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## **AGRÉGATION EXTERNE D'ANGLAIS**

### **ÉPREUVE HORS PROGRAMME**

#### **Première partie** (*en anglais, durée maximale : 40 mn*)

Vous procéderez à l'étude et à la mise en relation argumentée des trois documents du dossier proposé (A, B, C non hiérarchisés). Votre présentation ne dépassera pas 20 minutes et sera suivie d'un entretien de 20 minutes maximum.

#### **Deuxième partie** (*en français, durée maximale : 5 mn*)

À l'issue de l'entretien de première partie, et à l'invitation du jury, vous vous appuierez sur l'un des trois documents du dossier pour proposer un projet d'exploitation pédagogique dans une situation d'enseignement que vous aurez préalablement définie. Cette partie ne donnera lieu à aucun échange avec le jury.

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## DOCUMENT A

**Eudora Welty, extract from "Powerhouse" [1937]. Source: *The Collected Stories*, London: Penguin Books, 1983, pp. 131-133.**

Powerhouse is playing!

He's here on tour from the city – "Powerhouse and His Keyboard" – "Powerhouse and His Tasmanians" – think of the things he calls himself! There's no one in the world like him. You can't tell what he is. "Negro man"? – he looks more Asiatic, monkey, Jewish, Babylonian, Peruvian, fanatic, devil. He has pale gray eyes, heavy lids, maybe horny like a lizard's, but big glowing eyes when they're open. He has African feet of the greatest size, stomping, both together, on each side of the pedals. He's not coal black – beverage colored – looks like a preacher when his mouth is shut, but then it opens – vast and obscene. And his mouth is going every minute: like a monkey's when it looks for something. Improvising, coming on a light and childish melody – *smooch* – he loves it with his mouth.

Is it possible that he could be this! When you have him there performing for you, that's what you feel. You know people on a stage – and people of a darker race – so likely to be marvelous, frightening.

This is a white dance. Powerhouse is not a show-off like the Harlem boys, not drunk, not crazy – he's in a trance; he's a person of joy, a fanatic. He listens as much as he performs, a look of hideous, powerful rapture on his face. When he plays he beats down piano and seat and wears them away. He is in motion every moment – what could be more obscene? There he is with his great head, fat stomach, and little round piston legs, and long yellow-sectioned strong big fingers, at rest about the size of bananas. Of course you know how he sounds – you've heard him on records – but still you need to see him. He's going all the time, like skating around the skating rink or rowing a boat. It makes everybody crowd around, here in this shadowless steel-trussed hall with the rose-like posters of Nelson Eddy and the testimonial for the mind-reading horse in handwriting magnified five hundred times. Then all quietly he lays his finger on a key with the promise and serenity of a sibyl touching the book.

Powerhouse is so monstrous he sends everybody into oblivion. When any group, any performers, come to town, don't people always come out and hover near, leaning inward about them, to learn what it is? What is it? Listen. Remember how it was with the acrobats. Watch them carefully, hear the least word, especially what they say to one another, in another language – don't let them escape you; it's the only time for hallucination, the last time. They can't stay. They'll be somewhere else this time tomorrow.

Powerhouse has as much as possible done by signals. Everybody, laughing as if to hide a weakness, will sooner or later hand him up a written request. Powerhouse reads each one, studying with a secret face: that is the face which looks like a mask – anybody's; there is a moment when he makes a decision. Then a light slides under his eyelids, and he says, "92!" or some combination of figures – never a name. Before a number the band is all frantic, misbehaving, pushing, like children in a schoolroom, and he is the teacher getting silence. His hands over the keys, he says sternly, "You-all ready? You-all ready to do some serious walking?" – waits – then, STAMP. Quiet. STAMP, for the second time. This is absolute. Then a set of rhythmic kicks against the floor to communicate the tempo. Then, O Lord! say the distended eyes from beyond the boundary of the trumpets, Hello and good-bye, and they are all down the first note like a waterfall.

This note marks the end of any known discipline. Powerhouse seems to abandon them all – he himself seems lost – down in the song, yelling up like somebody in a whirlpool – not

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45 guiding them – hailing them only. But he knows, really. He cries out, but he must know exactly. "Mercy!...What I say! Yeah!" And then drifting, listening – "Where that skin beater?" – wanting drums, and starting up and pouring it out in the greatest delight and brutality. On the sweet pieces such a leer for everybody! He looks down so benevolently upon all our faces and whispers the lyrics to us. And if you could hear him at this moment on "Marie, the Dawn is Breaking"! He's going up the keyboard with a few fingers in some very derogatory triplet-routine, he gets higher and higher, and then he looks over the end of the piano, as if over a cliff. But not in a show-off way – the song makes him do it.

55 He loves the way they all play, too – all those next to him. The far section of the band is all studious, wearing glasses, every one – they don't count. Only those playing around Powerhouse are the real ones. He has a bass fiddler from Vicksburg, black as pitch, named Valentine, who plays with his eyes shut and talking to himself, very young: Powerhouse has to keep encouraging him. "Go on, go on, give it up, bring it on out there!" When you heard him like that on records, did you know he was really pleading? [...]

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## DOCUMENT B

Extract from ‘The Fun Stuff: My Life as Keith Moon’, by James Wood. Source: *The New Yorker* (November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010).

