

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

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PORNOGRAPHY

BY SIMON STEPHENS



EDUCATION RESOURCE PACK

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FOREWORD

PORNOGRAPHY – ORIGIN:

1840–50; Greek *pornográph(os)* writing about harlots (*porno-*, comb. form of *pórne* harlot + *-graphos* –graph)
(Oxford English Dictionary)

Description of the life, manners etc of prostitutes and their patrons; hence, the expression or suggestion of obscene or unchaste subjects in literature or art
(Oxford English Dictionary)

Lurid or sensational material: “Recent novels about the Holocaust have kept Hitler well offstage [so as] to avoid the ... pornography of the era”
(Morris Dickstein “Alive and 90 in the Jungles of Brazil”, *New York Times*, 2 May 1982).

The pornography referred to in Simon Stephens’ play *Pornography* is not sexual pornography but the pornography of everyday life. Stephens says the play is about transgression – the characters are forced to cross a certain border in a sexual, criminal or personal way. They are isolated city people who break taboos in order to experience something special. By doing so they fall prey to the logic of pornography.

Pornography is set in London in July 2005. It is the time of the city’s nomination for the Olympic Games, of the G8 summit and the Live8 anti-poverty concerts, and of underground train terrorist attacks. It is a city hovering between being in a state of euphoria and in a state of mourning. It has become a kind of hell in which Stephens tells six stories and one series of obituaries (seven chapters) that transpire over one day, the seventh day of the seventh month – a day which turns out to be the countdown to a catastrophe. In the play itself, Stephens deliberately omits the actual ‘catastrophe’. The power of the piece lies in Stephens’ ability to create an atmosphere of worry and insecurity by portraying home-grown terrorism in everyday situations. Stephens is interested in the structural preconditions of terrorism.

Pornography is written as a series of monologues with some dialogue. And, although there is both narrative and interaction, there are no specific characters. So, according to Stephens, the play could be performed by any number of actors, and in any order. Each monologue is disconnected and echoes the lives of the people depicted. Stories such as that of a young mother who, bullied at work and thus pushed to her limits, decides to betray corporate secrets; or of a schoolboy who spies on a teacher and retreats into his own twisted reality; of two siblings who enter into an incestuous relationship; a professor who gets a former student to dance for him; and an old lady who shuts out the modern world.

As these stories unfold and the characters go about their lives, somewhere else a young man rises from his bed, kisses his sleeping wife and children goodbye and sets out for London carrying a bomb in his backpack. He boards the busiest carriage on a subway train. At the moment that he detonates the bomb, the actor simply walks off the stage, through the auditorium and disappears.

The director of the piece is Sebastian Nübling. Nübling’s interest lies in what happens to people in times of transition. He is fascinated by their motivations “and how they explode physically and linguistically when the system in which they have functioned so far, suddenly becomes ineffective.”

Nübling’s approach to directing is to consciously evade expectations in pursuit of a new and challenging experience for both the performers and their audience. His productions place the performers’ bodies at the forefront of the mise-en-scène as he questions theatrical conventions and expectations. With *Pornography*, Nübling sets the piece against an oversized fragmented ‘jigsaw puzzle’ image of Brueghel’s *Tower of Babel* – designed by Muriel Gerstner – that the actors spend their time piecing together. They also stack desks against the back wall, and at times throw boxes of coloured tiles at one another. This occurs at the back of the stage, although the actors regularly come forward to join in the action as if they were taking part in a relay race.

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL ARTS FESTIVAL

EDUCATION RESOURCE PACK – PORNOGRAPHY

Pornography was commissioned by Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg and co-produced with the Schauspiel Hannover and the Festival Theaterformen. *Pornography* would be of particular interest to upper secondary students of Drama and Theatre Studies, Politics, German Language Studies and English. It is unnecessary for students to complete ALL the activities in this Education Resource Pack in order to gain an understanding and appreciation of the performance. Teachers may choose from the activities and decide what is appropriate for their students and teaching circumstances.

Teachers and students can complete the activities in this Education Resource Pack prior to seeing the performance however many exercises should ideally be done as follow up activities. Questions have been included in some activities as post-show discussion topics.

Deborah Leiser-Moore

Education Pack Writer



CURRICULUM LINKS

The VELS Standards (Level 6) were consulted in the preparation of this Education Resource Pack. Some of the connections are outlined below.

