

The Language Of Performance Arts

The language of performing arts is a way of communicating music, dance and drama all combined. This makes performance more interesting and entertaining. Within this essay I am going to talk about improvisation, rehearsing and performing, but to start off I am going to talk about performance. "Performance is a variety of visual arts and other disciplines, within these performances you are able to build on existing practice and preoccupations to undertake a creative research project, which explores any aspect of the visual language of performance" (Spolin .V). Being creative and using practical skills of theatre all make performance work. During performance we can see how all three types of performing arts can emerge together.

In our group we created many performance pieces for each subject and one with all three arts combined. In drama the piece was called 'Cold Calling', 'The Office' and 'Gregor's Dream'. All these plays showed how life today in society is and how alienated it's become. In dance we made three pieces called 'The journey', 'The One' and 'The Moscow Theatre Siege'. In music our piece was based on the child's story called 'The Three Little Pigs'. We created improvised pieces for each scene of the story. The final piece created was our integrated piece with all three art forms combined. It was called 'The Moscow Theatre Siege'. This play was a true story, which made it very interesting to perform.

The starting point for all our pieces was exploration through improvisation. In music we improvised music pieces to show the narrative, we had also used the wolf section as a motif to give a reacquiring scene of the big bad wolf. We learnt about numerous things like dynamics, rhythm, melody and harmony. All these things are important in music.

We first started of constructing the begging part, the three little pigs building their houses. We started of with the oldest pig wich made a house out of straw. We used music instruments such as the keyboard, drum, guitar and the rainmaker. The rainmaker instrument gave excellent sounds of straw, and also the keyboard was good use because it made our piece very dramatic when played fast. Then came the middle pig, he made his house out of wood. We used many wooden percussion instruments such as the woodblocks, Xylophone and shakers. All these instruments gave an image of a wooden house. The last pig house was made out of bricks. We used wood and metal instruments to represent the bricks. The last piece made was our main integrated piece containing music, drama and dance. It was based on a true story on how a teenaged girl survived the Moscow Theatre siege, also what she experienced and how it haunts her every walking moment.



This image shows one of the improvised pieces made in drama lessons; it was about a man called Dave Omega, he felt neglected from friends and colleges, plus he felt trapped by people in today's hectic society.

“Improvisation is a deconstruction of narrative into symbolic imagery”(Spolin .V).

In most of our work especially dance we improvised our movements and parts to fit in to our story line. In the first couple of lessons our task was to create a dance piece using ‘Sulphur 16’ by Wayne McGregor as an inspiration for choreography. His dancers perform movements that are often sharp, quite fast and showing fully extended limbs. We tried to use these movements as we tried out dance ideas.

We improvised and discussed ideas what to have in our dance piece.

In drama we improvised some characters given on scripts. We then took these improvised characters and placed them into our Dave Omega play. To create the Dave Omega piece we first played out a piece called ‘Gregor’s Dream’. Gregor is a bank clerk, which is under pressure at work and at home. He has a breakdown and feels he is changing into a dung beetle. We showed this break down scene by using Berkoff’s physical theatre techniques. We showed metamorphosis-taking place by acting it out. We done this by having Ben acting he was changing into a dung-beetle, the rest of us all crouched down next to Ben and rolled up leaving just our legs out as if we was the dug-beetles legs. We staged the extract and showed the anger and emotions between the characters using physical theatre theme techniques. I helped my group friend Ben which was doing the Gregor character, so that he can create perfect facial expressions being in agony plus begging his father to stop shouting at him.

This play showed us how to create physical theatre and tension between characters. Then by using our characters from the play ‘The Office’ and the Gregor character form ‘Gregor Dream’ we created our Dave Omega play.

Improvising in dance means to be able to compose a dance piece on the spur-of-the moment. You need to be able to explore a whole range of actions, jumps, travels, turns, gesture and pace. Also thinking of using different dynamics. Within the group we attached images and ideas that came out from improvisation in our dance piece to the integrated piece. We also learnt that Wayne McGregor used modern day technology to feed into the devising stage, and to leave its futuristic impression upon choreography and design. His choreography was to dance with all body moves jointed up, moving from one piece of dance to another. Some of our improvising scenes were when the psychiatrist was awaking Nastya to tell him what she has experienced, also the scene where the contrast between the theatre to show the terrorist hostage taking. From that lesson I have gained an understanding of how Wayne Mc Gregory doses his choreography for dance movements and I have gained knowledge of how he makes dance more extreme plus density.