[...] The drummer and the conductor are the luckiest of all musicians, because they are closest to dancing. And in drumming how childishly close the connection is between the dancer and the dance! When you blow down an oboe, or pull a bow across a string, an infinitesimal hesitation—the hesitation of vibration—separates the act and the sound; for trumpeters, the simple voicing of a quiet middle C is more fraught than very complex passages, because that brass tube can be sluggish in its obedience. But when a drummer needs to make a drum sound he just . . . hits it. The stick or the hand comes down, and the skin bellows. The narrator in Thomas Bernhard’s novel “The Loser,” a pianist crazed with dreams of genius and obsessed with Glenn Gould, expresses the impossible longing to become the piano, to be at one with it. When you play the drums, you are the drums. “Tom-tom, c’est moi,” as Wallace Stevens put it.

The drummer who was the drums, when I was a boy, was Keith Moon, though he was dead by the time I first heard him. He was the drums not because he was the most technically accomplished of drummers but because his joyous, semaphoring lunacy suggested a man possessed by the antic spirit of drumming. He was pure, irresponsible, restless childishness. At the end of early Who concerts, as Pete Townshend smashed his guitar, Moon would kick his drums and stand on them and hurl them around the stage, and this seems a logical extension not only of the basic premise of drumming, which is to hit things, but of Moon’s drumming, which was to hit things exuberantly. “For Christ’s sake, play quieter,” the manager of a club once told Moon. To which Moon replied, “I can’t play quiet, I’m a rock drummer.”

The Who had extraordinary rhythmic vitality, and it died when Keith Moon died, thirty-two years ago. I had hardly ever heard any rock music when I first listened to albums like “Quadrophenia” and “Who’s Next.” My notion of musical volume and power was inevitably circumscribed by my fairly sheltered, austere Christian upbringing—I got off on classical or churchy things like the brassy last bars of William Walton’s First Symphony, or the densely chromatic last movement of the “Hammerklavier” Sonata, or the way the choir bursts in at the start of Handel’s anthem “Zadok the Priest,” or the thundering thirty-two-foot bass pipes of Durham Cathedral’s organ, and the way the echo, at the end of a piece, took seven seconds to dissolve in that huge building. Those things are not to be despised, but nothing had prepared me for the ferocious energy of The Who. The music enacted the mod rebellion of its lyrics: “Hope I die before I get old”; “Meet the new boss, same as the old boss”; “Dressed right, for a beach fight”; “There’s a millionaire above you, / And you’re under his suspicion.” Pete Townshend’s hard, tense suspended chords seemed to scour the air around them; Roger Daltrey’s singing was a young man’s fighting swagger, an incitement to some kind of crime; John Entwistle’s incessantly mobile bass playing was like someone running away from the scene of the crime; and Keith Moon’s drumming, in its inspired vandalism, was the crime itself.

Most rock drummers, even very good and inventive ones, are timekeepers. There is a space for a fill or a roll at the end of a musical phrase, but the beat has primacy over the curlicues. In a regular 4/4 bar, the bass drum sounds the first beat, the snare the second, the bass drum again hits the third (often with two eighth notes at this point), and then the snare hits the bar’s final beat. This results in the familiar “boom-DA, boom-boom-DA” sound of most rock drumming. A standard-issue drummer, playing along, say, to the Beatles’ “Carry That Weight,” would keep his 4/4 beat steady through the line “Boy, you’re gonna carry that weight, carry that weight, a long time,” until the natural

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break, which comes at the end of the phrase, where, just after the word “time,” a wordless, two-beat half-bar readies itself for the repeated chorus. In that half-bar, there might be space for a quick roll, or a roll and a triplet, or something fancy with snare and high hat—really, any variety of filler. The filler is the fun stuff, and it could be said, without much exaggeration, that nearly all the fun stuff in drumming takes place in those two empty beats between the end of one phrase and the start of another. Ringo Starr, who interpreted his role modestly, does nothing much in that two-beat space: mostly, he provides eight even, straightforward sixteenth notes (da-da-da-da / da-da-da-da). In a good cover version of the song, Phil Collins, a sophisticated drummer who was never a modest performer with Genesis, does a tight roll that begins with featherlight delicacy on a tomtom and ends more firmly on his snare, before going back to the beat. But the modest and the sophisticated drummer, whatever their stylistic differences, share an understanding that there is a proper space for keeping the beat, and a much smaller space for departing from it, like a time-out area in a classroom. The difference is just that the sophisticated drummer is much more often in time-out, and is always busily showing off to the rest of the class while he is there.

Keith Moon ripped all this up. There is no time-out in his drumming, because there is no time-in. It is all fun stuff. The first principle of Moon’s drumming was that drummers do not exist to keep the beat. He did keep the beat, and very well, but he did it by every method except the traditional one. Drumming is repetition, as is rock music generally, and Moon clearly found repetition dull. So he played the drums like no one else—and not even like himself. No two bars of Moon’s playing ever sound the same; he is in revolt against consistency. Everyone else in the band gets to improvise, so why should the drummer be nothing more than a condemned metronome? He saw himself as a soloist playing with an ensemble of other soloists. It follows from this that the drummer will be playing a line of music, just as, say, the guitarist does, with undulations and crescendos and leaps. [...]

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## DOCUMENT C

Ernie Barnes, *Sugar Shack*. 1972. 34 x 24 inches. Oil on canvas. Place unknown.