PHYSICAL, PERSONAL AND SOCIAL LEARNING – INTERPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Students are engaged in activities that enable them to:

- develop greater awareness of complex social conventions; and
- describe how local and global values and beliefs, including traditional beliefs and the mass media, determine their own and others' social relationships.

THE ARTS – INCLUDING ART, DANCE, DRAMA, MUSIC AND MEDIA

Students are engaged in activities that enable them to:

- analyse, interpret, compare and evaluate the stylistic, technical, expressive and aesthetic features of *Pornography* in terms of its presentation;
- describe and discuss ways that their own drama creations communicate and challenge ideas and meaning;
- comment on the potential impact *Pornography* has on society in general; and
- apply decision making skills to find the most effective way to implement ideas, and to design, create and make arts works devised from a range of stimuli, including techniques and ideas used in *Pornography*.

ENGLISH

Students are engaged in activities that enable them to:

- compare ideas, build on others' ideas, provide and justify other points of view, and reach conclusions that take account of aspects of issues contained in *Pornography*; and
- explain how *Pornography* and audience responses to it are shaped by the time, place and cultural setting in which it was created and presented.

ACTIVITY 1

FEELING SQUARES

PREPARATION:

Using masking tape, the teacher needs to make four squares on the floor – big enough for the students to stand in – one student per square. (A variation to this activity is to make each square big enough for a number of students – the teacher can decide the size). Each square is then labelled with an emotion: eg fear, pain, love, anger.

The teacher should also bring in newspaper articles that refer to specific extreme events that have occurred, for example: the terrorist attacks on London (as in *Pornography*); or the Austrian Josef Fritzl who kept his daughter locked away in a cellar; etc. The teacher reads these to the students to inspire emotional responses that are then used in the activity. The aim is to explore emotions that are evoked from life and politics.

OBJECTIVE:

This activity allows the student to explore the different emotional states, and how they affect the delivery of text in performance. It gives students the 'permission' to explore the depth and breadth of emotions.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTMITY:

The students choose a sentence. Teachers may wish to provide students with a sentence or allow the students to develop their own. Students move (as directed by the teacher) from square to square. As the students move to each square, they must recite their sentence as if affected by the emotion of the labelled square. They can say the line as many times as they want/need, until they are instructed to change squares.

It is important to encourage the students to explore a range of different expressions and levels of feelings. For example: fear can be hearing a monster approaching, or being shy on the first day of school; pain can be cutting your finger, or getting your feelings hurt, or being disappointed; love can be expressed as a desire for somebody, or a paternal love, or feeling proud of yourself; anger can be expressed as revenge, jealousy, meanness, teasing, or the feeling of determination that we have when nothing can stop us.

Students must be encouraged to accept that there is no right or wrong.

This activity can be done by one student at a time – with the rest of the class being the audience. Or it can be done by a number of students at once.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- How did you express each of the emotions?
- How did you manipulate your voice, body, facial expression, movement, gestures, etc to express the different emotions?
- Did you find a variety of ways to express a particular emotion?
- What happened in the moment of change (when instructed to move to a different square)?
- How did the different states affect the way you delivered the line?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

The teacher can divide up the floor space into more squares, with more emotional states for the students to explore. Also, the text could be extended into improvised storytelling or text that they are already familiar with. Students might present their work to the class, individually or in pairs, for feedback and discussion.

ACTIVITY 2

JUMP TO YES!

PREPARATION:

No preparation is needed for this activity.

OBJECTIVE:

This activity can be used as a physical warm up that also stimulates the performers' imagination and helps them think quickly. It can also be used to help with character work.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

The game is played individually – or – a number of students can do the activity simultaneously.

Students are asked to move around the room. Once they are settled in the space, the teacher, at any point, yells "Yes!". When this happens, all the students move into a statue/position.

After a few freezes, the teacher side-coaches by shouting out instructions. For example, 'horizontal', 'up', 'down', 'sideways', 'big', 'small', 'light', 'heavy', etc.

As soon as the teacher calls out an instruction, the students are to imagine themselves as a particular character, in a particular situation. The students should use the word called out by the teacher as a stimulus for creating a character, and a context for a scene, i.e. the teacher calls out 'sideways' and the student uses this as a stimulus for creating a character that is walking sideways through a row of chairs at a cinema, in order to find their seat. At this point the teacher can ask each student to say, in one sentence, who they are and what is their situation.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- What is the purpose of the initial milling around the room?
- What happened when the teacher called out "Yes!"? Were you ready for this?
- How did this affect your level of concentration?
- Can you talk about the importance of being totally in the moment in relation to this activity?
- Was your character and situation clear to you?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

The other students watch as a student is selected to establish a frozen stage picture. Then, one by one, the students are added to the stage picture to build a scene around that performer, inspired by the frozen position of the first actor in the space. The end result is a frozen picture that can be brought to life. The teacher could add instructions such as pause, play, slow motion, fast forward and rewind to affect the scene.

