

SECTION A**General notes on *Tally's Blood*****Setting**

- Seven scenes are set in Italy, 24 in Scotland.
- A large number of locations is specified, indoors and outdoors. One even involves characters climbing a ladder and going in through a window.
- The play covers a 20-year period from 1936 to 1955.

Set, props, lighting, sound, costume

- The sets may present the director and designer with a problem. There are 13 scenes. The temptation is to avoid being representational at all costs. Yet certain pieces are essential – the ginger crates, the bin, working areas and, of course, that upstairs window.
- Some props are more than just dressing, they are essential parts of the plot – the bottles of ginger, the letter and the kitbag, for example.
- Lighting could make up for a lack of scenery, particularly in scenes where it will create mood and atmosphere – the church, the ginger store and the 'elopement' scene, for example.
- Sound too is used to set the scene – the music, the off-stage party.
- The period requires appropriate costume which should also reflect the characters' poverty. The Italian characters may have elements of national costume.

Language

- The language is realistic – mostly that of working class Glaswegians.
- Massimo and, particularly, Rosinella occasionally introduce Italian phrases or speech patterns.
- In the scenes set in Italy, the characters sometimes use Italian.
- In one scene the playwright uses the device of having her characters speak in the Glaswegian dialect although they are supposedly speaking Italian. This device enables the audience to understand the dialogue though Hughie cannot.
- The children use vocabulary and sentence structure appropriate to their age.

Comedy, wit and humour

- This is a predominantly comic play, though serious issues are dealt with.
- Much comedy arises from the use of dialect and the sharp Glasgow wit.
- The relationships between characters are another source of comedy.

Acting style/techniques

- It is important to capture a realistic, naturalistic quality in the acting. These are ordinary people in situations that are far from ordinary.
- This naturalism must be maintained against non-naturalistic settings.
- Even the monologues (Massimo on Italy; Massimo on internment) have a naturalistic sound and feel.
- Dialogue is often brisk and witty, like a stage routine.
- The rioting mob are unseen, except in silhouette, and the whole drama of the situation must be created by their off-stage shouts and by the reactions of the victims on-stage.
- Occasionally two scenes run simultaneously (for example, the first part of Act Two, Scene Twelve).

Actor/audience relationships

- The actors sometimes speak directly to the audience.
- The actors sometimes speak their thoughts aloud.
- Audience laughter in a play that is funny helps to shape the flow of the action.
- The characters age 20 years in the course of the play. If the same actor plays Lucia throughout, she has the problem of persuading the audience to believe in her as a child.
- The actor playing Hughie has the same problem. It is easier for the actors who begin as adults to age 20 years credibly.

Stage directions

- The writer leaves many decisions about staging to the director and designer.
- She gives clear indications of how scenes should be paced – ‘*A beat*’, ‘*Pause*’, ‘*Lucia hovers*’ and ‘*Hughie hovers*’.
- There are few descriptions of the physical appearance of the characters.
- Some decisions are left to the director: ‘*he starts to batter them (or whatever)*’; ‘*maybe gets hanky out ...*’.
- Stage directions are often informal – ‘*mildly miffed*’, ‘*could use “mooch”*’, ‘*nice wee hat on*’. This helps to indicate to the actor the mood of the moment.

Relevance to Scottish society

- The play is all about Scotland and Scottish society – but seen through the eyes of Rosinella, an Italian.
 - The poverty of 1930s Scotland.
 - A lack of employment.
 - War.
 - Ambition.
 - The dependence of young people on their parents.
 - Integration of foreign nationals.
 - The difference between the clear moral standards of the Italian community and the perceived laxity of the Scots.
 - Racism – on both sides, as shown by the mob on the one hand and Rosinella's contempt for Scottish men on the other.

Target audience

- Scots, especially, perhaps, those of foreign blood.
- Those who are concerned about how Scotland has developed since the Thirties – the diversity of influences from the past, the conflicting pressures of different ethnic backgrounds, the changing relationships within society.
- Young people, who will identify with the problem of relationships between generations.
- Those with an interest in history.
- Those with an interest in religion.
- Those with an interest in racial integration.

Structure of the play

An overview

- **The play progresses chronologically. It covers a period of twenty years.**
- **There are large gaps in the time-line: Act One has scenes set in 1936, 1939, 1943 and 1944. Act Two is set eleven years later in 1955.**
- **There are 31 scenes, giving the play a cinematic structure. This technique pushes the storyline on quickly, even when there is a break in the time sequence. It builds up a sense of tension.**
- **One important character, Luigi, has only a very brief appearance at the beginning of Act One, and is in fewer than half the scenes in Act Two.**
- **One influential character – Massimo's father – does not appear at all but we hear a great deal about him and recognise his influence on his sons and daughter-in-law.**
- **Two nationalities are involved – Scottish and Italian. Differences in their national characteristics are important but there are similarities, too – religion, family ties, hardships.**

Act One

Scene 1

(Page 11) Italy

Begins action/introduces storyline

- The handing over of the child.
- The Italian language.
- The mourning bell and black armband.

Introduces characters

- We see four characters who will become central to the plot but we learn little about them.
- We see Luigi's pain and can deduce that it has something to do with bereavement.
- We see that Massimo is protective of Rosinella.

Scene 2

(Pages 12–26) In and around Pedreschi's shop. Scotland

Begins main action and storyline

- The real start of the action. Lucia is now five.
- Lucia is thoroughly spoiled by both Massimo and Rosinella.
- Rosinella happily makes personal sacrifices for Lucia's sake.
- Rosinella reacts strongly to the news that Luigi might want Lucia to return to Italy.
- Franco is itching to get away from his father.

Develops characters and relationships

- Massimo and Rosinella show deep affection for each other.
- Massimo, Franco and Rosinella show great love for Lucia.
- They are helpless in the face of Lucia's stubbornness.
- Lucia is determined, manipulative and petulant.
- Massimo's father is demanding but Rosinella accepts it as her duty to attend to him.
- Franco is jealous of the fact that Massimo has left their father and set up his own shop.
- Franco expects Massimo to help him deceive their father over his involvement with a Scottish girl.

