

TARRAGON THEATRE

33rd SEASON 2003-2004

“Is there a better evening of theatre to be had anywhere?”
David MacFarlane, *Globe & Mail*, 2003

“An unrivalled purveyor of Canadian drama”
Vit Wagner, *Toronto Star*, 1999

“Tarragon [has] the key position at the centre of Canada’s theatrical stew.”
Mira Friedlander, *Globe & Mail*, 1997

About Tarragon Theatre

Tarragon is primarily a playwright’s theatre. Its mandate is to develop, encourage and produce new work; to attract or train new artists and technicians to interpret new work; and to inform and develop an audience for new work. The goal of the OutReach programs is to develop quality theatre education initiatives for students, educators, community members, and theatre patrons. The mandate of OutReach is “to use all its resources, programs, and facilities to promote, wherever possible, inclusion. Particularly through our OutReach initiatives we aim to support and foster relationships with community members, educators and students as together we develop the theatre practitioners and audiences of today and tomorrow”.

In 2003, our neighborhood association unanimously voted to adopt the official name Tarragon Village Community Association, making this the first neighborhood in Toronto to take its name from that of a theatre. Tarragon Village encompasses Dartnell Avenue to Bathurst Street and Bridgman Avenue to Davenport Road. An inaugural ribbon cutting ceremony took place on May 31, 2003.

Tarragon Achievements

- ?? Over 175 Canadian premieres by such celebrated and award-winning playwrights as David French, James Reaney, George F. Walker, Judith Thompson, John Murrell, Joan MacLeod, Maja Ardal, Morris Panych, Jason Sherman, Guillermo Verdecchia, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Daniel Brooks, Diane Flacks, Richard Greenblatt, Ted Dykstra, Ken Garnhum, Michael Healey, Morwyn Brebner, Mavis Gallant, Kristen Thomson and a host of others.
- ?? Tarragon is the foremost producer, in English Canada, of translated plays from Québec, most notably the work of Carole Fréchette and Michel Tremblay.
- ?? Plays developed and produced at Tarragon have on many occasions, toured nationally and internationally; they have also been widely published, broadcast and filmed.
- ?? Tarragon has received more than 200 Dora Award nominations, many nominations (and winners) for the Chalmers Canadian Play Award and many nominations for the Governor General’s Award for Drama (winners include Judith Thompson, Joan MacLeod, Guillermo Verdecchia, John Krizanc, Jason Sherman

and Morris Panych, all for Tarragon plays). Tarragon has received the Lieutenant Governor's Award 5 times in the past 7 years.

- ?? Since the 1995/96 season, Tarragon subscriptions have risen 136% to a record 4,095 subscribers in the 2002-2003 season. Tarragon is deficit-free.
- ?? The Urjo Karede Playwrights Endowment Fund, named to honour Urjo's commitment to Canadian theatre, stands at just under \$1.2 million. Income from the fund is used to assist playwrights while they are writing their plays.

Tarragon Programs

- ?? 7 or 8 major productions in two theatres each season. In the 2002-2003 season, there were seven productions (300 performances) with a total attendance of 46,950.
- ?? Playwrights Unit (since 1982). As many as 7 playwrights, with works-in-progress, work individually and collectively with the artistic director and the associate artistic director over the course of a year. These plays are given a public reading during Play Reading Week, held in mid-December.
- ?? 4 playwrights-in-residence.
- ?? Tarragon Theatre/George Brown College New Play Development Project – a Tarragon playwright will write a play to be workshopped by second year acting students at George Brown College in order to give the students a sense of the development process and their role as actors within it.
- ?? Spring Arts Fair (since 1985): an extraordinary free celebration of the performing arts, presented in spaces throughout the interior and exterior of Tarragon Theatre.
- ?? OutReach programs aimed at youth including Spring Training Project, Young Playwrights Unit, *Under 20 for Under 20's* playwriting contest, high school and post-secondary co-op placements; OutReach programs aimed at educators including Teacher Nights and educator workshops.
- ?? Apprentice programs in arts administration and stage management.

Tarragon Special Services

- ?? Over 500 scripts professionally read and assessed annually without charge.
- ?? Student and senior matinees; wheelchair accessibility throughout facility.
- ?? Teachers provided with a complimentary study guide.
- ?? Costume and prop rentals for professional and community companies.
- ?? Pay-What-You-Can performances every Sunday afternoon.
- ?? Tickets donated to community and social service groups for fundraising events.

TARRAGON THEATRE

study guide

Hello...Hello

Book and lyrics by Karen Hines

Musical score by Greg Morrison with Karen Hines



**Starring: Aurora Browne, Karen Hines,
Steven Morel and Peter Oldring
Directed by Chris Earle**

Musical Direction and Sound Design by Greg Morrison

Set and Costume Design by John Thompson

Lighting Design by Michel Charbonneau

Stage Manager: Alison Peddie

Assistant Director: Kilby Smith-McGregor

November 5 – December 14, 2003

About the **Hello...Hello** study guide:

This study guide has been created so that your theatre experience at Tarragon is a fulfilling and engaging one. We hope that it will help create discussions, generate ideas and prompt many questions.

The **Hello...Hello** study guide was coordinated by Laura Bonfigli and compiled by:

Laura Bonfigli (BA Honours, M.A.) has been with the Tarragon Theatre since 1996 when she began as a co-op student. Currently, she is the Toronto Fringe's Development Associate and is Tarragon Theatre's OutReach Associate.

Joanna Falck (BA Honours, M.A.) is in the final year of her PhD at the Graduate Centre for the Study of Drama. She is the Literary Coordinator for the Tarragon Theatre.

Avery A. Swartz (BFA Honours) is a graduate of Ryerson University's Technical Theatre Production program. She spent 4 years as a producer with Festival of Classics in Oakville. She is Tarragon's Administrative Assistant and Group Sales Coordinator.

Kristen Van Alphen (BA Honours) is a professional stage manager, who in 1999 made a career change to education program administration and theatre outreach. She is Tarragon's OutReach Director.

Mary B. Wood (BA Honours, B.Ed.) first came to Tarragon in 2000 as a Tarragon Theatre/OISE intern. She teaches dramatic arts full time and continues to work with Tarragon Theatre as our OutReach Consultant developing lesson plans grounded in Ministry Curriculum.

Special thanks and acknowledgements to Charissa Aldcroft, Mimi Dendias, Henry Bertrand, Alex Gilbert, Catherine Matzig, John Thompson and Kirk Thomson.

The **Hello...Hello** study guide is divided into several sections.