ACTIVITY 3

LABAN LIKE

PREPARATION:

Either the teacher could bring in some information on Rudolf Laban (Refer Appendix F) or the students could do some research about him and his approach to making performance.

Also, a choice of music should be available.

OBJECTIVE:

This activity helps the students develop a physical approach to creating character and performance. This is relevant to the production of *Pornography* – a highly physical piece of text-based theatre.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTMITY:

The teacher introduces three categories of physical attention for the students to consider:

- Movement: Sudden or Sustained
- Weight: Heavy or Light
- Direction: Direct or Indirect

The students move about the room (as in the previous activity). The teacher then instructs them to stop/freeze and instructs them to move as a character (eg old man, little girl, teenager, baby, middle aged lady, etc) based on the three categories above (timing, weight and space). The teacher calls out one option only at this stage – eg ‘sudden movement’; or ‘heavy’.

Then the students are instructed to experiment with different types of characters: What would a ‘sustained light’ old man be? As opposed to an old man that is ‘suddenly light’? What situations would make him this way?

The teacher then creates/instructs the students to create character/movement, using combinations of categories. The students create characters that behave/speak as specified by these combinations:

- punching – sudden / heavy / direct
- slashing – sudden / heavy / indirect
- pushing – sustained / heavy / direct
- wringing – sustained / heavy / indirect
- dabbing – sudden / light / direct
- poking – sudden / light / indirect
- smoothing – sustained / light / direct
- stroking – sustained / light / indirect

Note: The attributes go with the characters, not necessarily with the actual performer’s body. A heavysset person may move about delicately.

The teacher can then add different kinds of music. What direction / weight / movement does a certain song/music inspire?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- How did the combination of categories affect your character? Was the character more complex? How could you use this in building your character in a performance?
- Did the music affect you and your character?
- Talk about the physical aspects of the character and how the categories were applied.

ACTIVITY 4

STORY CIRCLE

PREPARATION:

The teacher could prepare a list of story subjects. Teachers should consider using subject matter from the *Pornography* performance as a stimulus for creating story subjects for this activity. Teachers will also need a tape recorder (or similar recording device) and blank cassette for this activity.

OBJECTIVE:

This activity teaches students how to 'write' stories from their own experience and/or imagination. It also teaches them about listening and being able to respond to offers by other 'writers'.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

Students sit in a circle. One student begins to tell a story and stops after a few sentences. The next student picks up the story thread and continues it, then stops. The next student adds to it and so on until the story comes to a resolution. The story could begin with a pre-selected title or subject to guide the improvisation. Teachers should record the 'story circles' on a tape recorder for later listening.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- How hard was it to pick up the thread of the story?
- How did you advance the story?
- How did you know when the story had come to its natural conclusion?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Students choose one of the stories they developed in the 'story circle' activity. They work in small groups to bring the story to life through performance. The students present their work to the class for feedback and discussion.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- How effectively was the story adapted into performance?
- What details of the story were developed, changed and/or enhanced?
- Did these developments, changes or enhancements, affect the way the story was interpreted by the audience? In what way?

ACTIVITY 5

STORY ZOOM

PREPARATION:

No preparation is needed for this activity.

OBJECTIVE:

This activity teaches the students about creating a whole and very detailed world for the audience. It also teaches the students about creating a performance from truth: from their own life experience and thoughts. The activity also builds focus and concentration.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

One student stands in the 'performing' area. The rest of the students are active audience. The student begins to describe a real event in his/her life (eg an activity they did on the weekend or their journey to school). The student must be very specific, giving details about their activity, feelings, description of surroundings, etc. They need to simply tell the story directly to the audience (rather than 'act').

As they tell the story, the teacher, or other students, can ask the storyteller to give more precise detail about something particular that they have mentioned: the storyteller must 'zoom in' to this detail and explore and describe it more fully.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- Were you able to focus on the story?
- What happened to the story when you were asked to give explicit detail about a specific aspect of the story?
- How difficult was it to expand the detail of the story?
- What happens to the body when the story is told in this way?
- What happens to the voice?
- How did you feel talking directly to the audience?
- Did the storyteller manage to create a world for the audience to enter?