Develops themes and issues

- Racial prejudice.
 - Rosinella disapproves of Franco's relationship with Bridget.
 - She assumes all Scots girls have looser morals than Italian girls.

- She believes that they are only interested in a man for his money.
- She thinks Scots women make poor mothers.
- Sense of family.
 - The happy relationship between Massimo, Franco, Rosinella and Lucia.
 - Rosinella regrets her lack of children.
 - She accepts that it is her duty to help look after her father-in-law – even cut his toe nails for him.
 - Franco feels he ought to stay with his father, even though he would like to escape.
 - The highest compliment Franco can pay Bridget is to say that she comes from ‘a great family, Rosinella. Really close’.
- The work ethic.
 - Massimo finds it hard to relax with his family, because he is thinking about his customers.
 - Franco speaks of ‘working from morning to night’.
 - Rosinella’s first direct question to Massimo is ‘The shop been busy?’

Scenes 3–6

(Pages 26–48) In and around Pedreschi’s shop. Scotland

Develops action and storyline

- We see the relationship between Franco and Bridget developing into a physical one.
- Tension between Massimo and Rosinella, over Lucia’s behaviour.
- Massimo slaps Lucia.
- Rosinella slaps Massimo.
- Franco warns Rosinella that she is getting too fond of Lucia.

Develops characters and relationships

- Massimo and Rosinella show some signs of hostility.
- Lucia is becoming even more stubborn – and more aware of her Italian background.
- Massimo offers Hughie a wee job in the shop. It is a ruse to encourage Lucia to talk English.
- Lucia and Hughie begin an argumentative relationship. At least it ensures that Lucia speaks English.
- Lucia and Hughie share the experience of the death of a parent.

Develops themes and issues

- Racial prejudice.
 - Lucia has taken to speaking Italian most of the time. It worries her teacher.

- **Sense of family.**
 - Bridget’s father exercises control over her behaviour.
 - Franco doesn’t want to cause trouble between Bridget and her father.
 - Bridget doesn’t want Franco to leave his father’s shop because of her.
- **The war.**
 - Growing awareness of the possibility of war.
 - Franco doesn’t share Massimo’s dread of war.
- **The work ethic.**
 - Hughie is delighted to be given a job by Massimo.

Scenes 7–13

(Pages 49–77) In and around Pedreschi’s shop. Scotland

Develops action and storyline

- War breaks out.
- Franco joins the army.
- Italy enters the war.
- Bridget borrows money from Massimo.
- A mob attacks the shop.
- The police arrest Massimo.

Develops characters and relationships

- Massimo and Franco come close to blows over Franco’s joining up.
- Franco and Bridget consummate their relationship.
- Rosinella is openly hostile towards Bridget.
- Massimo is gentle and kind with Bridget in her distress.

Develops themes and issues

- **Racial prejudice.**
 - Rosinella thinks of herself as Italian, living in Scotland. She doesn’t feel committed to Scotland, nor regard herself as part of the Scottish nation.
 - Franco regards himself as British.
 - Rosinella says only Italians are prepared to work hard.
 - She tells Bridget to find herself a Scottish boy because ‘Franco will be marrying an Italian girl’. Anything else seems to her inconceivable.
 - Lucia acts out extreme anti-Italian prejudice when playing ‘schools’ with Hughie.
- **Sense of family.**
 - In spite of their differences, the brothers have a strong fraternal bond.

- **The war.**
 - For Massimo, the outbreak of war is tragic.
 - He is arrested and interned.
 - For Rosinella, the war should have nothing to do with them.
 - For Franco, it is a means of escape from the shop and his father.
- **The work ethic.**
 - Rosinella has a powerful speech about work.
 - Hughie and Lucia go out on the streets with an ice-cream barrow.

Scenes 14–17

(Pages 77–92) In church and in Pedreschi's shop. Scotland

Develops action and storyline

- Massimo's story of his arrest.
- A leap forward in time.
- Franco is dead.
- Bridget tells Rosinella about Franco's letter to her – 'to be posted in the event of his death'.

Develops characters and relationships

- Massimo reveals his feelings about his father.
- Hughie and Lucia become 'blood brothers'.
- Rosinella cannot warm to Bridget even in their shared grief at Franco's death.
- She tells Lucia the story of her elopement.

Develops themes and issues

- **Racial prejudice.**
 - Rosinella cannot accept that Franco has written to Bridget because he loves her.
- **Sense of family.**
 - Franco's letter reveals the depth of his feelings for his family.
- **The war.**
 - Massimo is interned in Canada.
 - Franco is dead.
 - 'Daddy' is drowned on his way to internment in Australia.

Act Two

Scene 1

(Pages 94–98) Italy

Develops action and storyline

- It is eleven years later.
- Massimo visits his father's house for the first time since before the war.

Develops characters and relationships

- Luigi is a manipulator – just like his daughter, Lucia.
- He is jealous of Massimo's apparent wealth, compared with his Italian poverty.
- He relieves Massimo of his jacket, his photo of Lucia, his shirt and finally his trousers.

Develops themes and issues

- Racial prejudice.
 - Luigi cynically admires all things Scottish – in the hope of getting them.
- Sense of family.
 - Massimo has a great sense of belonging to his father's house.
- The war.
 - Luigi has lost most of his belongings.
 - He graphically describes the bombing.

Scenes 2–9

(Pages 99–149)

Develops action and storyline

- Rosinella is trying to get Lucia together with a nice Italian boy.
- Lucia, in spite of her age, has to ask permission to go to the wedding.
- Hughie, too shy to speak, writes to Lucia about his love for her. Rosinella takes the letter away from Lucia.
- Lucia is called home by her father.
- Lucia tries to find out what was in Hughie's letter.
- Hughie gives Lucia his most precious possession to take to Italy with her.
- Bitter at the loss of Lucia, Rosinella tries to get rid of Hughie.
- Bridget tells Rosinella of her pregnancy and abortion.