In music we created a narrative musical on the ‘Three little pigs’. We improvised the musical work as it was being performed. For each section of the story we made a music piece consisting instruments that described the materials used making the houses. We used the wolf part a reacquiring motif. This gave the image the wolf was after the three pigs badly.

When rehearsing we improvised and discussed ideas that we could use. In drama I rehearsed my lines and read the play throughout so that I can get an overview of the play and discuss if anything that I believe needs to be changed with the group. At moments we choreographed some performance for each characters in the play. In dance each of us had a go to choreograph one of us through a dance pieces. You need certain movement done at certain times to achieve the right look. I rehearsed my dance steps every day at home to make sure I know my dance routine inside out. Also whilst rehearsing I decided to examine it to see where our piece had the right dynamics and sequences. Within a few dance lessons my group and I learnt that using space was very vital, and that if you didn't use up the space required in you dance piece it would not look high quality.

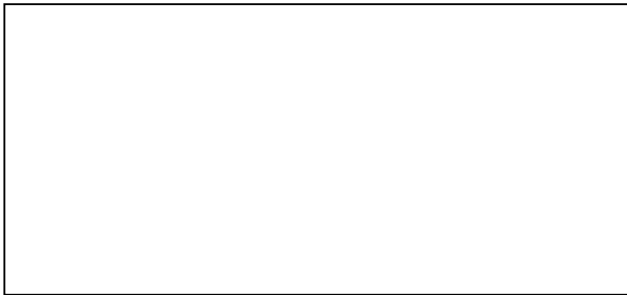
In our dance piece we used motifs in the section where we was getting ready for battle, this section acted as our base to expand on to the battling piece. There are two types of space; personal and general and they way this is used in dance is closely lived to proxemics in dance. In our dance pieces we choreographed a short dance, which lasted about two minutes, which incorporated different elements of dance. We learnt about each element and how to apply them to dance, during a series of lessons. Firstly through improvisation we started to put together pieces of dance movements, and gradually built up on it by going round each student with a piece of dance movement to join in. My fighting motif was a form of a karate style. This looked very effective with all the different types of dynamics used. I developed my fighting motif from improvising a few still images of low kicks and twirls; from there I added parts on like punches and high kicks. Then by animating them together I created my fighting motif. In order to make sure I remembered the scenes I needed to rehearse this sequences relatively a few times, this made me sure I wouldn't forgetting what parts that came next.

In drama our play that showed how people could quickly put on different faces for different people to show their feelings through facial expressions. With its cinematic style, which incorporated larger-than-life sets and elaborate and symbolic lighting. He saw theatre as a powerful political force, capable both of the entertaining and the changing society for the better. We made a drama piece in the style of Berkoff Berth creating an illustration of how life is in reality these days. To Berkoff, realism and the styles of acting is very important, we needed to show reality of how today's society is really like.

When rehearsing we made sure we showed the feelings right. This was important so the audience can see his emotions and feelings. In our Dave Omega piece we showed how people could feel lonely, neglected and left out from society. This play showed how people needed to feel they are being cared or loved by some one or someone that cares for them. Dave Omega is in the needs of friendship and wishes to be loved as well, but as a result he calls up a chat line, even then he feels that they don't care about him or his problems they just want his money. We had to rehearse this in the following way. Making sure we had our lines ready then, then making sure we came in the scene at the right time. We had done several times to achieve a perfect look. We wrote down the order of lines and scenes so that every one in the group can rehearse the play in their own time. I had to work on remembering my lines on the right scenes. Remembering my lines was a problem at first but soon I came over it by rehearsing them at class and home.

In music lessons we had learnt about numerous things, for e.g. dynamic, melody, harmony, notation, voice, rhythm, form structure, duration and ect. All these elements are important to music. We listened to 'Different Trains' by Steve Reich. He used a minimalist style in this music piece. We listened how he changes the tempo plus the rhythm with different sounds for different trains. In the music piece the rhythm moves fast and goes faster the further you go into the song. We learnt how a rhythm could be a heartbeat, or lungs in motion or the mouth moving up and down. Within the class we had a go on making a rhythm using our hands and other body parts.

