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Module: Specialised Performance

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Specialised performance- process workbook

Prior to this module my experience of physical theatre and sight specific work was sparse which led to a sense of apprehension towards the unfamiliar. There was an uncertainty of what to expect and as to whether the skills needed for this area of performance were possessed. Consequently, my main aim for the end of these sessions was to gain confidence and become more comfortable through experience of this sector of performing arts.

With having done performing arts A-level I had a small amount of experience of acting, physical theatre and sight specific work, however, this often only included areas that were indoors and that were rather common and familiar such as a library. Performing outside with natural environments was personally a new experience, a challenge that was faced was learning to embrace relaxing into nature and trying to focus on movements rather than on distractions such as bugs or dirt. Andrea Olsen stated in *Body and Earth*, ' [the earth] has something to teach us, the natural world can evoke awe and astonishment, stimulating connection to the sacred, integrative forces of life,

(Olsen, 2002).’ By respecting the Earth as a living thing rather than an object one can gain a connection with their surroundings and consequently obtain inspiration from within; making movements more meaningful and true.

Partaking in the workshop with Eva helped to give us a first impression of what to expect and ideas of what to include within our final performance. This was our first experience of doing sight specific work around campus which taught us what to look for when finding areas outside in which we would like to use. Eva explained to us that we should look for sites that interest us and that we can take inspiration for movements from, for example I used a sloped area of grass which reflected in my movements by using curved, scooping movements. Through this workshop I discovered that I preferred sites that were seemingly plain in which movement could be brought into, and that I was often drawn to man-made areas.

George’s workshop differed in style and technique to that of Eva’s which gave us a more varied outlook and experience of this genre of performing arts. Our focus with George was performing as a collective group, this included building connections, trust and generally learning how to perform together. We achieved this by partaking in different activities such as trying to keep a ball in the air which required collective focus and team work. Furthermore, we intensified our focus on the physical theatre aspect of the module, George made us incorporate gestures into our movements as well as physically acting out different scenarios such as falling down a moving bus. With George’s mime background we did some mime techniques such as holding tension

within the body. During our final performance there was a section where I acted as though I was trying to climb a wall, George's techniques were useful for this as it helped to make it feel more believable by using tension throughout the arms to make it look as though I was actually trying to climb. During this week we learnt more about Viewpoints, 'viewpoints are points of awareness that a performer or creator makes use of while working, (Bogart, 2014).' We participated in a variety of different activities that concentrated on the Viewpoints such as; tempo, repetition and duration, this clarified the difference between them all and their effect so that we could use them in our final performance making it varied, interesting and entertaining.

Learning parkour techniques for the day with Lee resulted in us learning how to safely move from place to place and to find interesting routes around campus, which helped for the final performance while we planned our performance route. These movements that we added to our repertoire made our performance more interesting by adding a higher level of skill such as the parkour sections.

While creating our own fabulous animals I tried to vary the animals I used as much as I could each day, particularly choosing animals that have different textures, weights and sizes. I tried to let each body part come to my mind without thinking about it too much. Through Zosias guided improvisations I tried to fully embody having animal's body parts such as antlers, wings and tails. As time went on I tried to think outside of the box especially to think of animals that move uniquely. Through improvisation and research I came to the conclusion of my final animal. I decided to use a mixture of an elephant,

sloth and snake, I concluded on these animals as they were rather meaningful to me; elephants are my dad's favourite animal, sloths are mine and I have a pet snake. With improvisation I decided to focus on different aspects of each of the animals. For the elephant I decided to focus on the movement of the trunk through different body parts (eventually settling on the arm), for the snake I concentrated on how snake moves across land by stretching and contracting, for the sloth I focused on their slowness and their hanging ability- which was reflected in the forest section of the final performance. During the scene in the bush I concentrated on combining the arm movements of the elephant trunk and focusing moving my body in a way that reflected the snake.

Due to the often lack of speaking in dance it was something that made us anxious for the final performance, however we all remembered our lines and tried our best to put emphasis into our voices. Which brings me to how the overall final performance went; on reflection I am proud of my performance throughout the piece as I tried my best to maintain energy and performance quality. I am happy with how my speaking part went as I remembered all my lines and throughout the rest of the scenes I think that I continued my focus of the embodiment of the animals and took on board the corrections and suggestions from Zosia.

Bogart, A. and Landau, T. (2014). *The viewpionts book : a practical guide to viewpionts and composition*. London: Nick Hern.

Olsen, A. (2020). *BODY AND EARTH : an experiential guide*. S.L.: Wesleyan Univ Press