



Teecher's Knowledge Organiser

CAPA212 – Modern Text

Understand how to interpret and analyse text in modern and classic dramatic writing.
Perform dialogue from modern and classic texts

John Godber & Popular Theatre

Background

Originally from Upton, a working-class part of West Yorkshire, Godber has made his place of birth a focal point for his plays. One of his aims is to reflect the lives of the people around him and so his subject matter often surrounds the challenges that working class people face. He aims to appeal to a diverse audience, particularly working-class people who traditionally don't go to the theatre.

Hull Truck Theatre Company

As Artistic Director Godber had steered Hull Truck from bankruptcy in 1984 to the West End, an international reputation and finally a purpose built £15million theatre which he helped design and raise the money for, which opened in 2010.

Influences

Godber claims that much of his influence comes from the world around him, his own experiences and the people that he meets and so the majority of his plays are set in the Northwest and are based around working class characters.

He was greatly influenced by his time as a drama teacher, this is evident in his play 'Teechers'. He has felt like an outsider since he failed his 11+ exam and this is a theme which he often explores in his work.

Many conventions of **Brecht** can be seen in 'Teechers' – multi role-play, direct address, music, minimal set and props, changing characters on stage. These are designed to keep an active audience.

Godber was not only inspired by the working-class people, gender stereotypes, conservative government, unemployment rates and his life at school, but also by an English actor, author, playwright and theatre director called **Steven Berkoff**.

Godber wrote his first, and to date most successful play, 'Bouncers' in 1977 and continues to write and direct to the present day. Godber sets his plays at the time of writing as he aims to reflect life as he sees it around him and to attract contemporary audiences.

Aims

Godber believes in theatre for the masses and so explores universal themes in his plays. He believes in the theatre as an instrument of social change for the better.

Using comedy to engage the audience but also to make them think. He described 'Teechers' as a comedy that was 'deadly serious' as it made audiences laugh but then question the fairness of the education system.

The trick for a writer, Godber suggests, is to get his characters to express emotions that they wouldn't normally express in a way that the audience will understand.

Famous Plays

TEECHERS BOUNCERS SHAKERS
UP N UNDER OUR HOUSE APRIL IN PARIS



Popular Theatre is aimed mainly at people who don't go to the theatre.

"Shakespeare was popular theatre," says Godber. "It wasn't lowbrow and there was something in it for everyone. I start from the idea of attracting the widest possible audience to come and see the play."

Godber tells of meeting a 16-year-old boy outside Hull Truck's new theatre, which is due to open in late April. The boy asked, "What is it, mister?" When told it was a theatre, he then asked, "What does it do?" Godber reflects: "Wouldn't it be great if we got more people to go to the theatre than currently do? That's a no-brainer, but they don't go because they don't think they are going to 'get it'."

Godber is the third most performed playwright in the country.

<https://www.thejohngodbercompany.co.uk/>



John Godber is one of the most performed playwrights in the English language. Born in 1956, he is the son of a mining family who went on to be a drama teacher at the school he went to as a child. He joined Hull Truck theatre Company in 1984 and has since won many prestigious awards for his productions. He has written 17 plays and has directed all their first performances.

Voice

Pitch	Speaking in a high, low or natural voice.
Pace	The speed at which someone speaks.
Pause	Where sound stops, how often and for long.
Projection	Enables audience to hear actor's voice.
Volume	How loudly or softly the words are spoken.
Articulation	Clarity of your diction and voice.
Tone	Suggests your mood and your intention.
Inflection	The rise and fall of your voice.
Accent	Particular to a country, region, local dialect.
Repetition	Repeating a sound or words for emphasis.
Emphasis	Choosing to stress particular words to convey meaning.

Physical

Facial Expression	Using your face to show mood, emotion, feeling and responses.
Posture	Stance, way of standing and sitting.
Gestures	Movement or action of any part of the body to express idea, feeling or mood.
Mime	Demonstrating an action with an object that doesn't exist.
Proxemics	Use of space, how the characters are placed on stage. The distance or level between character shows their relationships, feelings and give clues of the situation or the people within the situation at that moment.
Gait	The way you walk.
Eye Contact	Establishing eye contact with another actor or the audience.

Godber Conventions

- His general performance style is heightened through the use of stereotypes or 'stock' characters, although his language and dialogue are largely realistic and conversational.
- Direct address** is used to engage the audience and involve them in the action of the play. Brechtian technique to break the fourth wall.
- Minimal props and staging** help keep audience engaged and fast paced.
- Music** is used to add atmosphere to a particular moment or to enhance the meaning of a scene.
- Choreography and unison** are techniques often used to complement the choice of music in the play.
- Multi role-play or **multi-rolling** is used in many of his early plays and so actors need to use precise vocal and physical skills to portray distinctive characters that the audience can easily recognise.

Glossary – Acting Skills