

Physical Theatre

Is a style that can incorporate many practices. It's the HOW!

Devising

- Does not have to have a plot, the play could be a onstage of scenes on a theme.
- For instance, the play could be a collection of vignettes exploring guilt (this is a anthology/portmanteau)
- Alternatively you can aim to adapt an existing story or play.

Physical Theatre

- This is essentially theatre where the story is created physically through the body rather than through the text.
- It is not simply becoming the props and scenery as you were told in lower school.
- It is a very broad term that has come to describe any theatre that is not naturalistic.

Features of the style

- Dance Drama
 - Lifts
 - Grips
 - Chair duets
 - leans
- Highly disciplined movement (Laban)
- Stylised movements
- mime
- Multi use of props
- Moving to a count
- Ensemble
 - Synchronised/ unsynchronised movements
- Masks
- Puppetry
- clowning
- Sensory perception
- Exaggerated emotions expressed in non-naturalistic ways
- Actors becoming objects
- The reliance on the actor and the audiences imagination
- Actor is a creator rather than an interpreter
- Extra-daily movement (exaggerated to make them more interesting)

Laban Efforts

A way of moving...

Rudolph von Laban

- Hungarian, 1879- 1958
- Dance theorist

Laban identified that there are three categories of movement- Force, pace (speed) and space (directness)



Walk around the room

- Explore heavy/ light
- Explore direct/ indirect
- Explore sudden and sustained

Fast/ slow, sudden/ sustained

- These are the units of speed- just to confuse you.

We'll use fast and slow for ease from now on.

But think of them in terms of sudden being part of fast and sustained being part of slow

Focus

- Direct- sudden/sustained
strong/light
- Indirect- sudden/sustained
strong/slow

strong/ aggressive movements

Punch- Direct, Sudden, Strong

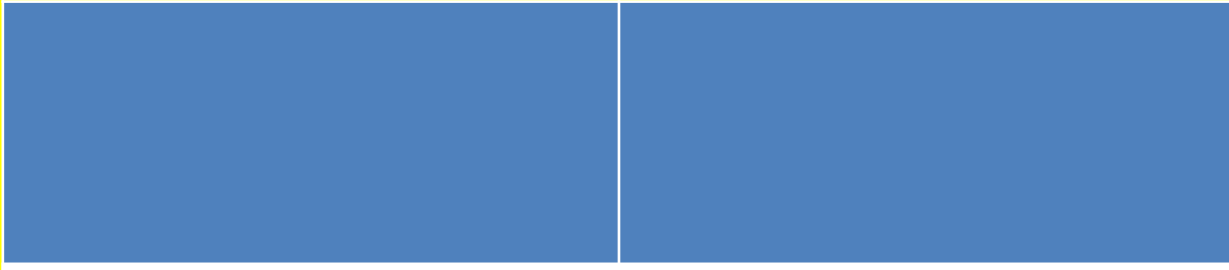
Press- Direct, Sustained, Strong

Slash- Indirect, Sudden, Strong

Wring- Indirect, Sustained, Strong

Light/ Dreamy movements

- **Glide-** Direct, Sustained, Light
- **Dab-** Direct, Sudden, Light
- **Flick-** Indirect, Sudden, Light
- **Float-** Indirect, Sustained, Light



Music

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvsZ0B6i-w8&safe=active>
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cNbzMMwo_os&safe=active
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMuMLshxjBw>

Group Task

- In your groups, each person pick an effort- try to create an environment that is clear to the audience.
- Improvise physical interaction with each other.
- Stylised movement, Symbolic characters- Visual!
- Addition- A major event happens in the play (could be off stage, a rumour or something big like a bomb about to go off.) this should change all your actions- but retain the same character.

Strong

Punch- Direct, Sudden, Strong

Press- Direct, Sustained
, Strong

Slash Indirect, Sudden, Strong

Wring- Indirect, Sustained,
Strong

light

Glide- Direct, Sustained,
Light

Dab- Direct, Sudden, Light

Flick- Indirect, Sudden, Light

Float- Indirect, Sustained,
Light

Pairs – do the touch exercise then
chair duet.

1.Sarah

2.Jacob

3.Vicky

1.Pippa

2.James

3.Louisa

Frantic Assembly

- Physical Theatre company whose work is based on devising and creating work as an ensemble
- Its founders (Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett) are both not trained dancers (or actors for that matter)
- They were the movement directors for *Curious Incident of The Dog In The Night-Time*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UF-22alcjAU>

Chair duets- Frantic Assembly

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYPCKjLRj0&safe=active> up to 2.42
- Music-
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-yp_mBPhpg

Chair duets part 1- instructions

- Firstly don't try and create a story or a background to a character. Just create movements and let that become the story
 1. Both face forward and try to imagine you are on a sofa watching a television
 2. Start by one of you placing a hand on yourself or your partner (knee, thigh, shoulder, neck, head) moving your own hand or placing the hand of your partner (on you or somewhere on them) – keep it clean
 3. Alternatively you can lean forward/ back or push your partners torso forward/ back
 4. Create 3 further moves (so you have 4 in total),!
 5. Once you have done this for your 4 moves, your partner takes over- you can start to place/ move elbows, cross legs, move neck.
 6. Repeat this series of 8 moves, let it become a story and evolve a bit. Try to identify an attitude in the moves- are you being angry/ petulant, flirtatious, frustrated? Start to form a relationship (romantic, sibling, abusive, argumentative inappropriate)
 7. You can now develop a further 4 to 8 moves (12 to 16 all together.)
 8. Don't get bogged down in character. Have fun with it, just play together and see what comes out of it.