ACTIVITY 6

BODY FILL

PREPARATION:

The teacher can prepare the space by creating a very specific and defined working area.

OBJECTIVE:

This activity helps the students think spatially in performance – about their own body in the space along with their body in relationship to others.

Students should start to examine how meaning can be communicated through the placement of bodies in a stage space.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

Each student is assigned the numbers 'one, two, or three'. They must then place themselves, in a neutral stance, in the defined working area.

The teacher then calls out a number (one, two or three). For example, if they call out, 'Twos', all students who are number two must step in to fill up all the empty areas (ie the space between themselves and the other students) in the working space.

The students can work on three levels: low, middle, or high. For example, the teacher calls out, 'Twos go low,' 'Ones go high,' etc, and the students fill the spaces but on that particular level.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- How did you feel when you were moving into a space?
- What was your relationship to the other performers – the ones who remained still and then, the ones who also moved?
- Do you think this created a physical 'dialogue' – that is, a story that was being communicated purely through the placement of the bodies in the space? If so, what was the dialogue/story?
- Where was your focus?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Students work in small groups of three or four to explore physical relationships created through the use of levels (high, medium, or low) and the positioning of bodies in a defined space. Once this is established, the teacher can ask the students to add some text. This could be something the students already know, or the students might be asked to respond to a particular question or topic. Teachers are encouraged to relate the question or topic to issues raised in the performance of *Pornography*. Students present their work to the class for feedback and discussion.

ACTIVITY 7

QUESTION TIME

PREPARATION:

The teacher should prepare a simple story outline from which the students will work and build/write a scene. The stories should have some correlation to issues/events presented in *Pornography*, for example: a particular political event, act of terrorism or a personal story. The teacher could source the detail of these stories from newspapers. The teacher will need to prepare a different outline for each group of students.

The teacher should also prepare lists of the following questions:

- Who is in the scene?
- What is happening?
- Why is there a problem?
- Where and when does the scene take place?
- Can you describe what the setting looks like?
- What are they doing?
- Why are they stopped? By whom? By what?

OBJECTIVE:

The aim of this activity is to give the students a specific technique to assist with the process of constructing and writing a scene; editing the text; and making choices in performance.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

Students should work in small groups. Students are asked to construct a scene using the story outline that they have been given. Students are to imagine that they are involved in, or are observers of, the event that is referred to in their story outline. They should record the detail of the scene in monologue form. Each character might offer a different perspective of the scene i.e. a shooting might be described differently by a policeman, witness, victim, perpetrator, journalist, etc. Each person in the group is to write a monologue from the perspective of their chosen character.

The teacher then asks students to answer the questions above. They should do so question by question (ie students need to resolve the first question before moving on to the next question). The answers to the questions are the building blocks of the scene they are constructing. Using the answers, students should read aloud their monologues.

The students spend time editing their initial text, until they are satisfied with their monologues. The students are then to be given time to work on a performance in which they present their monologues. Students should consider how they will present their monologues (ie in what order, layering monologues over one another, using repetition, breaking the monologues up so that characters are presenting only paragraphs, lines or words before jumping to the perspective of another character, etc).

The students perform their scene to the rest of the class for feedback and discussion.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- Could you clearly see the scene?
- Did the specific questions help? Why?
- How did you decide on the final text? What remained and what was cut? How close is it to the initial monologue text?
- Talk about the process.
- How did you decide the performance mode?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

The scenes already created form the starting point. The teacher (or a nominated director) can put these monologues together in much the same way as director Sebastian Nübling does with Simon Stephens's *Pornography*, thus creating a full-length piece. In doing this, they should consider the structure of the overall piece. Can the monologues be performed with different numbers of students? Can they be performed in any order? The students should be encouraged to experiment with these variables.

ACTIVITY 8

AN IMAGINARY JOURNEY

PREPARATION:

No preparation required for this activity

OBJECTIVE:

This exercise encourages confidence in the student to describe in detail a sequence of events (since the speaker knows very well the journey from their own front door to the inside of their own house). This exercise helps nurture the imagination and the storytelling process (ie the storyteller imagines the landscape of the story and guides the listeners on a mental journey).

