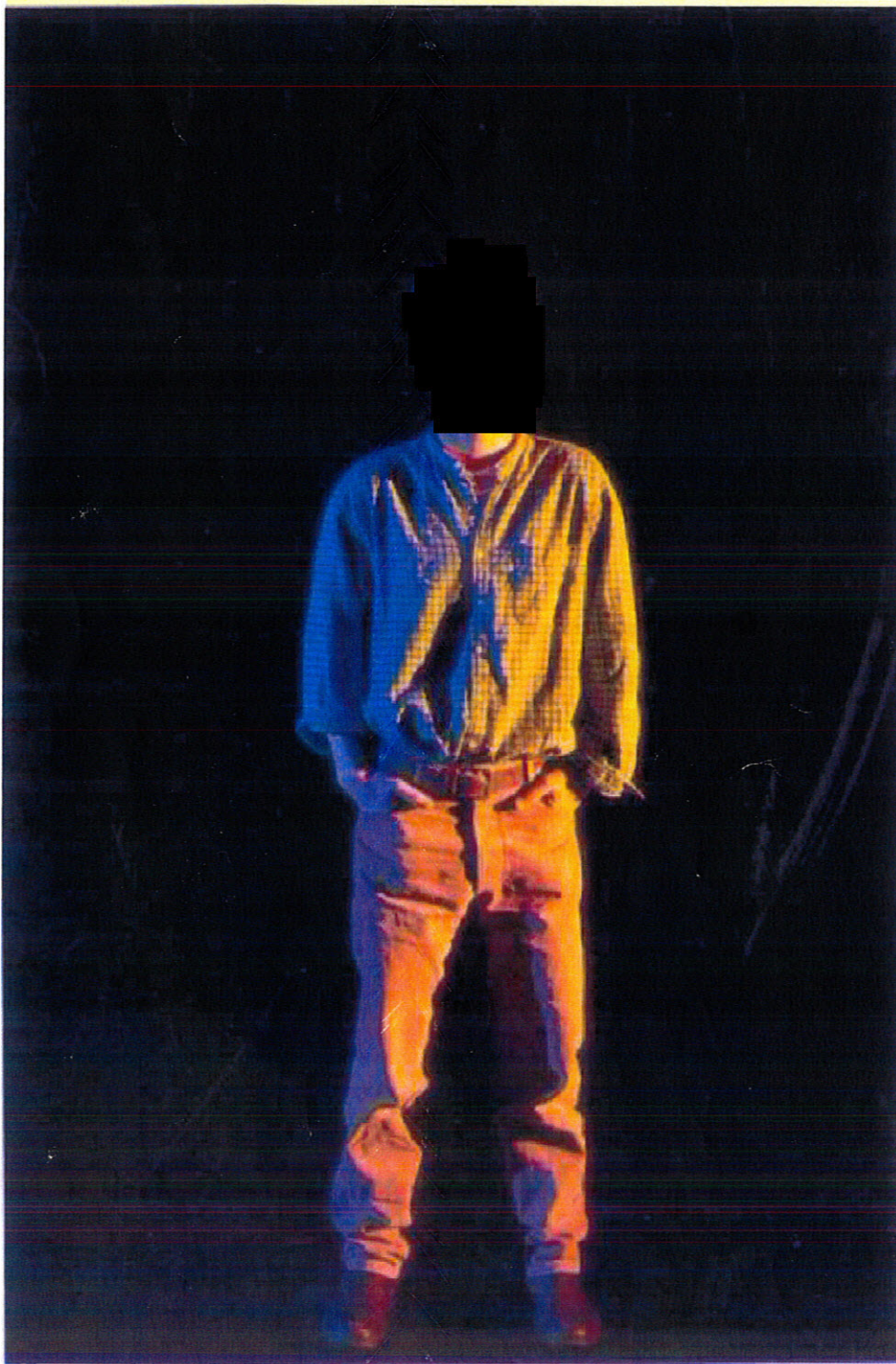


Costume: From Les Miserables: Jean Valjean played by Ramin Karimloo

This picture was my inspiration for the costume. This is a picture of Jean Valjean from Les Miserables. The prisoner's uniform all ripped and dirty, a man who is clearly emaciated, shows the appearance that I want the main character to have. Including this, the main character will be in shackles. The anger that is shown by Jean Valjean is the anger that I think the main character should feel.



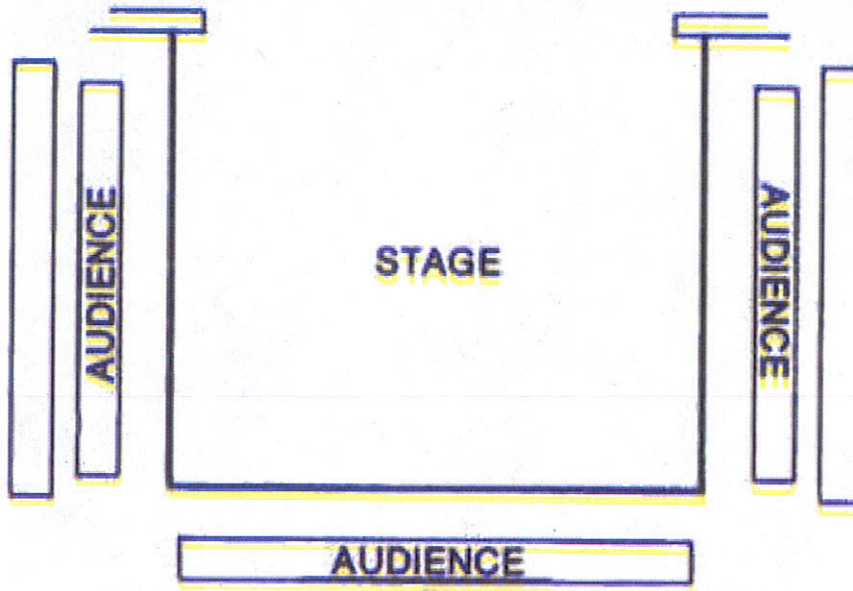
This is the image I used for the stimulus. It is the interior of the eastern side of the Hagia Sophia. The streams of light are what stimulated my idea of what the lighting should be in the performance. The light can represent God and enlightenment, but could also represent the light streaming in through the small window in a jail cell.



Stage Lighting from the book by Graham Walters

This is a picture that represents the shadows that I want casted on the man. The two overhead spotlights should cast at an angle and each should be a different color; one yellow and the other blue. I would want the spotlight to be more defined.

## Thrust Stage



This is the type of stage I want for my performance. The audience should surround him from three sides; they should be close so that he has the ability to converse to them. It allows an uncomfortable connection between him and the audience.



Here is another image from the Les Miserables performance. The way Jean Valjean is pleading and showing his chains to everyone is the way I want the man to do perform. Except, the man will have his hands and feet cuffed.