1. **About the Tarragon Theatre**
2. **About the Play**
3. **Additional Resources**
4. **Lesson Plans**

We encourage you to make use of this study guide as effectively as possible and as such we want to highlight the fact that some elements of the guide are most useful prior to viewing the production and some are most useful post viewing. For example, while the structure, character breakdown and themes set up a context for viewing, the design elements are best understood after viewing. There are also lesson plans included for pre and post show activities.

**Feel free to contact us should you have any questions or comments at
416.536.5018 x242.**

Educator Programs are generously supported by:



Hello...Hello

"I believe that in the space between the products there lies a truth about humanity...about what they want; what they need"

About The Play

1. Synopsis
 2. Structural Elements
 3. A Note About Translation
 4. Thematic Elements
 5. Canadian Content
 6. Design Elements
-

Synopsis

The play opens in a thriving megalopolis as we witness seas of telemarketers, executives, and manicurists spilling out onto the street at the end of the workday. Cassandra and Ben meet at the grave of her fiancée when he stumbles upon her while chasing a fifty-dollar bill. They begin a relationship that attempts to buy into 'the dream', as marketed by the corporate world. The attempt fails. In this darkly romantic, complex vision of our future, Hines takes the classic shop-girl-meets-dashing-businessman fable and spins it until it blurs.

Structural Elements

Hello...Hello moves chronologically through time and draws upon a number of stylistic influences to create the world within which the play is set. It is, ultimately, the merging of fable and satire with musical form that provides the piece with a structural foundation. There are two acts: the first is called Megalopolis and the second is called Semi-Residentia. The change in tone between these acts highlights the inherent dualism within this piece.

A fable is defined as a narrative making an edifying or cautionary point. Employing music to achieve this opens the audience up and allows them to more willingly suspend their disbelief. In an interview, Hines stated "You can say things in song that, if they were contained in dialogue would be very heavy handed and obvious." Particularly in this play, the messages are given layers by being delivered through music which, at times, juxtaposes the content of the lyrics. The audience can be laughing at the lyrics while being deeply moved by the music, or be put at ease because of a cheerful, upbeat rhythm while the lyrics tell a sad or alarming story.

The use of chorus is also an important structural element of **Hello...Hello**. The narrative moves from generic to specific, beginning by the painting of a landscape of multitudes and eventually revealing one couple for the audience to follow and, in due course, connect with. In order to understand the journey that Ben and Cassandra undertake, the audience must have a context. This is provided by the choral characters who take on multiple personas in order to create a backdrop for the central action. Inherent in the use of the chorus is the feeling that each of the additional characters represented (the newlyweds, the bank manager and his pie baking wife), have an archetypal or

“everyman” quality. The chorus also allows for the convention of narration – this element of the structure enables the script to convey a great deal of information to the audience. It allows for bizarre occurrences, because they only need be described rather than seen. It also informs the fable attributes by lending a “once upon a time” feel to the play.

Point of Interest

A device used in Greek theatre, the **chorus** is a group of dancers, singers and narrators who often speak collectively and comment on the action around them. They can be involved in the narrative directly, as a character, but they assume that role in addition to their function as a chorus. In its most general form, the chorus consists of abstract beings that represent higher moral or political interests.

The use of repetition is also important to note in relation to the structure of the dialogue within this piece. Cassandra repeats the same phrase numerous times in vastly different contexts.

The following phrases are repeated more than once in the text:

“They watch each other breathe for a moment”

“There are too many people in the world anyway”

“Deep girls picture universes”

“There is a devouring blackness that has an irresistible hold on my imagination”

How does the context affect the meaning of them? Pay close attention to how the lines are delivered – does it sound the same each time? Why or why not?

*Consider the title “**Hello...Hello**”. Knowing how important repetition is to the structure of the dialogue, how does this title function?*

Satire is defined as a literary work in which human vice or folly is attacked through irony, derision, or wit. Hines subtitles this play “a Romantic Satire”. How does this play fall within those parameters?

Setting

This musical is set some time in the future where there are six, not seven, seas and where artists are mostly a memory now seen in advertisements for khakis and ribbed halters.

More specific locations include: the city streets, the cemetery, The Abyss, Ben's apartment, Quicksilver Incorporated, the amusement park and Ben and Cassandra's home in Semi-Residentia.

What theatrical device is used to efficiently transport the audience to numerous locations?

Characters

Ben	A rising young executive who uses art and poetry to enhance his marketing prowess; he is the head of Creative at a major corporation.
Cassandra	A cryptic salesgirl for a trendy retail outlet; has the ability to see both ways and is often stricken by the feeling that she will “fly away”.
Chorus	Played by 2 actors who narrate the events, speak aloud the stage directions, become directly involved with the narrative as characters and with “delicate facetiousness” comment on Ben and Cassandra’s twisted love story.

Thematic Elements

Entropy

Entropy has several meanings, two of which relate strongly to the thematic nature of **Hello...Hello**.

1. The tendency for all matter and energy in the universe to evolve toward a state of inert uniformity.
2. Inevitable and steady deterioration of a system or society.

Under the thematic umbrella of entropy are several ideas that should be discussed prior to viewing the play and then revisited after viewing the play to see if any preconceived notions have been questioned:

Consumerism

The corporate culture that dominates **Hello...Hello** is indicative of the overall message of the play: that our reality is not so far removed from the world being presented onstage. The evolution of Quicksilver’s business status (incorporation to consolidation to consortium) shows a passage of time but also indicates that they are gaining strength in a world domination of sorts.

Ben’s unwillingness to market his angels is indicative of something complex within the makeup of his character. He represents the corporate world in this play and yet he spends his spare time creating something that is “almost like art”. For the majority of the play he doesn’t believe that you can sell or market that which is ephemeral or ethereal. This belief connects directly to the extinction of the artist, which we will address in the next section.

At the end of the play, Ben pitches his angels to the CEOs of Quicksilver. Why does he change his mind? What is accomplished by juxtaposing Ben’s pitch against Cassandra’s suicide?

*How do the billboards function in **Hello...Hello**? What do they represent (especially to the newlyweds)?*

One of the definitions of entropy refers to “uniformity”. Ben and Cassandra’s first song states, “I’m so glad that you’re the same as me.” How does mass marketing attempt to softly nudge the world into a state of inert uniformity?

In the world Hines creates, has marketing replaced religion?

Consider how the use of brands like “The Abyss” and “Unequivocal Vodka” call attention directly to our own realities. How does this device affect our understanding of the play?

