

# Performing Arts Coursework

By Zoë Murray

In performing arts we got split into groups in order to improvise, rehearse and perform music, dance and drama pieces. In the group I was in for music we used and developed each of the five music elements to our best extent, which consist of: rhythm, melody, harmony, texture and timbre.

Our music piece was from a poem about swans and it was a gentle poem consisting of words such as "Down the stream the swans all glide..." Our group decided because it had to last 3 minutes and it was a rather short poem, to repeat it three times but in differing ways. The first way was of a flowing rhythm, the second time the same melody but a slightly more up-tempo and finally in a fast rhythm of a rap-style. However, before lines from the poem were sung etc we added our own mark to the piece. To add a bit of humour to the piece our performance started with Hannah pretending to sing really off-key the lyrics "Down the stream the swans all glide" but it turned out more like "DOWN THE STREAM THE SWWW^ANNS ^ALLL GLLIDEEE!!!" This was of a great crescendo making the timbre very forte. Then it shows us telling her "No Hannah" then Leanne began singing "Were going to sing a poem" and then the rest of us sing the same lyrics but in a 3-piece constant harmony. One line Hannah sings: "We could sing it in an opera". On this line the rest of us create a dissonant harmony signing the word opera. Then following this we all say "...or in a jazzy theme!" Having said this we all improvise typical jazz sounds for example I imitate a saxophone playing bluesy notes. I do this twice hence creating a mini melodic motif and others making rhythmic motifs with an imitation of a jazz drumbeat.

The next few lines are spoken then on the final line before the poem starts to be sung etc there is a xylophone played to represent the calm water the swans are gliding in. During this we all improvise sounds that the swans and their surroundings may be making in this stream. I sang the word sliding. As I sang the word I slid my voice to show the onomatopoeia of the word sliding as if the swans were sliding. This was continual for a few seconds and the texture of this was rather constant as we all had different improvised sounds, which we individually kept the same.

When the improvising had got enough the xylophone sounded a diminuendo on a downward scale then two harsh notes from a higher pitch to a lower pitch. Then accapella two part harmonies introduced the first two lines gently and in a legato form. The following four lines of the

poem being sung the first time round were sung solo in a **ABAB** melodic structure.

Similar to the first time we sung it the melody and harmonies were the same however, the tempo was slightly faster. In a homophonic texture the second time round seemed to be as Natalie sung in a call and response way repeating the lyrics we sang. Whilst doing this we clapped to the rhythm.

After we'd finished singing the second time round Hannah shouted, "Holler!" and I said, "Check this yo!" and we all broke out into a rap version of the poem. The tempo was a lot faster whilst the rhythm was staccato throughout and the dynamics were louder (*forte*). In the first two lines we were of a monophonic texture yet on the third line we changed and again did a call and response rhythm. Three of us rapped half one line and three of us rapped the following line. This was also a melodic cannon.

1<sup>st</sup> three: "Their legs get wet!"

2<sup>nd</sup> three: "Their tummies get wetter"

1<sup>st</sup> three: "I think after all"

2<sup>nd</sup> three: "The bus is better!"

The previous ending line is actually the end line of our music piece and in the style of an actual **American** rapper we all say "yeaahh" at the end once again capturing the humour in our piece and as if to be respecting the swans which are written about in the poem. This is used of one of our additional skills along with the additional personal poem that we performed before singing the lines of the swan poem.

Our music piece can be linked to our dance and drama pieces too. For example we tried to use our additional skill of humour in all three pieces. The humour in music was previously mentioned whilst the humour in dance was that of Natalie being the rabbit in springtime bouncing around; and in drama it was I pretending to be a bitter old woman.

A musical motif was used in the music piece and the dramatic motifs of flashbacks were used. Similar to music, musical motifs were identifiable within the dance piece in the accompanying music to the spring dance. Rhythmic motifs were used in all three pieces. Drama in the way that the rhythmic motif of the old woman's walking around and grabbing her lower-back strain was pretty constant. Music was in the rapping rhythmic motif. In the dance was the rhythmic motif of moving our arms in cannon to the rhythm of the music to represent the wind blowing in spring.

Tension was created in our music piece when Selina played the two notes strongly and *forte* on the xylophone whilst we were improvising our singing and we went quiet before singing the first line of the poem. Comparable to this was the tension created in our drama piece whereby

it was the part at the dinner party and Abbie was choking and being food-poisoned.

We improvised, rehearsed and performed in all three pieces however these were in similar and different ways. The improvisation for our drama piece went rather poorly at first, we thought of a storyline at the start but then changed it because originally it was too naturalistic and turned out to be to soap-opera style. However, the improvisation for music went better because we thought of ideas straight away and just flowed with ideas. Dance we had originally thought of dancing with the stimulus of cultural diversity but because our piece started with us lying down on the floor in the shape of a flower we felt it made more sense to do spring.

The rehearsal for music was the one that had us feeling most confident about when it came to performing it. In dance we just needed the music and then we were to be ready for performance. Like in dance with having the music, once we had the main thing for drama, which was the storyline; rehearsal was running a lot more smoothly and geared us up more for performance.

When it came to performance, we got the humour conveyed more in drama and music than the dance whereby Natalie was the rabbit. I think this could have been because it was clearer that it was meant to be funny in drama and music because a rabbit is an actual aspect of spring. In general, our group were pleased with the fact that our drama piece went so much better than it ever did in rehearsal and improvisation whereas I feel that dance could have been a bit better because our timing was slightly inaccurate at the beginning. Overall, our group were pleased with all three because in the improvisation, rehearsal and performance we aimed to meet each of the three stimuli for music, drama and dance and in more ways than one, these aims we now feel we achieved.