Develops characters and relationships

- Hughie and Lucia – both now grown-up – are getting closer.
- Rosinella and Massimo disagree over Lucia going to the wedding.
- Lucia tells Rosinella that she feels she always has to do what Rosinella wants. That her life is managed for her.
- Rosinella is shattered by the news that Lucia is to go to Italy.
- She is shocked to hear about Franco's baby.
- Rosinella's demand that they abandon everything and go to Italy makes Massimo realise how selfish she has always been.
- Massimo's home truths strike home.

Develops themes and issues

- Racial prejudice.
 - Rosinella goes on about how hard working Italian men are.
 - She doesn't notice how very hard Hughie works – for her and Massimo.
 - She is shocked that Hughie has the 'cheek' to ask Lucia to go to the wedding with him.
 - Bridget warns Hughie that the Italians will never admit him to their family.
 - Bridget regards Rosinella as stuck up: 'all the time she's looking down her nose at you. Typical "eye-ties".'
- Sense of family.
 - Lucia is forced to lie to Rosinella about the contents of Hughie's letter.
 - She cannot ignore her father's call for her to go 'home' to Italy.
 - Rosinella feels she has the right to take Lucia's letter and read it, even though Lucia is a grown woman.
- The work ethic.
 - Hughie works 'like a Trojan'.
 - Rosinella, always boasting about Italians working hard, never notices Hughie's commitment.

Scenes 10–14*(Pages 150–177) Italy****Develops action and storyline***

- Lucia is not happy in Italy.
- She finds it 'foreign' and hostile.
- She is exhausted by the work she is required to do by her father.
- Rosinella has changed completely and is encouraging Lucia's relationship with Hughie.
- In view of Luigi's intransigence, she develops the elopement plan.

Develops characters and relationships

- Luigi has a kind of rough affection for Lucia but treats her like a slave.
- Rosinella is now 100% behind Lucia and Hughie.
- She reveals that it was Bridget who made her see how wrong she has been.
- Hughie powerfully speaks up for himself after Luigi has rejected him. It impresses Rosinella.
- Rosinella closes the circle by planning the same happy ending for Lucia as she arranged for herself – elopement.
- Massimo has got over his temporary displeasure with Rosinella and comes to Italy to find his own happy ending.

Develops themes and issues

- Racial prejudice.
 - Even Rosinella is prepared now to see some good in Hughie.
 - She argues his case with Luigi.
 - Luigi is determined that Lucia will marry an Italian – but his concern is more financial than racial.
 - Luigi is contemptuous of the non-Italian Hughie.
- Sense of family.
 - Luigi expects total obedience from Lucia.
 - He already has his sons working for him but he needs a woman, too, to replace his ailing wife.

Areas of study for *Tally's Blood*

For this play, the most appropriate area of study is Social, Political and Religious Dimensions.

A. Social, Political and Religious Dimensions

- **Social background and conditions.**
 - Massimo has had the courage to open his own shop.
 - The Italians have a tradition of working very hard to make their businesses succeed.
 - The Pedreschi shop is in a poor area.
 - The family are well integrated into the local community, talking knowledgeably and in a concerned way about individuals in the neighbourhood.
 - Franco feels trapped by the tradition of working in the family business.
 - All members of the family are expected to become involved in the work.
 - They are better off than their neighbours, because of owning their own shop.
 - They all feel the strength of commitment to family life.
 - Even the estranged father of Massimo expects to be treated with the respect due to the head of the family.
- **Nationalism.**
 - Rosinella is fiercely Italian.
 - Massimo is more aware of the need to become part of Scottish society.
 - Lucia, as a wee girl, insists on talking Italian at school.
 - Franco regards himself as British rather than Italian or Scottish.
 - Rosinella is guilty of racism in her hostility to the Scottish way of life.
- **Industrial relations and the workplace.**
 - In a family business there is no distinction between home and work relationships.
 - Massimo is naturally the boss, both as head of the household and, in the Italian ethic, as a man.
 - Rosinella works in the back shop. It is Massimo's place to deal with the public.
 - After Rosinella's change of heart, she accepts Bridget as a worker in the shop – virtually as a member of the family, therefore.
 - Massimo is happy to have the non-Italian Hughie as a worker because he is so diligent.

- **Political theatre as entertainment.**
 - The play is very entertaining but this does not detract from the clarity and power of its political statement.
 - The major area is the comedy much of which is directly aimed at a political target – Rosinella’s racism.
 - There is a minor area of entertainment in the Italian songs. It makes the political point that the Pedreschis draw strength from their native culture.
- **Distribution of wealth.**
 - The play is set in a poor area of the country.
 - The Pedreschis seem well off in comparison with their neighbours.
 - In real terms they are quite poor. Rosinella chooses to buy presents for Lucia with money intended for her own clothes.
 - The poverty of Luigi’s household is in stark contrast with the relative comfort of Massimo’s.
- **Relationship between the individual and the establishment.**
 - The Pedreschis feel part of local society at the beginning of the play.
 - They are horrified to be treated as aliens by the mob which presumably consists of their neighbours and customers.
 - They take it for granted that the police will save them from the rioters.
 - They are devastated when the police, representing the government, treat them as the enemy.
- **Sectarianism.**
 - There is no overt mention of Roman Catholicism in the play, but the Pedreschis are seen to be practising Catholics.
 - It can be assumed that the Devlins are also Catholics. (The names Bridget and Devlin; the size of the Devlin family.)
 - Rosinella’s objection to Bridget is on racial, not religious, grounds.
- **Devices used to communicate social and political messages.**
 - Massimo’s long monologue emphasises the horror of war even for non-combatants.
 - Bridget’s long monologue reveals the contemporary attitudes to unmarried pregnancy and to abortion.
 - Luigi’s comical acquisitiveness is a comment on the poverty of rural Italy, compared with urban Scotland.
 - Though Rosinella’s constant comparison between Scots and Italians is funny, it also carries the important message about how easily nationalism can drift into racism.
 - Luigi’s memories of the war emphasise its futility.

In this play, there are some issues that are relevant also to the area Use of history, nostalgia and popular tradition.

