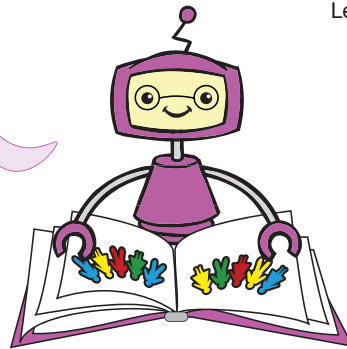


The show must go on

Have you ever considered a life on the stage? I know I have. Wouldn't it be wonderful to tread the boards? To have my very own dressing room with a spangly star on the door? To spend my days in rehearsal, my nights in greasepaint, and the hours in between signing autographs for my adoring fans? Let's find out more about the theatre!


LINKS TO:

Stage 3, Module 3

 Learning Object 4: *Write a review*

G

1 Exit, stage left!

Corroboree

Long before the first Europeans came to Australia, the Indigenous peoples of Australia had strong performance traditions. These traditions varied greatly between different language groups, but were largely performances related to the Dreaming. While many Indigenous groups incorporated performance elements into various ceremonies — as do many other cultures — performances, the purpose of which was to entertain, are more commonly associated with what European settlers called 'corroboree' (from the Indigenous word, *caribberie*). Corroborees are public performances or celebrations in which everyone who attends may participate. The performances, which include singing, playing music and dancing, are highly structured, requiring a great deal of knowledge and skill to perform.

All the world's a stage

Did you know that the first play staged in Australia starred convicts, and that one of the starring roles was played by a woman who was facing execution? In fact, all of the actors in the first play performed in Australia were convicts, and their audience was entirely composed of officers from the First Fleet. The play,

The Recruiting Officer, was performed in 1789, less than a year after the First Fleet landed on Australian soil, and had been written almost a century earlier by the Irish playwright George Farquhar.

Many of the plays staged in Australia during the 1800s were originally written and produced in England, and reflected the strong influence that English theatrical traditions had in colonial Australia. Early Australian theatres were influenced by the design of traditional English theatres, which featured a stage at the front, a pit for the lower classes close to the stage, and boxes for the upper classes. In Australia, the boxes were reserved for dignitaries like the governor and his wife, the upper echelons of the military, and wealthy land and business owners, while the lower ranks of the military and ordinary working people watched from the pit.

The first Australian theatre opened in 1837 in Tasmania. It was built out of convict-hewn stone and was wedged into a crowded street among the public houses, factories and workers' cottages of Wapping. In the early days, performances ranged from music-hall entertainments and dramatic melodramas, to boxing matches and traditional Shakespearean plays. Patrons of the theatre could quench their thirst at The Shades — a tavern that operated beneath the auditorium

(continued on following page)

(continued from previous page)

with its own entrance into the theatre pit. Tickets for the pit — later called the stalls — were cheap, and its patrons often rowdy and rambunctious, much to the displeasure of those in the comfortable boxes arrayed above. In the early days of Australian theatre, companies required a licence from the governor to put on a play, and there were often embargoes on convicts taking part in, or attending, performances, particularly in mainland Australia. Indigenous Australians were prohibited from entering most of the early theatres and other performance venues, though they often performed in travelling shows, particularly as 'minstrels' or slapstick comedians.

The Theatre Royal stage in Tasmania was lit by whale oil lamps until 1857 when gaslights were installed. The actors plied their trade on a fairly traditional European-style stage, laid with long, well-worn

boards, and fronted by a velvet curtain, which was drawn back from the proscenium at the beginning of the show to reveal the hand-built stage sets.

Like many theatres in Australia, the Theatre Royal is said to be home to a ghost that watches over the actors and the theatre. One story treasured by the theatre owners about the theatre's history is the story of Fred, the theatre's ghost. Fred was a stagehand and sometimes actor at the theatre, who is said to have died when a fire broke out after hours. Fred lowered the fire curtain to save the theatre from being destroyed, but lost his life in the process. Fred's remains were never found. Many people associated with the Theatre Royal believe that if Fred attends the opening night, the show is sure to be a success!



This image is in the public domain.

Poster advertising Walter Howard's play *Life's Revenge*, Theatre Royal, Hobart, 1902.

2 Indonesian traditional theatre, *Lenong*

There are many types of traditional Indonesian performances throughout the archipelago, from the famous *wayang kulit* or *wayang orang* performances to the not-so-well-known *Ubrug*, which is a traditional performance popular in Pandeglang, a town located in the regency of Pandeglang in West Java. In this work sheet, however, you will be introduced to *Lenong*, a type of theatre performance traditional to the Betawi community in Jakarta.