Urbanization and Environmental Decay

These two themes are tightly linked in **Hello...Hello** and also intertwine with the theme of consumerism. The entire play is set either in the core or suburb of a city (Megalopolis and Semi-Residentia respectively) however, the things that people long for are pastoral, such as the country scenario of a pie cooling on a window sill with a horse in the background. The conundrum that is outlined in this play is that corporations are continually looking for something that people think they want or need – that which is missing in their lives. However, what are missing from the world of the play are elements of the environment that have been lost through the spread of human consumption. Cassandra says things like “I remember bananas” and “oh yes, deer, I remember them” to highlight that valuable things are disappearing because of our solipsistic approach to the environment.

Many instances in **Hello...Hello** force us to realize that a repercussion of the commodified and increasingly urban culture is the misuse of our natural resources and the subsequent decay of our natural environment. The best example occurs at the beginning of the play when groups of people watch from a high rise as birds fly into the windows and fall to their death. Later in the play Ben and Cassandra actually step over the bird corpses on a walk through the city.

Other examples include:

- 1000 sleeping golden retrievers with 4001 twitching paws
- An eight-limbed toddler
- The last eucalyptus tree crashes to the ground
- The six seas (or sick seas)
- Ben and Cassandra’s perfect, but impossibly tiny baby
- Quivering beads of mercury in restaurant meal of zebra mussels

At the end of the play Ben acknowledges:

“We have plumbed the virtues of the dirt and the trees and the seven seas...
I beg your pardon...the sick seas...the six seas...
We have channeled our energies into the earth; and the earth has offered itself up to us.
And we are harvesting. Precious gifts. Gifts for those who can’t get enough, and now,
at last...for those who’ve had too much.”

How do you understand Ben's statement?

How does Ben and Cassandra's move into semi-residentia reinforce the umbrella theme of entropy?

What are some other instances of "unnaturalness" or environmental decay that are alluded to in the text? How do they serve to enhance the overall message of the play?

Escapism

One of the strongest thematic elements in **Hello...Hello** is escapism. Exemplified in the numerous suicide inferences, the billboards and the notion of the shiny ball, every person in the world of the play is tempted by the thought of escape.

The shiny ball is alluded to in Ben and Cassandra's first song but because we don't yet know what it is, we have the opportunity to believe that it could represent hope. The second we learn about Bury's death, we know that the ball is not symbolic of hope, but rather of death.

A satirical element is evident through the marketing of the silver ball. It is a comment on society that we have been convinced we need so many things that corporate America has begun to sell us suicide – perfectly packaged through 'lanky models' and leading captions. When a desperately poor newlywed sees a billboard hocking the silver ball she exclaims, "ooh, I want one." Not only is the silver ball perfect for those who have nothing, it is also the perfect accessory for those who have everything...except death.

Does the newlywed want a silver ball because she wants to escape her life or because it is the newest fad?

When Ben releases Cassandra from this world by giving her a shiny ball, he gives her an escape. The repeated phrase "Nothing is too wonderful to be true" actually has two meanings: for some it means that everything can be attained; for Cassandra it means that "in nothingness lies everything" – that in fact it is a place devoid of 'things' that calls out to her as she attempts to assimilate in semi-residentia. The following exchange marks the point at which Ben understands what she needs:

Ben: What do you / need?

Cassandra: Nothing

M: They pause. They watch each other breathe for a moment.

Cassandra: I need nothing.

At the end of the play, the world grows "dark with humanity". Before viewing the production, discuss what you think this might mean. Did your opinion change after you watched the show?

Do you think Cassandra's suicide is a choice? Could she have survived in the corporate, consumerist world? Do you think she would have chosen death or does she kill herself because Ben gives her the freedom to?

Do you accept Cassandra's suicide as a necessary release, despite the fact that she leaves her husband and newborn child behind?

What aspects of the shiny ball make it an ideal emblem for escapism?

The Role of the Artist

The female chorus defines artist as, “Those who engaged in writing a detailed history of the future because of their acute perceptions of the nature of the present? Because of their age-old ability to sidestep the violence of progress with full awareness.” Despite the fact that they are given a lofty, academic definition, the role of the artist is constantly undermined within the narrative. In the world of the play, artists are mostly extinct. They are occasionally seen modelling in advertisements to “buy ointments, which salve the wounds that have been created by their hands clawing at their own faces; or to pay for medicines which anaesthetize the pain that emanates from chasmic wounds in their bellies, which have opened up and bled endlessly due to years and years of bitterness and bile that went before this time now...”

Cassandra's dead fiancée, Bury, was an artist and her description of what he did for a living satirizes the act of theatre. By doing so, Hines calls attention to the fact that the audience is sitting in a theatre, observing the world as it might become. She forces us to question preconceived notions about where the world is and where it's slowly going.

Why does Hines juxtapose the artist against the businessman? What is accomplished in this comparison?

Discuss the irony implicit in the act of using art to portray a world devoid of art. Does this strengthen the argument?

The desire to compartmentalize Cassandra into the role of the artist and Ben into the representative of corporate America is understandable. In reality, however, these are truly layered characters. Cassandra cannot be fully aligned with the artist – she does not self-identify as an artist (although she has the spirit of one) and she works for a corporation and attempts to subvert her true feelings to fit into the world of semi-residentia. Ben also does two things that separate him from being entirely corporate: he creates the angel dolls, mugs, etc. in his spare time and, for the better portion of the play, is unwilling to market them; and he releases Cassandra from a world that is suffocating her, although that act spoils the realization of the American dream. Neither of these characters can be entirely compartmentalized, which is why they are a strong juxtaposition against the two dimensional choral characters and, as such, elicit empathy.

Why isn't Cassandra an artist? Why is she unable to reflect back to the world what she is feeling? What do you think she means when she says her eyes see both ways?

Love

Love is subverted in a material world because it becomes impossible to validate emotion without producing something tangible. The newlyweds' gift to each other of the shiny ball, after they have lost so much, represents the fact that the material world still has a hold on them. They love each other deeply but it continues to manifest itself in the desire for consumer goods.

There is a deeper message than romantic love – if we love our planet then we must realize that needs to outweigh our love of consumer goods. Otherwise, a world with six seas, and ever-shrinking forests is not that far in the distance. The consumer-driven romantic love theme is a metaphor for our immediate need for gratification, urged on by corporate America, and in direct conflict with the sustainability of our way of life.