B. Use of history, nostalgia and popular tradition

- **Historical accuracy.**
 - The harsh treatment of Italian families by both mob and government.
 - The internment of the ‘enemy aliens’ in Canada and Australia.
 - Attitudes to marriage, pregnancy.
 - The place of women in the home and the workplace.
 - Rosinella has never learned to read.
- **The war.**
 - Always in the background of the action is the threat of war.
 - The sinking of the internees ship on the way to Australia.
 - The willingness of Franco to serve (and die) in the British army.
 - The pointless death of ‘Daddy’.
 - Luigi’s account of the destruction of Monte Cassino and the villages round about.
- **Nostalgia.**
 - However hard the war years, there is often a kind of rosy glow to memories of the past.
 - The audience – if old enough – will remember the music and the dances with pleasure.
 - For older members of the audience the name Cassino may recall a sense of triumph – a great Allied victory, yet at the expense of Luigi and poor people like him.
 - For Massimo, the Italy he left behind has a pull that he cannot forget. He wants to renovate his father’s old house in Italy.
 - Ice-cream barrows.
 - ‘Ginger’ – the preferred drink of children before the days of universal Coke and Tango.
 - The reference in the play’s title to the practice of pouring raspberry sauce over ice-cream in cones.
 - The play pictures a way of life that has disappeared.
- **Devices used to create a sense of period.**
 - Music: a waltz; *The Gay Gordons*; *Blue Suede Shoes*.
 - Money: the cost of an abortion; the day’s takings in the shop.
- **Use of period song and dance.**
 - Scottish music: *The Gay Gordons* at the wedding.

- Italian music: the singing by Massimo and Franco; the paesano music at the Feast.
 - Bridget's clumsy attempts at dancing.
 - Hughie and Lucia are accomplished jive dancers.
- Variety, pantomime and farce.
 - Rosinella climbing the ladder is broad comedy, bordering on farce.
 - Celebrations, rituals, social gatherings.
 - The Scottish wedding.
 - The Italian Feast of the Assumption.
 - Both are off-stage but created for the audience by sound and music.

In this play, there are some issues that are relevant also to the area
Issues of gender.

C. Issues of gender

- Symbolic martyr.
 - Rosinella presents herself as a martyr, choosing to spend her clothes money on Lucia.
- Romantic hero.
 - Franco sees himself as a romantic hero. He just has to murmur a couple of words in Italian and the girls fall at his feet.
 - His enlistment in the army is another aspect of his view of himself as a heroic figure.
 - Hughie is the very opposite of a romantic hero – too shy to admit his love; easily talked out of declaring himself; reluctant to climb the ladder to 'rescue' Lucia.
 - Massimo's final scene shows him as a romantic hero, though with tongue in cheek, perhaps. This recalls his youthful adventure in stealing Rosinella away from her family.
- Relationships.
 - **Rosinella and Massimo.** Loving, teasing, showing affection in a rough kind of way. No mention of love. They do argue, usually over Lucia. Massimo even slaps Rosinella once. Eventually Massimo comes to recognise Rosinella's selfishness and there is an estrangement between them. However, her conversion to Hughie's cause brings Massimo back to her. He is naturally the head of the household and expects her to accept his decisions. However, he is weak, especially over Lucia, and Rosinella can usually manipulate him.

- **Franco and Massimo.** Strong brotherly affection which survives even their bitter fight over enlistment. Massimo covers for Franco, deceiving their father. Franco is a little jealous of Massimo's break with their father.
 - **Franco and Bridget.** Although Franco does enjoy his status as a heroic figure, he does seem to be genuinely in love with Bridget, prepared to risk his father's wrath and boasting about her to Rosinella, in spite of her hostility to Scottish girls.
 - **Lucia and Hughie.** They begin as childish sparring partners and they never quite lose this fun element in their relationship. This makes it harder for Hughie to speak up and change the nature of their friendship.
 - **Lucia and Rosinella.** Rosinella is devoted to Lucia, forgetting that she may have to lose her some day. Her lack of children of her own makes Lucia all the more important to her. She spoils Lucia and finds it hard to discipline her. Lucia, as a youngster, ruthlessly manipulates her aunt, well aware of Rosinella's devotion to her. As she gets older, she finds Rosinella's care for her becoming stifling and she hurts Rosinella with a bitter outburst.
 - **Luigi and the others.** Luigi is driven by self-interest and a desire for possessions. We see some of his sly ability to control others reflected in his daughter. He sees Massimo and Rosinella as legitimate targets, even offering to let them pay for Lucia's wedding to Mario. He uses Lucia as a slave, presumably having treated his wives in the same way.
 - **'Daddy' and the others.** Though sulking because Massimo has opened his own shop, Daddy still expects help from him and Rosinella, demanding that the latter cut his toe-nails for him. (A task which she willingly undertakes, recognising her place as a woman in the family.) In Massimo's account of the scene at the camp at Bury, his father becomes a very different person – a small, frightened, lost old man.
- **Marriage and the family.**
 - The play presents an Italian view of both marriage and the family.
 - The husband is the unquestioned head of the household (though he may well be manipulated by the women without his noticing).
 - For Rosinella marriage is the inevitable – and desirable – destination for all women. She has chosen a suitable husband for Lucia and even offers advice to Bridget on how to find a man for herself.
 - Rosinella constantly emphasises the importance of a girl remaining pure till married. But we learn eventually that she and Massimo cheated the system by spending a night together up a tree. It hints

at a more romantic side to Rosinella than she normally reveals. It re-appears when she decides to help Lucia use the same trick to avoid her father's choice of a husband for her.