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

The students work in pairs, consisting of a listener and a speaker. Each pair of students imagines that they are standing outside of the speaker's front door. The speaker then tells the listener to do an imaginary errand. The speaker must carefully explain to his or her partner how to go into the house, travel to the bedroom, and, once there, describe where to find a special object somewhere in the room.

The speaker must then tell the partner a story about why they need them to retrieve this object. What is its story? Why is it special? Why do they need it? The speaker then verbally explains to the listener how to travel back to the front door to bring the special thing out to where the speaker will be waiting.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- Did the speaker clearly describe the house?
- Did the listener have a clear image of the house, the journey and the object?
- Did you believe in the importance of the object that was to be retrieved? Why/why not?
- Did the nature of the object affect how you approached your journey out of the house?
- The speaker may discover in discussing this exercise afterwards, that the listener imagined the house clearly and 'saw' more detail than was mentioned.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Repeat the above activity but this time the listener is required to draw a map of the speaker's house and a picture of the object that the speaker has described. Once the speaker has finished their description, allow the speaker to look at the listener's drawing and map.

QUESTION FOR REFLECTION:

How accurately was the listener able to record the speaker's information?

ACTIVITY 9

CREATING HISTORY

PREPARATION:

The teacher should bring in a variety of objects. These objects can be anything – for example: a shoe, a match, a rubber band, woollen socks, a brush etc.

OBJECTIVE:

This activity nurtures the imagination and helps the student to create a story from anything and everything!

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

This activity can be done in a number of ways:

- in pairs;
- in small groups; or
- by one student in front of the rest of the class.

The student is given an object. They must imagine the life story of the object. They should describe the history of the object – giving very specific details about it. For example:

- Where was it made?
- Why was it made – ie what is it used for?
- What year was it made?
- etc

Once this is established, the student must then tell the history of the object backwards: that is, through the personal use, purchase, manufacture, to original natural resources from which it, or its components, were made.

The student must personify the object and tell its story like an autobiography.

Examples:

- the tale of a piece of newspaper back to the tree in the forest.
- the tale of a plastic toy, back through the oil that became plastic, to the prehistoric plants that created the oil.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- What did you discover as you were tracing the history of the object?
- Was it easy to personify the object? How did this help (or hinder) the storytelling?
- Were you able to create a detailed history?
- Comments from the 'audience'?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

As above, but the student tells the story of the object backwards only.

The students can then write down the story of the object. This should then be edited and performed to the rest of the class for feedback and discussion.

ACTIVITY 10

LIFE PERFORMED

PREPARATION:

No preparation is needed for this activity.

OBJECTIVE:

This exercise helps students create heightened and physical performance from their personal stories. They will learn that exciting theatre can emerge from personal and everyday stories.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

The students can work in groups of approximately six per group.

One student begins by telling a true story from a single day in their life. The story should be related to a significant moment in their life (explain that a significant moment does not necessarily have to be a huge event – big changes and realisations can come from small things too). Students should keep their story quite simple and very precise (clear enough for the story to be able to be repeated and performed). They can tell the story a number of times in order to clarify structure and detail.

Once they have finished, the students must choose one of the stories to perform to the rest of the class in one or more of the following styles:

- a Shakespearean tragedy;
- a melodrama;
- an interpretive modern dance;
- a scene from a musical theatre production; or
- a mime piece.

Before starting the performance, it is recommended that the students discuss what is meant by each of these styles. What are their characteristics? And, especially, what is their unique physicality? Each of these styles challenges the student to approach the performance of their story with a heightened theatricality and physicality.

The groups can then perform their story to the rest of the class for feedback and discussion.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- How did you approach translating the everyday story into a heightened performance?
- Was the original story still clear?
- Comment on the performance. Was it interesting?
- Can you compare the straight story telling to the performed one?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

When the groups present their performance to the rest of the class, a nominated student/s or teacher can call out the different performance styles and the performers must adapt their performance to reflect the selected style.

ACTIVITY 1.1

ONE VOICE

PREPARATION:

The teacher should prepare a list of 'storytelling' topics for the students. Some of these topics should be drawn from the subject matter of *Pornography*.

OBJECTIVE:

This activity builds trust between students/performers. It nurtures the ensemble – helping them learn to work together and listen to each other through their whole body.

This activity also helps with improvised storytelling, focus and concentration.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

Teams of two to four students line up one by one on the stage. They should face the rest of the class with their arms over their team-mate's shoulders.