On the other hand, Ben's love for Cassandra is so strong that his gift to her is not just the shiny ball but rather, what it represents. Ben gives her the freedom to leave despite the fact that he loves her so much. When Cassandra leaves she watches the world become dark with humanity and eventually increase in chaos until it becomes its own shiny ball of nothingness. Ben's gift calls attention to the idea of romantic love as a double-edged sword: the beautiful ideal of romantic love is undermined by the fact that love can only be shown through participating in the consumerist ideal.

Does Cassandra love Ben? How has Hines subverted the traditional boy meets girl love story?

Compare the "tragic end" with the end of Romeo and Juliet. What makes these two love stories so vastly different?

Reflection

This is a theme that is not overtly addressed in the play but sums up the goal of the play's effect on the audience. When Cassandra confesses her true feelings to Ben she says: "There is a devouring blackness that has an irresistible hold on my imagination and the pain of reflection is too much for my weak soul to bear."

It is an escape from the act of reflection that motivates Cassandra to fall in love with Ben. When she feels reflection, or introspection, coming on she is able to ask Ben to lie down on her; when he kisses her he makes her shallow where she was deep. Unfortunately, she can only hide from herself for so long and eventually must accept that she needs to leave this world. Her act of reflection is actually her saviour as she watches the world "turn from green and blue to dark with humanity" and eventually "is rendered, at last, a shimmering, whirling, silvery shiny ball."

Hines wants us to pause and reflect on where our world is headed – what do you think is the best and worst future possible for humanity?

Dualism

Many ideas in this piece are presented as mutually exclusive realities, beginning with the juxtaposition of the corporate world against the artist and ending with the strong contrast of freedom through death and entrapment through life. The game that Cassandra and Ben play in Act 2 brings the notion of dualism directly to the forefront.

Ben: If you had to pick one, which would you rather be: alone or irritated?

Cassandra: You mean alone or...(dryly) with a companion?

Ben: Well...

Cassandra: AH! If you had to pick one, which would you rather? Die young and leave a beautiful corpse? Or die young and leave a RAVAGED corpse?

Ben: I...

Cassandra: AHHH! I got it wrong AGAIN!

Ben: There there...it's just a game.

Cassandra: WHAT AM I DOING WRONG?

Ben: The questions you ask have answers which are too easy to – (gently) The answers are implicit. Explicit. There's no game to them.

Cassandra: As opposed to *your* questions...?

Ben: Which are puzzling. *Challenging*. They're six of one half a dozen of the other questions. The present two realities, which are not opposing necessarily, but are mutually exclusive.

How does Hines use dualism to address the following themes: romantic love, life and death. What parallels, or mutually exclusive realities, does she create within the world of the play?

In the dualist world that Hines presents, is Cassandra's death at the end of the play really a rebirth? Discuss.

Ask each student to come up with a Catch-22 that would work in Ben and Cassandra's game. Did any of the students have difficulty coming up with one? Why or why not? Read the questions aloud to each other. Do many of them have similar themes or topics? If yes, why do you think that is?

Canadian Content

This show presents a world that looks very much like ours. Hines asks us to recognize aspects of our own corporate culture through the use of synonyms (The Abyss, Unequivocal) and then forces us to question whether or not our world is falling into a similar "entropic" trap.

*Why does Hines present this piece to a Canadian audience at this time? If your class is familiar with George Orwell's **1984**, discuss the similarities between Orwell's vision and Hines' vision.*

Design Elements

The following section is intended to increase the awareness of production elements utilized in theatre. It combines general information about areas of design (including information from Tarragon production staff, design websites, and the textbook: Theatrical Design and Production by J. Michael Gillette) with specific examples of how design elements have been employed in the production you are attending. A brief glossary is also included to assist with technical terms used in this section of the guide.

Design Overview

A script can be performed numerous times without ever being interpreted the same way. Although text stays the same from production to production, the way the piece is conceptualized changes.

The designers (set, costumes, lighting, sound, etc.) and director thoroughly discuss the play to ensure all parties share a similar vision of the play, and explore how this vision

will be represented through design. Design elements should create an environment for the play that supports the production concept: the creative interpretation of the script.

There are some artistic and practical considerations that apply to all areas of design. These include:

- ?? mood and spirit of the production
- ?? historical period of the production
- ?? locale of each scene
- ?? season of the year and time of day for each scene
- ?? time, labour and material budgets
- ?? health and safety
- ?? needs of other designers

?? *How do these elements affect the choices for each area of design?*

Designers in each discipline also submit their ideas to the production department for costing. This is the first introduction of the designers to the production manager and technical director. When the costing is complete the director, design team and production team review the feasibility of the design and make any adjustments necessary.

For **Hello...Hello**, the production design strives for a timeless, simple, and interchangeable world. This is accomplished through a geometric, 'sleek' approach. To support the fable quality of the narrative, the designs create a mythic world that - like the story - call to mind components of the past, present and future. These fundamentals include scenery influenced by musicals of the 1930's and 40's combined with present-day urban and 'future-world' steel elements; lighting that evokes the past freeness of the 60's, the indulgence of today's marketing campaigns, and a garish future; costumes that belie any decade; and music that pairs upbeat melodies with cautionary lyrics.

The combination of design results in a sense that the story, although at first appearing outlandish, is not unthinkable considering where we, as a race, have been and where we seem to be headed...perhaps indicating that our past and present actions are informing the world of tomorrow and that, left unchanged, will create a future not unlike the world of **Hello...Hello**...

Set Design

The set designer's job is to create a physical world that helps the audience understand and enjoy a play by providing a visual representation of the production concept. Before rehearsals begin, the set designer meets multiple times with the director. From these meetings design drawings and a maquette (a scale model of what will be onstage) are developed. The model and drawings are used by the actors, stage managers and production staff to better understand the design goals; to imagine and replicate the space the production will be set in; and to build and decorate the set pieces.

Specific practical elements considered by the set designer are:

- ?? the socio-economic level of the characters
- ?? number and position of entrances and exits needed

- ?? number and position of entrances and exits already in the space
- ?? the seating formation of the theatre – is it malleable?
- ?? the type of stage that comes with the theatre (i.e. proscenium, thrust, arena, catwalk etc.)
- ?? is this a flyhouse?
- ?? the duration of the run
- ?? will the set tour after the first production

In addition to the scenery, the set designer is usually responsible for designing the stage properties.