- The 'family' is a wide one, encompassing 'Daddy', Franco and even Luigi.
 - The Devlins present an interesting contrast. They have a different attitude to pre-marital sex. A brother 'has to get married' and Hughie thinks this would be a better solution for him and Lucia than having to carry her down a ladder; Bridget is prepared to have an abortion, particularly shocking in a Catholic girl. Yet there are strong similarities – her father won't allow Bridget to go dancing because it would cheapen her.
- Women and power.
 - Although power appears to lie with the man in Italian society, Massimo's wife can often manage him very effectively.
 - Luigi is a more traditional Italian father, expecting to exercise total control over his family.
 - Men and power.
 - 'Daddy' – as we learn at second-hand since we never see him – thinks of himself as a kind of god-father figure, keeping tight control over his sons, keeping one at home against his will and making use of the one who has escaped.
 - Luigi has used Rosinella to bring up Lucia but now expects to use Lucia to run his house for him.
 - Luigi has chosen a fiancé for Lucia without even telling her.
 - Luigi's sons are playing their traditional part, working on the land for their father.
 - Massimo is a bit of a failure as far as the traditional Italian view is concerned: he has less control over Rosinella than he thinks; he is hopelessly unable to discipline Lucia; he is an easy touch when Bridget needs money; he cannot stand up to Luigi's acquisitiveness.
 - Sexual development of characters.
 - Franco and Bridget move quickly from first kiss to pregnancy.
 - Bridget believes that Franco would have married her had the war not intervened.
 - Hughie and Lucia move very slowly, over a period of about 12 years, from childhood games and arguments to an unspoken love.
 - We see Hughie's love for Lucia but if she fully reciprocates it, she keeps it better hidden. Only the need to escape from her father makes her admit it.

- The apparent solidity of Massimo’s marriage takes a knock when he fully realises Rosinella’s selfishness and ruthlessness. Interestingly, it is her attitude to Hughie that makes him waken up to her self-centred view of life.
- Oppression/suffering.
 - The Italians suffer from arrest and internment after Italy enters the war.
 - Poverty affects neighbouring families like the Devlins.
 - Women do not have equal rights, even over their own bodies: Bridget is forbidden to go dancing by her father; girls ‘have to get married’ if they become pregnant; or, worse, Bridget has to suffer the pain of abortion rather than live as an unmarried mother.

Current productions and interests

1. **A specific production of *Tally’s Blood*.**
(*This section is relevant if you have seen a production of this play.*)

Setting and props

- How did the Company cope with the problem of changing the setting so many times?
- Did this match Ann Marie di Mambro’s intentions?
- How did the setting(s) and use of props add to your understanding and enjoyment of the play?
- Were the setting, décor and props appropriate?

Lighting, sound

- What was interesting about the use of lighting?
- How effective was the use of sound, other than music?
- What use did the production make of music?
- How effective was their choice of music?
- Did the lighting, sound effects and music enhance the mood and feeling of the play?

Costume

- Did the company use costumes appropriate to the characters in the play?
- Which costumes in particular helped to emphasise character?
- Did the costumes match the period of the play?
- Did the costumes have an Italian feel?
- How did the costumes help suggest the ages of the characters?

Language

- Were the Scottish local accents convincing and effective?
- Did the Italian characters need to have accents? If so, did they have convincing ones?
- How did the performers use language and accents to bring out character?
- Did you have difficulty in penetrating the Scottish accents and vocabulary?

Comedy, wit and humour

- Did the Company correctly identify and establish the comic elements of the play?
- Did they use different *styles* of comedy for different scenes or characters?
- How effective was their use of comedy?
- Did they at any point play for comedy *inappropriately*?
- Did the director invent good comic business?

Acting style/techniques

- What acting style did the actors adopt?
- Was this appropriate for *Tally's Blood*?
- Did the actors' interpretation of their characters show a clear development over the course of the play?
- Was their interpretation always in keeping with the writer's intentions?

Actor/audience relationships

- What techniques did the actors use to involve the audience?
- Were the actors always successful in involving the audience?
- Did the actors appear to respond to audience reactions? If so, in what ways? Was this appropriate? Was it effective?
- Were there times when the audience appeared to lose concentration? If so, why did this happen?
- What would you say was the overall impact on the audience?
- Did you feel that the company had correctly identified Ann Marie di Mambro's dramatic message?
- How successfully did they put it across?
- Did any members of the audience appear to be shocked by the occasional use of strong language in the play, especially by a very young girl?

Relevance to Scottish society

- What relevance did this particular production of *Tally's Blood* have to a modern Scottish public?

- In your view, was this greater or less than Ann Marie di Mambro intended?
- Did the production make use of techniques borrowed from Scottish popular entertainment – music hall, pantomime or the variety stage?
- If so, were the techniques appropriately used?
- Did the production make wide use of ritual or other traditional activities?
- If so, were the techniques appropriately used?
- Did the production correctly identify the social background of the characters? Did they show them as being from different backgrounds? What techniques were used to put this across to the audience?
- How did the Company create a sense of being in Scotland? And in Italy?

Target audience

- Did the Company manage to attract the appropriate audience for the play?
- How had they used their marketing and publicity to ensure that the appropriate people came to see the play?
- Was their acting style appropriate to their audience?

2. The work of Ann Marie di Mambro

(This section is relevant if you have studied other works by this playwright.)

- Is this play in a similar style to her others?
- Does it raise the same questions and deal with the same issues?
- Has the writer created characters similar to those in her other plays?
- Is the play aimed at the same target audience?
- In what specific ways does it differ from her other work?
- What specific contribution does this play, and the writer's work in general, make to Scottish theatre?
- How does this play fit in to the whole picture of the writer's output?
- Does the play reflect the other areas studied in Contemporary Scottish Theatre – Social, Political and Religious Dimensions; Use of History, Nostalgia and Popular Traditions; Issues of Gender?

3. A current theme or trend in Contemporary Scottish Theatre
(This section is relevant if you have read or seen a range of plays by different Scottish writers.)

- Do the issues raised in *Tally's Blood* echo those familiar in the works of other Scottish playwrights?
- Is the style of the play similar to that of other contemporary Scottish plays?
- What trends do you identify in style, origin and theme in contemporary Scottish theatre that are exemplified in *Tally's Blood*?

Examination of a key scene

Examine Act Two, Scene 4, pages 116–121.

