

Calon's Process workbook

Preparation and my building blocks towards improv

During our first weeks of improvising and devising we started with a discussion on what we thought improvising and devising was before we started on developing our own characters and stories. I looked a lot into Spymonkey's devising methods through the national theatre website, learning a lot more about status between characters and how to express that subtly in an improvised scene. I thought the improv section of our module was very fun and some of the scenes ended up being in the story itself such as me and Jaime's proposal scene, and some characteristics and relationships between characters stayed the same also, with me and Tim still having a dynamic of one serious and one slightly fascinated. I learnt a lot through improvising when understanding characters entire life and how most of it doesn't need to show in the story, I had a whole personal backstory to Baxter's character which isn't necessary to the narrative but essential to my understanding why Baxter does what he wants.

The writing and scene work

Once we have are characters established and we were put into our groups we quickly learnt what connects our characters and what are our dislikes of each other's characters before writing our scenes, to help with the status in our scenes but also to give a foundation to what the plot should be. Before even writing as a group, I watched Jason Sudeikis videos on writing and improvising as I really took a liking to his recent show that he wrote Ted Lasso. He came from a heavy background of improv work which later developed to one of his characters being turned into a three season tv show, and in the show, itself used the method of Chekov's gun which is to give draw the audience to a detail that heavily pays off in the climax of the second act or even the wrap up of the story if I'm describing it in the three act structure format. Or it can be something subtle that the audience later understands the intention to an action at the beginning of the story, my example of this is during the introduction when me and Ellie's character are both on our phones and my character ignoring Talia's affection.

Final week notes

For our final week we did several runs and rewrites for our scenes. We were struggling to find a balance between our four characters during the conflict in scene three and the reasons to certain events happening in the first place, such as Talia leaving in the first why Baxter would sleep with Daisy In the first place especially when she said that the couple should split up. With scene three we didn't pay enough attention to the material we wrote, and it left some gaps in our story as to why games night happened in the first place, so we had to go back to the drawing board on how the audience can understand how we all ended up in daisy's house in scene three. We approached this with a design thinking process, bringing in the reworked material and new lines and rehearsed seeing if it would fit, if we were satisfied with what we changed we then had some of our ensemble observe the scene to give us feedback and notes on what needs changing in the narrative of our story along with what needs to be developed independently.

Reflection

Now that we have done a run for the final time in front of an audience with this ensemble, I can happily say that I am very happy with the work and last-minute changes to the story to give an engaging and entertaining experience. I thought my performance of Baxter for the final time gave a lot more character and energy in the story, listening to what Shane said in our final notes to listen

more to each other and to not just speak in lines it felt more natural. I thought my interactions in the background made much more sense, instead of interfering with other characters I took a likeness to Jo (Alex) and Eddie (Lee), I also enjoyed the chemistry me and Ellie had during scene two, not acknowledging Talia in the background and just understanding how much of a dick Baxter can be.

I do however feel that I could've taken more time with my lines, it felt rushed at times due to the events happening so quickly which led me to mumble a line in scene three. I also felt like scene one was my weakest, I could've put a lot more energy into Baxter being full of himself before sitting down. However, when going through the scenes myself and my scene partners energy went up with the audience's reactions, it really motivated us to have new faces observe our scenes and knowing in what we've been doing has been working and the changes we made helped flesh out the story a lot more.

If I were to do this module again, I would research more into practitioner methods to improve rather than the actors or productions I like so much and have more people give feedback on the work I've been doing and what needs to be changed in our scenes. We as a group didn't really have enough conflict and usually said yes to everything, which caused problems in continuity down the line so instead we could've considered what else needs to be done when approaching an idea instead of just putting something into our scene.

Bibliography

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