

# Lee Rowlett

## Performance studies

This essay describes how I have worked towards and performed four pieces of practical work using all three art forms. (Drama, dance, music, and a final piece that is a mixture of all three arts). Each piece must be three minutes long and we have around two months to improvise, rehearse and perform the four pieces. We were given five 'key words' to follow as a sort of guide line for our pieces. There was a different set of guide lines for each art form. These consist of... Music – rhythm, melody, harmony, timbre, texture. Dance – motif, action, relationships, dynamics, space. Drama – dialogue, 1 characterisation, physicality, proxemics, tension. These fifteen rules do interconnect between the arts which I will explain during this essay.

We started our performance studies classes by learning about and experimenting with improvisation as well as learning about the five rules for each of the arts. We then began to look for the five rules in our dance / musical / drama pieces. We experimented with the five rules in our improvised pieces and all so broke down each of the rules to find out exactly what they can cover.

Now we split ourselves in to groups and began to experiment using improvisation for the final performance. 2 In dance we sat as a group and planned out linking moves that used all of our five rules, and then put them together by improvising links. In drama we used improvisation to create scenes and improvised the scenes endings, and the drama in them. We also improvised characters for these parts, and once we found something that we liked we would enhance it through rehearsal and write a script. In music we used improvisation to begin to create musical pieces. We created and re-created compositions until we could find a sound that would suit the mood we were aiming 3 to achieve. In the mixed piece we had to firstly sit and discuss our options and we decided to base it around a theme. Our theme was on circles and squares, creating a piece about the trapped ness of a single person, using the shapes as representatives of the person's feelings.

We did hit some problems during the creations of these pieces. In dance we had a lot of people dropping out of the coarse so our group ended up as a double act. But still we managed to capture all the five essences with

a certain level of grace. We<sup>4</sup> used cannon in our piece. When rehearsing it in front of the class we learnt that we needed to improve direction in our piece and to make it 'less robotic'. So, taking these words in to account, We improved on our direction and added some more 'rounded' expressions. In drama our group and piece ideas changed quite a lot. The ideas were constantly changed because of group members leaving the course. We started with a piece about a school child and teacher having an affair; but due to absences our groups were all swapped around and we started on a new piece<sup>5</sup> about faith. This piece involved to people wanting to fall in love but 'fait' kept getting in there way. The fait being two different people, one good working towards getting the couple together, and the second working to keep the pair apart. This idea was not ready in time for the performance as it was far more technical than we had anticipated and it was difficult to direct due to the fact that there was a lot of people in our group. In music our group was once more unsettled but we managed to create and rehearse a purely instrumental<sup>6</sup> musical piece with vocals and a piano. For our mixed piece there was no changes, and even though it was the last piece that we started, it was the most well organised as everyone took it in turns to speak and a bond between the group was made where we all trusted each other.

We soon began to realise that in ways our set five rules were interconnected even though they were completely different art forms. Dialogue had a link to both rhythm and melody, harmony to relationships, characterisation to our timbre, and our dynamics to our texture. We all so<sup>7</sup> figured that motif in dance was quite like an ostinato in music as it is a repeated pattern in both. These are rules spread across all three different art forms and yet within our pieces they interconnected.

Within rehearsals of our dance piece (when we had finally decided on a piece) we separated the piece in to three parts. A motif 'A' that was to last around a minute. A motif 'B' where we decided we would do the opposite feel to motif 'A'. E.g. Motif 'A' is happy and fast then motif 'B' would be sad and slow. Motif 'B' would all so last a minute. And<sup>8</sup> then finally a motif 'C' or '2<sup>nd</sup> A' this was where we returned to motif 'A' and changed it from an introduction to an ending of our piece. This was all so a minute. We did our motif 'C' by reversing our fast happy movement in motif 'A' so we could finish at the same points that we began. Our music piece greatly interconnected with this as we used the same technique. In our music piece we all so decided to do three different motifs with the last one being the same as the first, and the second being the opposite of both. We started with an<sup>9</sup> ostinato that was quick and done both on piano and vocally with piano chords being played over the top of the ostinato. The

second piece (motif 'B') was then much more depressive and played in a minor key. In the drama, after not being able to do the 'fait' performance we quickly went back to improvisation trying to create a simple yet effective scenario with time to rehearse and develop it. With the mixed piece we divided it once more in to three using the same technique. We had decided by this point that if we stuck to the same performance 10 pattern we would be able to cover more of our five rules as we had already discovered the link between them all. We rehearsed this piece as motif 'A' being the circle where the central person felt trapped. Using the people that made up the circle as the stressors in his life. Motif 'B' was showing the musical happiness of all peoples lives in a square with a dance routine. Through both motifs we used ostinato's in this one it was rhythmical clapping and in the first one it was chanting. The piece finishes on motif 'A' once more building a tension but this time without the happy release of motif 'B'.

In the drama 11 piece I feel we would have done better if the group did not change so regularly and if we had a bigger rehearsal studio. It needed more scripting and organisation. More time would not have gone a miss either. In the dance piece We would have done better with a bigger group which we could not get due to so many people dropping out. This all so meant we could have done with more time as we hit so many ruts due to absences. In the musical piece the same improvements all so apply. But in the mixed piece we 12 were given less time but it was far better organised as all members attended rehearsals regularly and we were provided with more space in which to practise. During the planning all so there were no arguments as we took it in turns to give our views and ideas before we began to rehearse.