Interpretation

- What does the first line, '*Oh, my feet are killing me*', tell us?
- What does it reveal about Lucia that she is embarrassed by Rosinella's habit of bargaining with shop assistants?
- Why does Rosinella feel that being Italian makes it all right for her?
- Why does Lucia say, '*I prefer the way I do it myself, actually.*'?
- What is the significance of Lucia *twiddling the charms on her bracelet*?
- Is it reasonable of Bridget to say that Hughie needs more '*oomph*'?
- What is Bridget really thinking of when she says, '*Would you really want to go through life, loving the one person you can't have, rather than looking for someone that might make you happy?*'
- What is the significance of the beat in this line? *BRIDGET: 'But I do understand, son. (A beat.) I mean, I can IMAGINE what that must be like.'*
- What makes Bridget change from '*Give yourself a chance to forgive her*' to '*Tell her – you love her?*'
- What thoughts are unsaid in Hughie's line, '*I don't really know... I suppose I never really ... Och, it's not so easy... ?*'
- Is Lucia babbling on about her bracelet because she suspects what Hughie might be about to say or has she no idea of what is on his mind?

Characterisation

- What is Lucia's mood at the beginning of the scene?
- How is Rosinella feeling at the beginning of the scene?
- How does she feel by the time she makes her exit?
- What is Bridget feeling on her first line, '*So, she didn't come?*'
- How do Bridget and Hughie feel about each other in this scene?

- **How far is Bridget concerned about her own feelings rather than Hughie's?**
- **Is Lucia interested in nothing but her charm bracelet?**
- **Is she keeping Hughie at arm's length?**
- **What are Bridget's emotions in the last speech of the scene?**

Audience reaction

- **How will the audience react to the short sequence between Lucia and Rosinella?**
- **Will they agree with Bridget that Hughie needs more 'oomph'?**
- **How will they feel about Lucia in this scene?**
- **How will they feel about Bridget?**
- **How will they feel about Hughie by the end of the scene?**

SECTION B**Acting roles*****Rosinella***

Rosinella is often very funny and audiences are likely to feel quite warmly towards her. However, she has two major failings: she is utterly selfish and she is deeply prejudiced against Scotland and the Scots (or perhaps against anything and anyone not Italian).

She does show affection for Massimo, though she doesn't ever speak of it. We see her occasionally teasing him and even punching him in a friendly way. Once, she really slaps him, in reaction to his slapping Lucia.

She shows love for Lucia, but there is a possessiveness in it that is dangerous. This may spring from her own lack of children. She feels this is a failure of her womanhood and her Italian blood. She has poured all her mother's love into Lucia, even though she knows Lucia belongs to someone else and will probably go back to Italy. Her selfishness blinds her to the fact that she may be turning Lucia against her.

She has a complete change of heart after she realises that she was responsible for the loss of Franco's baby. She becomes supportive of Hughie and – when her attempt to persuade Luigi to accept him fails – wickedly contrives a scheme to set Lucia free.

How would *you* interpret the character of Rosinella?

- Would you try to make her a sympathetic character?
- How would you choose to play her sharpness and humour?
- Would you try to suggest that this is only superficial?
- How would you portray her selfishness?
- How do you interpret her attitude to Hughie?
- What physical mannerisms would you give her?
- How would these change over the course of the play?
- What sort of voice would you want her to have?
- How would you portray her change of heart in the last five scenes of the play?

Massimo

Massimo has had the strength of character to leave his father's shop and set up on his own. He has both a fatherly and a brotherly attitude to Franco. He works hard, content that it is all done for himself and his family. He has a comfortable affectionate relationship with Rosinella. However, he turns against her when he finally recognises the depth of her selfishness.

He loves Lucia and finds it hard to discipline her. He is so shocked by her swearing that he slaps her, but is immediately contrite. He likes people, seeing the best in them – Bridget, Hughie, other neighbours whom he speaks about.

He is less critical of Scotland than Rosinella but he has a love of Italy that may be stronger than hers. She has always refused to go to Italy with him. He has a romantic attachment to his father's old ruin of a house in Cassino.

He has a generous spirit. We see it in his behaviour towards Lucia, Luigi, Bridget and Hughie. Like Rosinella he regrets not having children of their own, and like her he finds a substitute – Hughie – but he does not have Rosinella's possessiveness and his relationship with Hughie is a good one.

How would *you* interpret the character of Massimo?

- Would you make him a cheerful character?
- Does he have the typical Italian machismo?
- How would you portray him as different from Franco even though they are brothers?
- What physical and vocal characteristics would you want to give him?
- How would you interpret his feelings about Rosinella?
- How would you portray his feelings about Lucia?

Lucia

As a small child, she is spoiled, demanding, manipulative and assertive. She ruthlessly gets her own way by crying at will. From the first she is the stronger of the two in her relationship with Hughie. She does not show strong emotion for him, but she rejects all Rosinella's attempts to match her up with an Italian boy. This may be a reluctance to let her aunt decide for her, of course.

She seems at the very least insensitive when Hughie is trying to tell her he loves her. Is she deliberately preventing their relationship getting on to a different level?

Her outburst against Rosinella is more honest than her false tears and tantrums earlier on. (Pages 108–109.)

How would *you* interpret the character of Lucia?

- How would you make her spoiled and self-centred without making her unpleasant?
- How would you use your voice and body to show her as a child?
- How would you indicate her increasing age throughout the play?
- Is she genuinely in love with Hughie or is he just her means of escape from her father?
- How would you portray her relationship with Rosinella?
- How would you show her feelings about her father?
- Is she a sincere or insincere person? How would you show this?

Franco

Franco has a fine sense of his own charm; he expects women to fall easily for him. His wooing of Bridget is both accomplished and determined. He resents being under his father's thumb, afraid that he'll be stuck in the shop for the rest of his life. Yet he is reluctant just to walk out. The war gives him a reason and an excuse to go.

He is unscrupulous about deceiving his father over Bridget and about involving Massimo and Rosinella in the deception. He is good with the children. His 'posthumous' letter to Bridget reveals a strong sense of family.

How would *you* interpret the character of Franco?