It will be interesting to take notice of the following:

- ?? Where on the stage certain scenes take place
- ?? How the mood and spirit of the production is relayed through the design
- ?? How many different locales are represented on the stage
- ?? What areas are used as exits and entrances
- ?? What information the set gives about the characters

The **Hello...Hello** set, designed by John Thompson, is a black, white and silver proscenium space, with staircases on stage right and stage left, and an oval riser that represents a bed. A striking design that remains sparse in the playing area to allow for choreography, the **Hello...Hello** set creates an environment within which the world of the play can exist incorporating mirror which supports the sense of reflection, levels which create interesting spaces for tableaux, and a lot of white space to allow for exaggerated lighting effects. The set is also effective in the telling of a musical – where the suspension of disbelief is often greater than in a play – by allowing instant shifts in time, place and space. Because everything including the bed is generic, the set reinforces the mythic quality of fable and refuses to pinpoint any particular era. The design evokes many things including:

- ?? a close-up of a billboard
- ?? black and white television
- ?? classic comic books
- ?? lights in urban skyscrapers
- ?? a barcode (on the back wall)
- ?? a pool of mercury on the floor
- ?? the musicals of Busby Berkeley
- ?? Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*

Are there other influences that you recognize in the design?

How would this production have been different if the props were real?

The chorus functions to move the audience through space, place and time. How would this function have been affected in a more detailed, naturalistic set?

Sound design

Sound design has grown incredibly in the past few years. This is partly due to increased expectations created by film and television, the advancement of sound technology, and the prevalence of high quality personal sound equipment. Sound is now increasingly being used in the theatre to focus the audience's attention and reinforce (or counteract) the dominant emotional theme of the material being presented.

Sound design consists of music, effects and reinforcement (such as microphones).

The sound designer obtains a lot of information directly from the script i.e. "a phone rings", "it begins to rain", or "a sad song is heard through the window". S/he must think about the transitions between scenes and what sound elements will shift the audience from the mood of one scene to the next. Sound design also extends to the elements the audience hears when they first enter the theatre, during the intermission, and even the curtain call and post-show music.

Some practical elements the sound designer considers are:

- ?? speaker and microphone placement
- ?? live or recorded sound, or both
- ?? volume of each piece
- ?? length of scene changes
- ?? equipment available
- ?? existing ambient noise in the theatre

As well as establishing and reinforcing mood and atmosphere, sound elements also provide information to the audience:

- ?? When you enter a theatre take a minute to listen to the pre-show music or soundscape – does it offer any clues about the nature of the show?
- ?? What sound cues did you hear that helped establish time and place?
- ?? Were any special effects used? Were they useful in moving the story forward? Why or why not?

Hello...Hello is a musical that includes one musician: the musical director, sound designer, and co-composer Greg Morrison. Because he plays every night and can respond to the actors, the show can grow throughout the run. In addition to the music of the songs, Greg also provides sound cues and ambient cues – he sometimes adds effects to the voices, or loops sounds, or uses repetition. He is able to do this using a synthesizer that can emulate, engineer and distort a myriad of sounds. Greg becomes a fifth character in the play, responding to, foreshadowing and underscoring certain parts of the narrative through a detailed synthesized soundscape.

When you attend the show you will notice that the technician is located at the back of the house, outside the booth. He is doing a "live mix", which means he needs to be able to hear the performers the way the audience does. He is constantly mixing the sound from the reinforcements (microphones) to be heard through the speakers. Normally, when the technician (in this case, Michael Freeman) is in the booth, he is isolated behind a glass wall and below a low ceiling – both of these things prevent him from using his ears as an instrument to contribute to the show.

Point of Interest

At any live music concert that involves microphones there is a sound mixer, in the open, usually placed 2/3 of the way back in the audience – it takes a well-trained ear to perform a great live-mix.

Greg uses a variety of equipment including:

- 5 PCC microphones: Phase Coherent Cardioid microphones that ring the stage on the floor. These allow for high volumes before feedback and directional pick-up without sacrificing tonal quality; as such these microphones are an excellent alternative to lavaliers, or body mics, for productions with minimal budgets. The reinforcement is used to allow voices to match the live amplified music. Because amplified sound can be 'treated' before it is sent to the speakers, these microphones also make possible the addition of effects such as the reverberation, or echo quality, used when Ben and Cassandra are in the Tunnel of Love.
- A shotgun microphone hung in the air on the stage-left side of the stage. These microphones are adept at picking up what is directly in front of them without catching ambient sounds from the sides and rear. In this production the shotgun mic is used to add effects to specific dialogue that takes place on the SL stairs such as the first time Cassandra asks Ben to lie down on her, or when the female chorus takes on the persona of Ben's dead lover Forget-Me-Not.
- A subwoofer, or loudspeaker designed to reproduce bass frequencies, is used to reinforce low-end sounds such as the ominous sound cues at the beginning of each act.
- Monitors, which are speakers that allow the performers to hear a mix of themselves and the music, are hidden in the wings of the set. These wedge-shaped speakers are usually placed at the front of the stage facing the playing area but are hidden here to preserve the set design.
- An electric keyboard with synthesizing capabilities. This instrument allows Greg to play with a wide range of sounds including ones that are futuristic in quality.

Take note of when effects are applied to the amplified voices of the performers – how does this element add to a scene?

Lighting Design:

Effective stage lighting not only lets the spectators see the action of the play but also ties together all the visual elements of the production and helps create an appropriate mood and atmosphere to heighten the audience's understanding and enjoyment of the play.

The lighting designer wants to give information such as time and place, mood, and where the focus of a scene is. Lighting design is often not noticeable because it has been created in such a way as to enhance the mood of the play as unobtrusively as possible. However, many directors will employ unnatural lighting or hyper-realized lighting to add another layer to the production.

Lighting includes the use of coloured gels to create different effects; intensity to determine how dark or bright a scene is; direction to establish the angle at which the light hits the stage; and movement to decide the duration and components of cues.

Lighting and sound often work together to create an effect (i.e. a fade to black that is timed to a piece of music).

Lighting also works closely with set pieces when 'practicals' are used. These are light sources that are manipulated by the actors (i.e. a desk lamp). In this case the set designer will determine the look of the lamp and the lighting designer will decide how it functions.

Some practical considerations for a lighting designer are:

- ?? the number of locations in a set
- ?? the number of lighting instruments available
- ?? the type of performance (i.e. drama, dance, opera, etc.)
- ?? whether the lighting board is manual or computerized
- ?? alternate light sources (i.e. video or slide projection)
- ?? set materials requiring special lighting (i.e. a scrim or cyclorama)

Some lighting elements to notice are:

- ?? when and how lighting indicates a change in time or location
- ?? lighting changing the focus from one character to another
- ?? how lighting interacts with sound elements
- ?? how lighting is employed to reinforce a mood
- ?? how colour is used in the lighting instruments

Lighting designer Michel Charbonneau uses both light boxes and a cyclorama to explore the landscape of the narrative.