Lenong was first staged towards the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. It is believed that the word *lenong* originated from the name of a Chinese merchant, 'Lien Ong'. Lien Ong often held theatre performances to entertain himself and his family, as well as the people of his community. The form itself was probably adapted by the Betawi people from a similar form known as *komed bangsawan* or 'court comedy' and *teater stambul* or 'stambul theatre', which already existed at that time.

Firman Muntaco, a well-known Betawi artist, however, suggested that *lenong* is a development of the *gambang kromo* music — a type of music that combines gamelan with Chinese musical instruments.

Lenong as a performance has been known since the 1920s and, originally, it was performed by buskers travelling from kampong to kampong in Jakarta.

There are two types of *lenong*: *lenong denes* and *lenong preman*:

Lenong denes — the word 'denes' is Betawi dialect for *dinas* or *resmi* 'formal' — is usually set in a kingdom and tells about the lives of noblemen. The players wear costumes and the language used in the performance is high Malay.

Lenong preman, in contrast, tells about everyday life and ordinary people. The setting can be anywhere and the players wear normal clothes. The performance is delivered in everyday, colloquial language.

There is a suggestion that *lenong denes* is performed more for the middle and upper classes, whereas *lenong preman* is enjoyed more by the lower classes. The story in both types of a *lenong* performance contains a moral message. Furthermore, during the Dutch occupation, the stories also contained elements of resistance towards the colonisers.

Lenong is performed in the open air without a stage. While the play is in progress, one of the actors or actresses will usually mingle with the audience to ask for money or 'payment'. This 'payment' is a voluntary donation of no set amount. It is believed that this interaction between players and audience cultivates a certain connection that allows the audience to be involved in the performance by shouting out funny comments, making the play more lively.

Exercises

Exercise 1

Peter and Anna are working with their Indonesian friends to stage the famous balcony scene from the traditional Shakespearean play *Romeo and Juliet*, but with a few modern variations.

The first thing they need to do is decide who will play each character in the scene.

The roles they need to cast are listed below, along with Peter and Anna's casting notes.

- Romeo:** *Muda, tinggi, tampan, lincah. Harus bisa melompati pintu pagar di halaman.*
- Juliet:** *Anggun, feminin, misterius. Tidak boleh terlalu berat karena harus berdiri di balkon tanpa merusaknya.*
- Mercutio:** *Tinggi, berani, and ramah. Harus bisa membawakan sebuah lagu dan memainkan sebuah alat musik.*
- Hidalgo:** *Tukang kebun yang pendek dan berambut warna gelap, berkumis. Harus cukup tinggi untuk menggapai balkon tanpa sebuah tangga.*
- Pengasuh:** *Wanita agak tua yang besar, ramah, kelihatan selalu sibuk.*
- Opsir Gentle:** *Mempunyai suara yang dalam, dengan kumis yang bagus bentuknya. Harus luwes sehingga tampak menakutkan pada bagian awal adegan, tapi berubah menjadi lebih simpatik dan bersahabat mendekati akhirnya.*

For each of the actors provided in this exercise, write an explanation, in Indonesian, for why they would not be suitable for one or more roles. Then write a second sentence stating what role they would be suitable for, and why.

➡ For example:

Peter tidak cocok berperan sebagai Juliet, bukan saja karena dia tidak anggun tapi karena dia tidak feminin. Dia cocok berperan sebagai Mercutio, bukan saja karena dia tinggi dan berani, tapi karena dia juga mempunyai wajah yang ramah.

1.1 Nina:

1.2 Ardi:

(continued on following page)

1.3 Ella:

1.4 Tono:

1.5 Pak Rudi:

1.6 Bu Susi:

Exercise 2

Study the diagram below, which shows how a traditional English theatre stage is divided up, and then complete the exercises that follow.

<i>Panggung atas</i>	▶	<i>Kanan</i>	<i>Tengah kanan</i>	<i>Tengah atas</i>	<i>Tengah kiri</i>	<i>Kiri</i>
<i>Panggung tengah</i>	▶	<i>Kanan</i>	<i>Tengah kanan</i>	<i>Tengah</i>	<i>Tengah kiri</i>	<i>Kiri</i>
<i>Panggung bawah</i>	▶	<i>Kanan</i>	<i>Tengah kanan</i>	<i>Tengah bawah</i>	<i>Tengah kiri</i>	<i>Kiri</i>

PENONTON

2.1 The next job Peter and Anna have to complete is finalising the set design. They have decided on the various elements of the design, but have not yet worked out where everything will be positioned on the stage.

The following is a list of the set pieces Anna has designed for the performance.

Write sentences, in Indonesian, describing for the stagehands where each object should be placed.

Bangku taman

Balkon

Pintu pagar halaman

Tempat sampah kompos

Kebun mawar

Tiang lampu

Hint! Consider the size and height of each object when you are deciding where to place it.