The word motif means "the central movement theme of a dance which is developed, repeated and varied" (Linda racket young, 1996). Throughout our lessons our course group learnt that changing the direction, tempo without changing its order could vary an important part in performance. We showed different type of dynamics in all of our lessons music, drama and dance parts, ways of movement going faster or slower showing dance movements can be very choreographed into every day movements. Unison- moments one after one .We choreographed on piece to show 'the passing of time'. This scene was very effective towards the audience. It showed the hostages feelings and behaviour in the theatre. To achieve effectiveness we had to rehearse this section carefully. The way the hostages were treated by the terrorist needed to look realistic and very dramatic. We wanted to give the audience a feel of how the hostages were captured in the real Moscow theatre siege, make them see the story from both sides.



This image shows us using motifs in dance lessons. My motif shows the waiting time for rescue.

Performance

Performance is a form of an act or a role in music, drama and dance. In drama we learnt about a famous play writer in drama called Stanislavski, and way of how he loved to perform drama. We learnt how Stanislavski was an influence to the new expressionist of drama. We showed proxemics to show how people treat other people in society. We used many iconic objects like the mobile phones and the newspapers to show how alienated society communicates within it self.

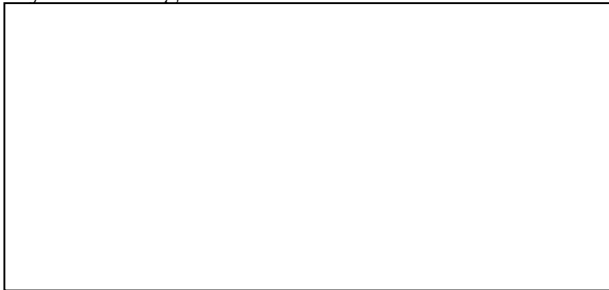
To perform well you need to have an understanding of the audiences needs, you need knowledge of what are the audience's likes and dislikes. If you can do this then you can achieve well in your performances. The final part of the course consists of the completion and showing of the performance event. We presented our performance to our six form students in the main hall. We needed to show our feelings to the audience clearly so they can get understand and interact within the performance. Also they relate the performance to their own experiences. In the piece we showed our characters roles clearly for the audience to understand who they are and how they are related to Nastya Kruglikova (the main person). After the performance it is important to get an audience feed back, if it's positive feedback than it makes you feel good and pleased with your self plus your performance. If it is

negative feedback from the audience then you can improve on things and have knowledge next time you are performing.

In the dance piece we had a part where we showed 'The Seven Deadly Sin', it was an idea we had improvised to show all the bad things us humans could do or become. My deadly sin was 'Envy', the actions I used to illustrate this sin was by using different types of dynamics plus all the space around me. We each had a deadly sin to represent in a dance form. We first made still images and then improvised and animated them together to perform a dance piece. These dance pieces were played as cannon, one after one; this was good because we got to show our individual solo pieces and also looked very practised. The way we started to do unison movements after we finished every ones solos. The first couple of practical workshops in the group were learning about 'emphasis' it is placed upon the conceptual articulation of project aims and objectives on performance.

The final piece was the integrated piece of dance, music and drama. Our performance was going to be based on the Moscow theatre siege. This performance took many rehearsals to get right but at the end we managed to fit everything in place. For each subject we had made pieces to contribute to the narrative.

For music we improvised most of the music pieces, and the main instruments used was the keyboard and the guitar. During the integrated piece I saw how all three art forms could merge together and form a performance piece well. The drama fitted and merged well into the dance, and the dance fitted well into the music. By combining all the art forms we have created a performance.



This image shows all three art forms combined together to create performance.

Our feedback from most of the audiences was that it was a very good performance and was really realistic. They liked the fact it was based on a true story, which made the story more exciting to them. It was a good idea to have a psychiatrist in the play; it helped the audience understand better what is going on in the performance piece.

The rehearsal stage overall was quite impressive, considering that we had a few weeks until the performance is shown. Throughout the performances I have realised that all three art forms can integrate into each other and with correct timing and good rehearsals would have great impact on the performances when played out.