A light box is generally a constructed scenic element that is lit from the interior. In this case translucent plastic columns on the down-right and down-left portions of the stage encase lighting instruments that shoot up through them. These are used to highlight the urban setting at the beginning of the show and at various other points when the text refers to buildings or skylines. The effect is that of a high rise building with lit windows.

A cyclorama, or white canvas, has been hung upstage of the back wall of the set and is used to portray a variety of saturated colours that reflect the colours attributed to the sky. The cyclorama is used whenever there is an exterior scene and remains unlit for interior scenes. As well as telling the audience the location of each part of the narrative, the cyc lights constantly remind the audience that they are in a different world in which the bizarre is accepted as perfectly normal.

Michel uses white light on the stage to counter the use of saturated colours elsewhere in the design and also supports the directorial choice of tableaux by silhouetting the performers at certain points. This lays a groundwork for the burst of colour displayed at the end of the narrative when Cassandra is leaving the world and it is beginning to spin at a chaotic pace.

What colours has Michel chosen for the cyclorama in different scenes – do the colours inform the narrative?

Costume Design

Costume design includes all clothing, underclothing, hairdressing, makeup, and accessories such as hats, scarves, fans, umbrellas, and jewellery, worn or carried by each character in a production.

A costume design suggests specific personal information about each character.

Through discussion with the director, the costume designer will decide whether or not to make the costumes 'period accurate'. The designer researches clothes of a period in many ways including: looking through store catalogues of the era (i.e. Sears or Eaton's); going to a reference library, art gallery and/or museum; perusing picture archives; or even looking at old family photographs. Similarly, if the costumes are contemporary, designers look to current fashion magazines, TV and film, and stores for research.

The designer also works from indications within the play's script and looks for hints into the characters' personality. They then make artistic choices for the colour of the costumes, their shape, and the fabrics to be used.

Finally, the designer works with the costume team and the actors in fittings to make certain that the costumes are comfortable and as easy as possible to manipulate.

Some practical considerations in costume design include:

- ?? the background and personality of the characters
- ?? the limitations created by the set or staging (i.e. a raked stage makes spiked shoes impractical)
- ?? the actors can move about on the stage as required (i.e. run up a set of stairs or engage in stage combat)
- ?? the costumes remain effective under stage lighting
- ?? costumes that need to be changed quickly are built accordingly
- ?? costumes can last for an entire run and be laundered

To clothe the actors within the production concept for **Hello...Hello**, costume designer John Thompson chose wardrobe pieces that continue the geometric feel of the set design and that have simple lines with timeless cuts. Cassandra, for example, wears classic dresses whose cuts do not imply any particular decade. Ben's shirts take on more colour throughout the show, his ties are more starkly geometric and his suit becomes more professional. The female and male chorus do not change throughout the show to support the notion that they have many personas. Although the undergarments worn by Cassandra and Ben are very contemporary the fact that they glow gives them an eerie futuristic feel.

Point of Interest:

Although Ben returns after the undergarments scene wearing the same shirt as before, he is actually in a duplicate shirt which has been 'quick-changed' to make the redressing easier. In this case, the shirt has had Velcro sewn onto the opening in place of the buttons. Ben, therefore, does not have to struggle into a shirt that may have its arms inside out, etc. and also have to button it up. The effect is completed by having buttons

sewn on the top layer of the opening, in the buttonholes; thus, it appears that the 'quick-changed' shirt has been buttoned up.

Stage Management

One aspect of technical production that is too often overlooked is the area of stage management. The stage management team provides support, organization, information and leadership to all areas of a production including administration, technical production, front of house, and the company of actors.

With regards to design, the stage manager plays a key role by providing a variety of information including: scene timings; costume requirement; and properties additions. The stage manager also 'calls the show' which means they coordinate when each design element will be used and tell the technical team, on a cue-by-cue basis when to "go". As a show naturally progresses throughout a run the stage manager must be the human element that determines when cues should happen in order to relate to the action on stage. They also work with the actors to remain aware of the choices that were made when the cues were set.

Stage managers for musicals must be particularly adept, as many of the cues they will call will be based on passages in the score. Therefore, it is important for the stage manager to understand and appreciate music. They must also be comfortable with dance choreography, as they will need to note and remember dance sequences for cuing purposes.

Glossary of Useful Technical Terms

Acoustics	The sound transmission characteristics of a room, space or material
Cue	A directive for action (i.e. a change in the lighting, sound, or an actor's entrance)
Cyclorama	A large piece of scenic material used to surround the stage on to which colour can be projected
Gel	Generic name for the film used in lighting instruments to change colour. It can also be used as a verb (i.e. to 'gel' the lights)
Gobo	A thin metal template inserted into a lighting instrument in order to cut a pattern into the light that is projected onstage
Flyhouse	A theatre space with the ability to "fly" set pieces and/or backdrops from a fly gallery located high above the stage using ropes and cables
Maquette	A scale model 3-D representation of the set design
Plot	A scale drawing showing the placement of various elements (i.e. lighting instruments) relative to the stage configuration and theatre
Prompt book	A copy of the script with each actor's blocking, all the technical cues, and details/lists of all technical elements involved in the production

and details/lists of all technical elements involved in the production

Raked stage A stage that is higher at the back than at the front

Scrim A scenic panel made from translucent gauze-like material

Stage Configurations

Arena Stage A stage configuration where the audience completely surrounds the playing space

Catwalk Stage A stage configuration where the audience surrounds the playing space on 2 sides – also known as an Alley stage

Proscenium A stage configuration where the audience watches the action through a rectangular opening that resembles a picture frame (proscenium arch)

Thrust Stage A stage configuration where the audience surrounds the playing space on 3 sides

Additional Resources

1. About Karen Hines
2. Historical Antecedent
3. Production Antecedent

About Karen Hines

Karen Hines is an award-winning performer, writer and director and is the artistic director of Keep Frozen: Pochsy Productions. She is the creator/performer of *Pochsy's Lips*, and *Oh, Baby*, which have been presented across Canada and in the U.S. Other acting credits include: Second City, Canadian Stage (*Angels in America*), Necessary Angel (*Swollen Tongues*) and Mirvish Productions (*The Drowsy Chaperone*). Directing credits include: Mump & Smoot in *Caged, Ferno; Something Else*, and *Flux*. Film and TV credits include: *The Newsroom; Foreign Objects; Married Life* (nominated for CableAce and Gemini awards); *Hedwig and the Angry Inch; Escape from the Newsroom*.