I am coming back in 20 minutes to add another layer, so work effectively.

Leave the chairs- leans and lifts

- Try adding lifts, leans and synchronised movements getting out to the chairs to continue the story. This is part of the style incorporated by DV8 Physical Theatre Company (more of them later.)
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PFR2OXf9iQ&safe=active>
- From 5.00 to 7.25
- (the whole film is on youtube, it's called 'Enter Achilles'- it's very good, you should watch it.)

Practitioners so far

- Rudolph von Laban
 - Effort actions- Force (heavy, light), pace (sudden, sustained/ fast, slow)
direction (direct, indirect)
- Frantic Assembly
 - Chair duets, working together, letting the movement create the character
 - Dance Drama/ Devised Drama
 - Curious Incident, Love-song, Othello
- DV8 Physical Theatre
 - Dance Drama- Lifts, grips, leans, spins
 - Using dance to tell the story
 - Enter Achilles, John, Can We Talk About This, To Be Straight With you.

Sell Out Floor (Frantic Assembly)

- Break down 8 beats/ moves of your scene and repeat these twice. But is slow motion (lifts, grips, pulls etc.) this is more effective with the more combative sections.
- Repeat this in slow motion on your own- imagine your partner is still there connecting with all these moments. Use tension to create the weight and movements of your partner. Lock these movements into your mind, keep repeating them, how can you give the impression of a partner.
- Lie on the floor and repeat this sequence- try to come to your own solution of how to re-enact some of the harder sections.

Basis of Lecoq's theory

- His main training technique involves using masks to 'free' the actor creatively (though in French a 'mask' could also be face paint-masque means to disguise)

(in Italian Theatre there are 2 masks, mask on the face and the mask of the body language this creates... In Malian Theatre the word for Mask and Puppet are the same... anyway, back to Lecoq.)

- A great deal of work is done both with neutral masks and expressive masks
- Three of the principal skills that he encouraged in his students were *le jeu* (playfulness), *complicité* (togetherness) and *disponibilité* (openness). (his theatre is about creating as a group, ie- devising)

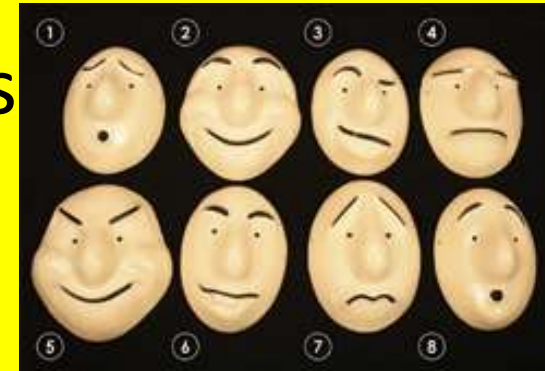
Expressive Masks

- There are a few forms of expressive masks-



Larval masks

Trestle Masks



Commedia
Dell'arte



Make up

Mask companies

- Trestle
- Vamos
- Strange face

‘Wake up in the mask’

- Put on the mask for the first time and lie flat on the floor with all your muscles relaxed
- Picture the masked character coming to life for the first time and start to move your limbs, find the characters way of moving.
- Sit up, look around, how do they stand, how do they walk. Don't reason it, just let it bring you to life.
- Where does this fit in with Laban?
- How do you react to others? Enjoy the character, be playful with each other, be open to interacting together

Groups

Vicky

Jacob

Louisa

Sarah

James

Pippa

Music as a devising technique

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C68SkzGb6Ww>
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvsZ0B6i-w8&safe=active>

Trestle masks

- Play
- Record, recreate
- refine

Mask technique

- 'Clock the audience'
- Pass the focus
- Cannot rely on your face to act, have to do it all physically (this exercise pushes your physical acting).
- 'the mind does not make decisions, the body does'

Jaques LeCoq

- 1921-1999, French actor and Gymnast
- Theatre was based on 'playing' and inner creativity to physically tell the story
- Trained Steven Berkoff in physical theatre.



Repeat without masks

- Keep the play silent, but now remove the mask.
- Try to present an identical play, but now you are able to act with your face. Still play all out to the audience
- What does this bring to it?

Noticing and reacting

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCZFVCgs7Dw>
- Get a prop/ item improvise noticing and reacting alone with the mask. Then take away the mask.

His use of space and voice

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3mxheYvfv3c>

Final Performance

- Using the characters from your mask performance and the stimulus of
- “monotony” and/ or “daydreams”
- Create a 2 minute play- music of your choosing, but we need to hear everyone's at different points