The teacher asks the team to tell a story chosen from one of the prepared topics, or they can ask other students to suggest a topic. In telling/improvising the story, all of the members of a team need to speak together as one voice. The team should speak slowly and they are allowed to make eye contact with each other. No one player should try to lead – this is about ensemble and trust.

Students need to speak at the same time. No preparatory work is necessary for this activity. The aim is for the students to try and work as one unit.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- Did you manage to speak as one voice? Or was there a tendency for one person to lead? Was it always the same person?
- How did you know when to speak? What signs? Feelings?
- Did your story make sense?
- Was there a difference when you made eye contact with your team mate?
- Could you speak as one voice when you were all facing your audience? Was this more powerful? Did it require more focus and concentration?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Once the trust and 'oneness' is established in the team, the teacher can extend this activity in a number of ways. For example:

- The team could be asked to be an expert on a given topic.
- The team could be asked to answer questions from the class.
- There could be two teams on stage improvising a scene as two characters.

ACTIVITY 12

ELEMENTAL SOUND AND MOVEMENT

PREPARATION:

The teacher could prepare a list of 'elements' – sounds from the natural environment – in order to help the students (optional).

OBJECTIVE:

In this activity, the students learn that storytelling in performance consists of more than just words. They learn to consider other elements in their 'writing'.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

The entire class is asked to compile a list of seven or eight 'elements' (for example: rain, wind, lightening, stampeding horses, falling trees etc). The students work together to create a sound that corresponds with each of the elements (eg clapping hands for rain).

The class is then divided into smaller groups. Each group is to create a story which incorporates all of the 'elements'. Once they have worked out their story they should practice incorporating the sounds effects for each of the 'elements' in their story.

Once they have finished this task the students should add movements for each element – for example: for the lightening flashing everyone jumps in the air with their arms straight up. The teacher should give the students enough time to work on this (left to the discretion of the teacher).

After the groups have had a chance to plan and choreograph, the teacher brings them back together in order to perform their story to the rest of the class for feedback and discussion.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- Were the 'elements' effectively linked together through the story?
- Did the sound effects support the story or detract from it? Why?
- Did the sound capture the 'element' effectively?
- What about the movement?
- How did you plan the story? The movement?
- What happened when you brought the sound and movement together?

ACTIVITY 13

DIRECT AND SAY

PREPARATION:

No preparation is needed for this activity.

OBJECTIVE:

This activity helps students listen to each other and work together with their fellow performers. It also nurtures a sense of the unexpected: anything is possible in performance. As they are unaware of what action they will need to perform next, students also learn to be present in the moment.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:

Students do this exercise in pairs. The first student starts with one line of dialogue. For example:

- Student 1: "I want a divorce"

The second student will then state the action that the first student must perform (it is important to keep the action do-able and active). The second student must say "he/she said" and then describe the action that the first student must perform. For example:

- Student 2: (giving the actions that the first student must perform) "She said, while grabbing a knife from the kitchen table."

At this point Student 1 needs to take an imaginary knife.

Student 2 continues with his/her own line, for example:

- Student 2: "Sure Honey"

- Student 1: "He said, while turning to the sports page of the paper"

Student 2 must perform the action of turning the page of an imaginary paper. Student 1 then continues with his/her own line, for example:

- Student 1: "You're not listening to me".

And so the exercise continues in this way.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

Was there a difference between the action you imagined you would be doing with your line of text as opposed to what your partner instructed you to do?

Did this affect the way you said your dialogue?

Did this change the next line of dialogue you created?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

This activity can also be done in groups of four. In this case, two students provide the lines, and the other two provide the 'directions' (each director providing the action for one of the actors).

This activity can also be done in groups of three, where one student provides directions while the other students present the dialogue.

APPENDIX LIST

P 20	Appendix A.	About playwright Simon Stephens
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APPENDIX A

ABOUT PLAYWRIGHT SIMON STEPHENS

“Janice Galloway once compared writing to waving. She said that people wave in the hope that somebody will wave back. So they write in the hope that somebody will recognize what they have to say. I like this as an idea. I like the duality of it. It implies that at one and the same time one has to write for oneself and one’s audience. It means it is very important that I distill in my writing my fundamental ideas. In this way I’m writing for myself. I’m writing to clarify and articulate. But I write for others, for all others, regardless I think of class, age, gender, sexuality, in the hope that something I say might make sense to them. That they might recognize themselves in something I write.”

Simon Stephens, in response to the question Who do you write for?