Hines left university after one year and went to New York City to study acting. She joined the Second City touring company in 1989, later moving to its London company and finally to the Toronto cast. Her extensive work in clown and bouffon, styles with vastly different philosophies, has given her a strong foundation to create dualistic characters living in complex realities. About **Hello...Hello**, she states, "It's a piece that should manage both to attract and repel audiences at the same time." Further describing the contrasting nature of the piece, Hines states "It's dark as well as light, cutting as well as soothing. The show condemns some aspects of humanity but at the same time celebrates others and says they're what make life worthwhile."

Hello...Hello is a piece that relies on a variety of disciplines to convey both its literal messages and its visceral appeal. The music, the text and the design harmonize to build layers into the creation. About her creative process, Hines states "My aim is to create, in the magical space that lies between the bodies onstage and those in the

audience – and through the laughter that arises out of a shared sense of hopelessness – a moment of hope.”

Points of Interest

Karen Hines, writer and actor, and Mark Christmann, movement consultant, both have extensive training in clown. Three teachers have been instrumental in influencing the styles of these two artists and are consequently visible in this production of **Hello...Hello**.

Philippe Gaulier – The Gaulier technique is rooted in the desire to avoid the “boring”. He traditionally focuses on the development of the bouffon character – an outcast or ugly version of the traditional clown. About L’ École Philippe Gaulier, he says “In my school, we teach the basics, the essential: how to turn corners in the imaginary, how to avoid being so pedantically realistic.” He believes that “A bad actor is a kind of pain in the arse who says too much, who acts too much, who wants too much.” His beliefs manifest themselves in his teachings on performance via the darker side of clown.

Jacques LeCoq – École Jacques Lecoq teaches the control of gesture and movement through melodrama, human comedy, tragedy, bouffon and clown. Past students have included actors, producers and stage designers, but also architects, teachers and authors. Strongly rooted in movement and physicality, École J. LeCoq teaches students silent improvisation, the use of masks and techniques of movement to express what lies behind words. The Lecoq method involves strenuous physical and emotional exercises, which rang from acrobatics to clowning. Struggling to make their classmates laugh, students learn to be funny from within themselves. Wearing masks, they learn how body movements can turn facial blankness into expression. LeCoq believed in the philosophy that “everything moves” and used that as a foundation for performance instruction.

Richard Pochinko – Pochinko studied clown technique with Lecoq in Paris, but found the European tradition authoritarian and conforming. Combining the skills learned in Paris with the Native American clown tradition, he formed the Pochinko technique. At the core of this approach is the idea that if we can face all the directions of ourselves, North, South, East, West, Up, Down, we can only laugh at the beauty and wonder that is in us. Students of the technique learn how to be open, completely vulnerable and fallible in order to develop their clown.

Historical Antecedent

In Greek mythology, Cassandra was a cursed prophet. She had the gift of foretelling the future but was cursed to have no one believe her. She predicted the fall of Troy as well as her own death and was doomed to see both come to fruition.

How does Hines’ Cassandra relate to the mythological Cassandra?

*In **Hello...Hello**, some of the names are names are highly symbolic; Hines inverts common names with uncommon spellings with regards to Cassandra’s dead fiancée and her baby. How does this affect our understanding of these offstage characters? Does it change our opinion of Cassandra?*

Production Antecedent

Hello...Hello, like most musicals, has experienced several incarnations. It is, ultimately, the spawn of a fifteen-minute office play, "Telemarketing: The Musical" created for Tarragon's Spring Arts Fair while Hines was a member of the Tarragon Playwrights' Unit in 1994. From 1994 to 1996, Hines and Morrison developed the piece as a full-scale 12-person musical *La BOOM*, with Tarragon's support, while Hines was a playwright in residence at Tarragon. *La BOOM* also received support, through public and private workshops, from Canadian Stage, Women in View Festival and The Banff Playwrights' Colony.

In 1996, Hines began a revision of the text for a cast of four, and in 1998 produced a public workshop. This production, now titled **Hello...Hello**, (directed by Chris Earle) led to a 1999 public run produced by Pochsy Productions in association with Factory Theatre. Richard Rose has now brought this newest incarnation back to the Tarragon, where the project began.

Greg Morrison has been musical director and composer for every stage of development. Chris Earle has directed and dramaturged each phase since it became **Hello...Hello**. Steve Morel has performed in every version from the start. Teresa Pavlinek participated and performed in the 1998-99 workshop and production, and David Jansen in the 1999 production. Andy McKim and Peter Hinton directed the *La BOOM* workshops.

Pre Show Lesson Plan 1 Choral Work

Expectations:

CR1.01: create the inner and outer life of a character, using a variety of strategies (e.g., improvisation, research, textual analysis);

TH2.02: describe how movement and non-verbal communication can be used to portray character, to define relationships among characters, and to communicate dramatic tension;

CRV.01: use various ways to sustain a role within a drama;

ANV.02: use the vocabulary of dramatic arts to discuss, critique, and review drama presentations in the school and the community; **Ontario Dramatic Arts Curriculum**

Warm up:

Moving Chorus

- Students form a circle and each student takes a turn calling out an emotion (i.e. sadness) and simultaneously matching it with a gesture.
- The entire class repeats each emotion and physical gesture directly after the leading student.

Main Activity:

Choral work

?? Review the following character and choral information about **Hello...Hello**.

Ben	A rising young executive who uses art and poetry to enhance his marketing prowess; he is the head of Creative at a major corporation.
Cassandra	A deep, cryptic salesgirl for a trendy retail outlet; has the ability to see both ways and is often stricken by the feeling that she will “fly away”.
Chorus	Played by two actors who narrate the events, speak aloud the stage directions and with “delicate facetiousness” comment on Ben and Cassandra’s twisted love story.

Point of Interest

A device used in Greek theatre, the **chorus** is a group of dancers, singers and narrators who often speak collectively and comment on the action around them. They can be involved in the narrative directly, as a character, but they assume that role in addition to their function as a chorus. In its most general form, the chorus consists of abstract beings that represent higher moral or political interests.

- ?? Divide students into groups of four. In each group, students decide who plays Ben, Cassandra, Female Chorus and Male Chorus.
- ?? Somewhat similar to the Ben and Cassandra experience, the teacher asks students to think of a “romantic connection” scenario such as a couple’s first date at a restaurant, a trip through the tunnel of love, etc.

