

Journal Entry 1 – Crazy for You

For our final university production, we have been given the tap musical Crazy for you. In this production I am playing the character 'Billy'. In the original of Crazy for You, Billy is a cards player, but the director changed it for ours to make him a miner. Instead of having cowboys we are now miners as we have also changed the country of which it takes place in from USA, Nevada to South Wales. As the cast consists of mainly Welsh people it made sense to set it in Wales and change things accordingly. In preparation for the show, I did some research into what South Wales was like during the 1930s. The 1930s were a difficult time for not just the people of Wales but for the economy and the country itself. The coal industry took a huge hit and many people were cut from their jobs which wasn't great for the environment or economy. As of 1927 unemployment in Wales had reached 23%. Between the 1920s and 1930s the Welsh population decreased by 430,000. And 10,000 people alone left Merthyr Tydfil in the 1930s. **"Thatcher's obliteration of mining communities was conducted in an appalling manner, but reinstating the industry was not the answer."**

I was quite anxious about being in a dance heavy show as I feel like my dance is the least consist out of the 3 skills we study in university. In my first year I really struggled with tap dancing, and I think that showed. I unfortunately missed the rehearsal where we went through the choreography of 'Can't be bothered now' and 'I got Rhythm'. I struggled when we first started because I missed so much of the choreography, but I have been asking the dance captains for help and I also have been going to extra rehearsals with some cast members to just go over and catch up on the things that I had missed. I personally believe that I have done a good job at catching up with the dances. I also surprised myself with how quickly I picked up the harmonies and vocals. The only song I have struggled with is 'Bidin' my time'. The reason for that is because we have changed the song so that we all sing in Welsh instead of English. I am also quite nervous about the French version of 'Bidin' my time, as I may have that as a solo. I do not speak the language, but I think in the character development of my character would really suit singing this song by himself.

In the script Lank is the owner of tearooms in Deadrock and I – Billy, work at said tearoom. I had a rough idea as to what they were, but I didn't know how they looked. We did a small improv session where we just acted out a lively tearoom and I was to just go around as if I worked there. I found this to be incredible beneficial as I had no idea what I was meant to be doing but it allowed me to make mistakes and try things within the improvisational task. I really like the character I am playing because even though he does not say much, he is always in the wrong place at the right time. He is just so oblivious to everything and is always in the worst places making things incredibly awkward between characters. I can sometimes hate doing improvisation because I feel like I mess up a lot or miss out obvious things. **"Beating yourself up because you didn't get it right the first time or every time is almost always counterproductive"**

So far, I have really enjoyed the process of bringing this musical to life through dance and song. It has pushed me as a dancer and has changed my ability to pick up on harmonies. I really enjoy being ensemble in a show because I learn so much about how to carry myself and tell a story without saying many words.

<https://theconversation.com/coal-mining-in-wales-the-1930s-writers-who-depicted-the-environmental-calamity-caused-by-the-pits-144828#:~:text=Wales%20was%20devastated%20during%20the%201930s%20by%20the,was%20going%20through%20a%20boom%20at%20the%20time>.

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