(Interview with Simon Stephens, 2 February 2009, York Theatre Royal, available at:

<http://yorktheatreroyal.wordpress.com/2009/02/02/an-interview-with-playwright-simon-stephens/>)

LINKS TO INTERVIEWS WITH SIMON STEPHENS

Timeout London (19 April 2006) Nadia Abrahams

www.timeout.com/london/theatre/features/244/Simon_Stephens-Interview.html

The List (17 July 2008) Steven Cramer

www.list.co.uk/article/10159-pornography-simon-stephens-interview/

The Telegraph (31 July 2008) Dominic Cavendish

www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/3557508/Pornography-the-most-shocking-play-of-the-Edinburgh-Festival.html

The Guardian (4 August 2008) Lyn Gardner

www.guardian.co.uk/culture/2008/aug/04/edinburghfestival.festivals

APPENDIX B

ABOUT DIRECTOR SEBASTIAN NÜBLING

The following links are to the Goethe Insitut online resource 50 Directors working at German Theatres.

BIOGRAPHY OF SEBASTIAN NÜBLING

www.goethe.de/kue/the/reg/reg/mr/nue/enindex.htm

A PORTRAIT OF SEBASTIAN NÜBLING BY JÜRGEN BERGER

www.goethe.de/kue/the/reg/reg/mr/nue/por/enindex.htm

SEBASTIAN NÜBLING, SELECTED PRODUCTION HISTORY

www.goethe.de/kue/the/reg/reg/mr/nue/ins/enindex.htm

APPENDIX C

ABOUT DEUTSCHES SCHAUSPIELHAUS HAMBURG

www.schauspielhaus.de

The Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg is the largest and most beautiful theatre in Germany used for spoken drama.

Designed in neo-baroque style by the Viennese partnership of Fellner and Helmer, the most famous theatrical architects of their day, the Schauspielhaus originally contained over 1800 seats. Though this number has been reduced in recent years, the present red plush and gold auditorium is a scrupulous reconstruction of the original designs completed in 1984.

When it opened on 15 September 1900 with a production of Goethe's *Iphigenia on Tauris*, the Deutsches Schauspielhaus was a private theatre with a subscription audience. In 1934, when the National Socialists were in power, it was nationalised and renamed the Staatliches Schauspielhaus. After the Second World War – where it avoided severe damage in the bombing – the British forces requisitioned it. It only reopened as a theatre, under its original title, in 1948.

A decade later, under the artistic directorship of the actor Gustaf Gründgens, the Schauspielhaus had become Germany's most prominent theatre. Gründgens's production of *Faust*, which was filmed in 1960, remains a landmark of its time.

In 1972, a second, smaller studio space was opened, the Malersaal, with the world premiere of Franz Xaver Kroetz's *Stallerhof*.

In the last thirty years the Deutsches Schauspielhaus has consistently striven to produce new theatre of the highest quality for a wide audience and in the process has produced work by a host of notable directors including Peter Zadek, Jérôme Savary, Luc Bondy, Giorgio Strehler, Frank Castorf and Christoph Marthaler.

The latest chapter in the theatre's history began in September 2005 with the arrival of Friedrich Schirmer as artistic director and the creation of a new youth theatre, the Junges Schauspielhaus, devoted to the audiences and practitioners of tomorrow.

APPENDIX D

PRODUCTION CREDITS

PORNOGRAPHY – DEUTSCHES SCHAUSPIELHAUS HAMBURG

Playwright: Simon Stephens

Director: Sebastian Nübling

Set Designer: Muriel Gerstner

Assistant Set Designer: Jean-Marc Desbonnets

Costume: Marion Münch

Music: Lars Wittershagen

Lighting Design: Roland Edrich

Dramaturgy: Nicola Bramkamp and Regina Guhl

Cast: Marion Breckwoldt, Katja Danowski, Juliane Koren, Hanns Jörg Krumpholz, Jana Schulz, Daniel Wahl, Samuel Weiss and Martin Wißner

APPENDIX E

INTERNET REFERENCES

PORNOGRAPHY – DEUTSCHES SHAUSPIELHAUS HAMBURG

REVIEW

The Guardian (19 June 2007) Brian Logan

www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2007/jun/19/theatre

TRAILER

www.youtube.com/watch?v=2m3r16uRChU

APPENDIX F

LABAN

For introductory information on Rudolf Laban and his practice, refer online to:

www.laban.org/php/news.php?id=20