- Is his attractiveness superficial? If so, how would you let the audience see this?
- What techniques would you use to show his self-confidence and charm?
- What are his true feelings for Bridget?
- How genuine are his complaints about his father?
- How would you play his last scene? Is he excited, scared, regretful?

Hughie

Hughie is, at first, a cheerful, cheeky child, street-wise and independent. As he grows older, he becomes less sure of himself, hiding himself in work. He is too shy to tell Lucia about his feelings of love for her. But he shows real spirit speaking up for himself after the rejection by Luigi.

How would *you* interpret the character of Hughie?

- What acting techniques would you use to show Hughie's age in the first few scenes of the play?

- How would you portray his development into adolescence?
- How do you interpret his character as a young man?
- Is he completely under Lucia's thumb?
- What is his relationship with Bridget?
- How does he feel about Massimo?
- How does he feel about Rosinella?
- What kind of accent would you give him?

Bridget

Bridget is sensible and self-reliant. Though very much in love with Franco she tries to keep their relationship within the moral limits imposed by society at the time. When it goes wrong she copes with the situation herself, without telling anyone about her illegal abortion. After Franco's death she remains true to him, refusing to get involved with other men. The determination she showed in getting herself an abortion also gives her the strength to stand up to Rosinella over Hughie. Her decision to tell her about the child is the turning point for Rosinella; it brings about a dramatic change in her attitudes.

How would *you* interpret the character of Bridget?

- What kind of accent should she have?
- How does she behave towards Franco in their first scene?
- How does this change later?
- How would you present her relationship with her brother Hughie?
- How does she feel when she comes to read part of Franco's letter to Rosinella?
- Why does she decide to tell Rosinella about the baby?
- How would you play the long speech where she describes the abortion?

Luigi

Luigi is not an attractive character. He gives away his daughter to someone else to bring up. Yet he demands her return when he needs her to work for him. He ruthlessly uses his wartime experiences to make Massimo feel sorry for him. He takes all he can get from Massimo and is prepared to take more if he will pay for Lucia's wedding to Mario.

He treats Lucia like a slave and teases her although it is obvious that she is genuinely upset about the spiders and snake. He does not mean to be cruel; he just does not understand her. He finds her a fiancé without even telling her – and his choice depends on what is best financially for him and his sons.

How would *you* interpret the character of Luigi?

- **What kind of accent would you give him?**
- **How would you deal with the scene where he is supposedly speaking Italian but the audience hear him in Glasgow dialect?**
- **Is he a totally unattractive character? If not, what redeeming features do you see in him?**
- **Would you play totally for comedy in the scene where he gets Massimo's jacket, shirt and trousers?**
- **How does he feel about Hughie? How would you show this?**
- **How does he feel about Lucia? How would you show this?**

Recommended acting pieces

<p>Act One, Scene 2</p> <p>Page reference: 12–16 (Closing line: ‘<i>Who’s my best girl?</i>’)</p>
<p>Casting: 1 male and 2 female</p>
<p>Characters: Massimo, Rosinella and Lucia</p>
<p>Approximate length: 8 minutes</p>
<p>Comments: The scene gives an actress the challenge of playing a five-year-old girl. All is charm and happiness at first, as Lucia preens for her delighted uncle and aunt. Massimo is warm and affectionate towards his wife and gently teasing with Lucia. The mood changes when Lucia is told to change out of her new dress: she becomes petulant at first and then increasingly hysterical. The adults are at a loss, failing to take a firm enough line with her. Finally they give in and Lucia instantly becomes sweetness and light. The adults are completely at her mercy.</p>

<p>Act One, Scenes 3, 5</p> <p>Page reference: 28–30 (Opening line ‘<i>Ciao Bella!</i>’); 41–44 (Opening line ‘<i>Sorry, Franco, I done it again.</i>’ Closing line ‘<i>Prima vera di bellezza...</i>’)</p>
<p>Casting: 1 male and 1 female</p>
<p>Characters: Bridget and Franco (plus Hughie read in)</p>
<p>Approximate length: 8 minutes</p>
<p>Comments: The two scenes may conveniently be run together. It begins with a playful, flirtatious scene, with Franco very conscious of his charm and the effect he is having on Bridget. Instead of exiting at the end of the scene, they go into a waltz. The relationship develops, with urgency on Franco’s part and some restraint on Bridget’s. We learn how Franco feels trapped by his work; she is sympathetic but pragmatic about it.</p>

Act One, Scene 12**Page reference:** 65–71(Opening line '*My father's got a house in Italy.*')

Casting: 1 male and 2 female

Characters: Massimo, Rosinella and Lucia (plus voices read in)

Approximate length: 9 minutes

Comments: Massimo's reverie is interrupted by the attack by the mob, all the more effective because they are just off-stage voices. There is a series of changes of mood: a growing sense of panic as they realise the seriousness of the situation; relief when the mob leave; despair as Massimo sees the amount of damage done; fear at the new knocking; relief when they realise that the police have arrived; anxiety when the police take Massimo away.

Act One, Scene 15**Page reference:** 80–85**Casting:** 1 male and 1 female

Characters: Hughie and Lucia

Approximate length: 8 minutes

Comments: The children are both nine years old – an interesting exercise for actors nearly twice that age. Lucia veers between hysteria and cool contempt; Hughie is excited and nervous. The scene calls for subtle timing in the comedy and a sensitivity towards the feelings of children. There is poignancy as they complete their ritual, broken by some irreverent comedy. The scene ends with the children stumbling on a truth they do not understand.

Act Two, Scene 1
Page reference: 94–98
Casting: 2 male
Characters: Massimo and Luigi
Approximate length: 6 minutes
Comments: A fine comic scene, needing good character playing from both actors. Massimo is deeply moved, at first, by his first return to Italy since the war. Luigi makes the most of his hard-luck story about his wartime experiences and cleverly gets as much as he can from Massimo. The scene ends on a good strong comedy tag-line.