(continued on following page)

(continued from previous page)

Mercutio: Wangi!? Apa dia memang pernah bertemu Romeo? Mungkin saja dia pemuda yang menyenangkan, tapi aku tidak akan menggambarkannya sebagai wangi.

Hidalgo: Kamu tahu kan, bahwa tidak semua mawar wangi baunya. Ada yang mempunyai duri dan mempunyai bau yang busuk, terutama kalau bunga itu baru dibuat menjadi kompos seperti bunga-bunga yang cantik ini!

Juliet: Hei sobat! Jangan begitu dong! Aku sedang mencoba membuat suasana yang romantis, nih.

Mercutio: Ma'af, Jules. Ayo lanjutkan.

Hidalgo: Ya, ma'af. Coba kamu mulai lagi.

Juliet: Oh, Romeo, Romeo, mengapa kamu ...

(continued on following page)

(continued from previous page)

Pengasuh: [memotong dari belakang panggung] Juliet! Julieeeeet! Kamu sudah membuat PR? Dan bagaimana dengan latihan tangga nada dan arpeggiomu? Saya tidak mendengar ada lagu merdu yang keluar dari ruang muka siang ini.

Juliet: Aarrggh.

Mercutio: Mawar wangi! Musik merdu! Kamu tahu apa yang dikatakan orang, Juliet, musik punya pesona yang bisa menenangkan binatang buas. Barangkali kamu sebaiknya menyanyikan sebuah lagu untuk membangun suasana ketimbang membacakan puisi kuno itu.

Juliet: Aku nggak yakin ...

Hidalgo: Aku senang sekali mendengarkan lagu yang enak. Bagaimana dengan lagu 'Semuanya jadi mawar?' Atau lagu tentang ulat yang mengukur bunga bakung itu? [Mulai menyanyikan lagu ulat, tapi dipotong.]

(continued on following page)

(continued from previous page)

Mercutio: Tidak, aku tahu, bagaimana dengan lagu ini ...

[Mercutio mulai menyanyi. Hidalgo ikut menyanyi di bagian refreinnnya sementara Juliet bertepuk tangan mengikuti lagu dari balkon.]

Pengasuh: Apa ribut-ribut itu? Juliet! Julieeeeet! Apa ada teman yang bersamamu di kamarmu di atas sana?

Juliet: [cekikikan] Tidak! Tapi ada beberapa burung hantu yang berisik sedang menyanyi di halaman.

Pengasuh: Mercutio! Hidalgo! Apa yang sedang kamu lakukan di sini malam-malam? Mercutio, bukankah kamu seharusnya berlatih bola basket bersama Romeo? Dan Hidalgo, mengapa kamu ada di sini, berkebun malam-malam seperti ini?

Opsir Gentle: Wah, wah, wah. Ada apa ini?

(continued on following page)

(continued from previous page)

Mercutio: Saya cuma menyanyikan sebuah lagu, kok.

Hidalgo: Saya cuma berusaha berkebun, kok.

Juliet: Saya cuma berusaha menciptakan sebuah suasana, kok.

Opsir Gentle: Dan bagaimana dengan Anda, perempuan cantik?

Pengasuh: Saya?

Opsir Gentle: Ya, Anda, Mawar malam yang luar biasa menawan!

(continued on following page)

(continued from previous page)

Mercutio: Lagi-lagi bunga mawar!

Pengasuh: [merah pipinya] Ah, saya cuma ... Maksud saya, saya akan ...
Ya, yang sebenarnya adalah ...

Opsir Gentle: Ya, katakan saja ...

Juliet: Sebenarnya, kami akan berlatih musik, tapi Romeo, yang seharusnya memainkan drum untuk menentukan tempo lagu, terlambat!

Opsir Gentle: [Mengambil tongkat komandonya dan memukulkannya di tutup tempat sampah kompos]. Kalau ada nada ...

Pengasuh: Kita bisa berdansa mengikutinya.

(continued on following page)

(continued from previous page)

Semua: [menyanyikan lagu yang sama dengan tafsiran baru, kali ini diiringi oleh Opsir Gentle yang memainkan 'drum'nya, dan yang lainnya masing-masing memainkan 'alat musik' yang terbuat dari apa pun yang bisa mereka temukan di halaman.]

Romeo: Aku bisa dengar kalian dari ujung jalan sana! Ada apa di sini?!

Juliet: Ya, kamu sih, terlambat ...

Hidalgo: Dan kami tidak sabar menunggu ...

Pengasuh: Untuk mulai menyanyikan lagu ...

Opsir Gentle: Ayo sekarang bergabunglah ...

(continued on following page)