- ?? Students work on developing a scene, remembering that the chorus may narrate Ben and Cassandra's discussion, make side comments, describe would be stage directions and morph into other necessary characters for the scene.
- ?? Students are reminded to be aware of blocking and movement in the scene.
- ?? Students perform the scenes in front of each other and provide feedback.

Closure:

Questions for the class to consider after their scenes have been performed:

- 1) Did anything surprise you about this activity? Why? Be specific.

Journal:

- 1) What did you already know about Drama/Theatre that was confirmed for you today? Please explain specifically (based on class experience) how it was confirmed.

Extension Possibilities:

- ?? After seeing **Hello...Hello** students can compare and contrast their own scenes with the performance they attended.
- ?? Were any acting choices the same as their own interpretation? Did it give them a special insight into Ben and Cassandra's relationship?

Pre Show Lesson Plan 2

Free Write

Expectations:

TH2.04: demonstrate the use of movement, gesture, and non-verbal communication to express ideas in a drama

AN2.02I: explain connections between their own lives and the metaphor or theme in a drama;

TH1.01: demonstrate an understanding of the theory of “willing suspension of disbelief” both as performer and as audience; **Ontario Dramatic Arts Curriculum**

Warm-up:

?? Lead group physical warm up (i.e. body stretches and guided imagery relaxation)

Main Activity:

Free Write

Ben repeats the following statement in **Hello...Hello**:

“I believe that in the space between the products there lies a truth about humanity...about what they want; what they need”

One interpretation is that Ben believes that amidst the chaotic congestion of our consumer culture there is a truth about who we are as humans and what we want and need.

Ask students to find a private space in the classroom with a pen and paper. Students are to do 5 minutes of uncensored free writes (writing without stopping) on the following topics:

1. What does the media/advertising/corporate culture tell us what we want and need?
2. What do our teachers, parents and friends say we want and need?
3. What do you personally feel you want and need?
4. What do humans want and need at the beginning of the 21st century?
5. What does the earth need?

?? Divide the students into groups of six.

?? Ask students to share what they have written with each other (within their comfort zone).

?? Students create a five part tableaux with each tableau representing one of the free write topics.

?? Within the tableaux, students are to create transitions by incorporating phrases from their own writing that they speak individually or chorally; students are also encouraged to include movement techniques (i.e. mirroring)

?? Students present the tableaux to each other and discuss the performances.

Journal:

1. From each presentation, pick a moment that spoke to you in a powerful way. Please explain your choices from both a personal and technical perspective. Consider the visceral reactions of a personal response as well as the technical elements of presentation (i.e. good focus, smooth transitions etc.).

Extension Possibilities:

(For use in Post Show Lesson Plan 1)

Ask your students to observe and research their environment and their world, with an additional lens, over the next few days.

Students are to track media/advertising/corporate images of what life should be like, what we should aspire to attain; students should also to track who is feeding their artistic/creative minds and where it is occurring.

Post Show Lesson Plan 1

Satire

Expectations:

TH2.04: demonstrate the use of movement, gesture, and non-verbal communication to express ideas in a drama

CR2.03: explain reasons for presenting a particular type of drama (e.g. children's theatre) to a particular audience;

CR1.06: demonstrate an understanding of their own and others' respective functions in collaborative work on a drama;

THV.01: demonstrate an understanding of the conventions of role playing and structuring dramatic works etc.

TH1.01: demonstrate an understanding of the theory of "willing suspension of disbelief" both as performer and as audience; **Ontario Dramatic Arts Curriculum**

Warm-up:

- ?? Lead group physical warm up (i.e. body stretches and guided imagery relaxation)
- ?? Discuss the element of Satire in **Hello...Hello** with students.

Main Activity:

Satire is defined as a literary work in which human vice or folly is attacked through irony, derision, or wit.

- Divide students into groups of 4.
- Students share with each other their research that tracked the media/ advertising/ corporate images of what their lives should be like and what they should aspire to attain.
- Students can also discuss where and who is feeding their artistic/creative minds.
- Students select a media/advertising/corporate image and create a scene around the promotion of that image.
- Thinking of **Hello...Hello** students incorporate a chorus and present the scene in a satirical style. They should use mime to represent various props.
- Students present their scenes and watch the other groups' performances.

Journal:

1. Did **Hello...Hello** help inspire your scenes in today's class? Why or Why not? Please explain.
2. What skills or concepts did you use that were new to you today?

Post-Show Lesson Plan 2

Whole Group Role Play based on Hello...Hello:

Expectations:

TH1.01– demonstrate an understanding of the theory of “willing suspension of disbelief ” both as performer and as audience;

TH2.01– demonstrate an understanding of the control of volume, tone, pace, and intention in an expressive speech;

TH3.02– explain how dramatic forms may effectively communicate more than one perspective;

CRV.01– use various ways to sustain a role within a drama;

CR1.02– demonstrate an understanding of the element of risk in playing a role (i.e. adapting to challenges to personal and social beliefs); **Ontario Dramatic Arts curriculum**

Warm-up:

Review with students the important elements of creating a whole group role-play:

- a. Maintaining focus throughout the role-play.
- b. Maintaining the physicality of your character throughout the role-play.
- c. Sustaining the vocal quality of your character throughout the role-play.
- d. Ability to take on, and commit to, your characters’ attitudes and beliefs.

Main activities:

In class role-play

- ?? Distribute two pieces of paper to each student.
- ?? Ask students to write down a question(s) that they have for any member of the **Hello..Hello** production (writer, director, actor, designer).
- ?? Try to encourage diversity in who the questions are directed to.
- ?? Collect questions and split the pile in half.
- ?? Divide the class into groups “A” and “B”.
- ?? Take group “A” and assign one of the following roles to each student: actor(s), set designer, costume designer, director, lighting designer, sound designer, playwright etc.
- ?? Ask group “A” students to discuss quietly and prepare for their role as a member of the **Hello...Hello** production team in one part of the Drama room.

- ?? Distribute the one set of the already collected questions for members of production to the Group “B” students.
- ?? Inform group “B” that they are media at a press conference; they must ask the “artists” their previously collected questions. Additional questions are encouraged and everyone on the artist panel must answer as least one.
- ?? After each question has been asked, reverse group “A” and “B” roles and distribute the remaining questions.

In this activity, students develop role-playing skills, reflective thinking, focus and application of existing skills. Students discover that through their own creative work, experience in their drama class(es) and viewing the production, they inherently know some of the answers to the artistic choices being asked.

Reflection/Journal:

Students can explore greater character depth by answering the following:

What surprised you about your character? List two things and give examples.

What was your favourite part of the role-play? Use specific examples from the exercise.