Act Two, Scene 2
Page reference: 105–112 (Opening line <i>'So, Lucia, you lost your tongue the night or what?'</i>)
Casting: 1 male and 2 female
Characters: Massimo, Rosinella and Lucia
Approximate length: 11 minutes
Comments: A scene of changing emotions. It opens with humour and good-natured banter. This is Massimo and Rosinella at their most affectionate. Lucia changes it all by asking permission (she's 21!) to go to a wedding with Hughie. Rosinella is horrified, but Massimo tries to hold her in check. Rosinella tries to reason with Lucia but when that doesn't work she loses her temper. Lucia cries and then tells her aunt some home truths about how she feels treated. Rosinella ends the scene with an angry tirade directed at Massimo who can't quite understand what all the passion is about. The scene needs mature and sensitive acting by those playing the middle-aged couple.

Act Two, Scene 7**Page reference:** 132–138**Casting:** 1 male and 1 female**Characters:** Hughie and Lucia (plus Rosinella off-stage read in)**Approximate length:** 9 minutes

Comments: At first, it seems almost as if they were children again, sharing the old humour of the ginger store. Gradually it becomes a duel of love, as neither is willing to come into the open about their feelings but each is trying to make the other say something revealing. The scene throbs with unspoken emotion and, consequently, with frustration.

Act Two, Scene 12**Page reference:** 159–169
(Opening line '*Buona sera.*')**Casting:** 2 male and 1 female**Characters:** Rosinella, Hughie and Luigi (plus Lucia walked in)**Approximate length:** 13 minutes

Comments: A long scene that involves a difficult style of comedy, building to disappointment. It makes heavy demands on all three actors, not least on Luigi who must manage fluent Italian. There is comedy as Hughie struggles to understand what is being said. The comedy takes a different turn when Luigi starts speaking in Rosinella's Glasgow dialect for the audience's sake – but Hughie is still hearing Italian. There is a build-up of drama as the audience hear of Luigi's plans for Lucia that completely destroy Hughie's hopes, but Hughie alone remains in the dark. Rosinella is persuasive and unusually gentle but to no avail. She is puzzled by Luigi's determination until she realises the truth: he needs Lucia to marry in order to increase his land holding. She ends with a spark of her old fire as she tells Luigi what she thinks of him.



APPENDIX**An interview with the playwright****How does *Tally's Blood* fit into the body of your work as a playwright?**

It is very personal to me. I hesitate to use the word 'favourite' but it is certainly the closest to home, drawing on my Italian ancestry. I had touched on the subject in *Joe*, but *Tally's Blood* carries it much further. I was Writer in Residence at the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh, back in 1990. Part of the remit was to write a play for production there. I had been toying with an idea but it wasn't working out. Then one day I overheard Ian Brown, the artistic director of the Traverse, saying to somebody that he would love to direct a play about the Italian Scottish community. I said to him, 'If you do, and I haven't written it, I'll never forgive you.' So we did it. As soon as I started thinking about the subject, I felt right with it. 'I know what I'm doing here,' I said to myself.

I had written about racial prejudice before, in my first commission, a play for TAG – *Visible Differences*. But that had been about the conventional view of prejudice – against the incomer. This time I wanted to tackle it from a different angle: *Tally's Blood* is about the prejudice the incomer feels against the community he, or she, has joined. It's common; it's dangerous and it's not often spoken about.

It often occurs *within* a family. It can prevent the incomer making the most of himself in his adopted society.

I saw this as I grew up. I was part of this Scottish Italian community. My father was interned, during the war, as Massimo's was in the play. To a large extent, his monologue is my father's story.

In *Tally's Blood* you explore this kind of prejudice most fully in the character of Rosinella.

Yes. She carries this huge weight of prejudice against the Scots she's living alongside. But she isn't really aware of it. She has just never thought about her own attitudes.

The audience find it quite funny, particularly at first.

Of course. She's a likeable character and there is no real bitterness in her prejudice. But it does a lot of harm.

She changes dramatically.

She's forced to when she suddenly confronts the effects of her attitude.

Recognising what she has been doing comes like a slap in the face?

Like several kicks in the stomach.

Did you have a target audience in mind as you wrote the play?

Not really. I mean, when I wrote *Visible Differences*, it was for performance to 3rd-year pupils. So I had to keep that in mind. *Tally's Blood* was for the Traverse and I know people think there is a special kind of 'Traverse audience' but I didn't have any particular group in mind. Now, though, I hope it is reaching out to the Scottish Italian community. It's their story, after all. When the play was revived at the Byre Theatre in St Andrews they wrote to all the Italian Societies, and there are dozens of them in Scotland, encouraging them to come. And I think they did.

People who weren't regular playgoers?

I hope so. The play strikes a chord with any Scottish Italian. They all grew up knowing about the *Arandora Star* and the way Italian families were treated during the war. In the original production, at the Traverse, we cut Massimo's monologue, for reasons of length. I'm sorry about that now.

It does seem a crucial element in the play.

It is. On the other hand, it doesn't really match the style of the rest of the play. It is all very naturalistic, and then there is this monologue, standing out as different. But that's what's so great about theatre. You can do anything you want.

Why did you choose the structure that you did – 31 short scenes?

It helps to span the twenty years of the storyline, I think.

Do you write because you have a subject bursting to get out, or because someone has asked you to write something for them?

I need to believe in it. I have sometimes let commissions go because I had no feeling for the subject.

You now have two plays available for study in Higher Drama: *Tally's Blood* and *Brothers of Thunder*.

I was really surprised about *Brothers of Thunder* because it deals with some difficult themes – homosexuality and HIV. But when I go into schools, I'm always impressed by how thoughtful and caring these teenagers are. We see the awful mush that they get served with on

television, but then you meet them and you realise that they do concern themselves with these important issues.

What's your view of the contemporary Scottish theatre?

I think we're in a good state. Theatres are not only doing new works, they are also mounting second or even third productions of older plays. This is really healthy. There's a sense of looking back and recognising what has been achieved. There is now a body of Scottish work that we can take pride in. We can revisit it. I hope that the new Scottish National Theatre will regard it as one of its priorities to keep alive works that have had maybe one production only, but deserve to be seen again.

October 2003