

Drama 2:

Performance Drama

Welcome to the ARTSQUAD Project drama resources. These resources have been developed to demonstrate how drama can be used as an educational medium to build key competences and provide students with practical experience of performing drama through fun and creative activities.



Playback Theatre is a type of drama developed in America in the 1970s. It is an interactive experience between the audience and actors. In Playback theatre a personal story is told by a member of the audience (The Teller) and then enacted or mirrored respectfully by the actors and musicians on stage.



A Playback performance can take place in any type of space or location and with any group, whether they have acting experience or not. It can work on many levels, for example, as a fun, team building activity or a deeper, healing experience. In the next few slides we'll explain how a performance is conducted. Why don't you try it out!



In a playback piece, there is the Storyteller or MC, Three Voice Team, Three Instrument Players, and Story Players. To create an atmospheric effect, all actors can dress in black. A variety of objects and pieces of material and instruments can be used as props. Remember, the whole Playback experience is dependent on each player's listening skills, awareness, synchronicity and imagination.



Performance introduction

Introduce the performance with each player stepping forward in turn, saying their name and making a statement while creating a frozen sculpture, e.g., 'My name is Mary and I am happy to be here.' Each member should remain in their pose while the next player introduces their name and joins the sculpture.

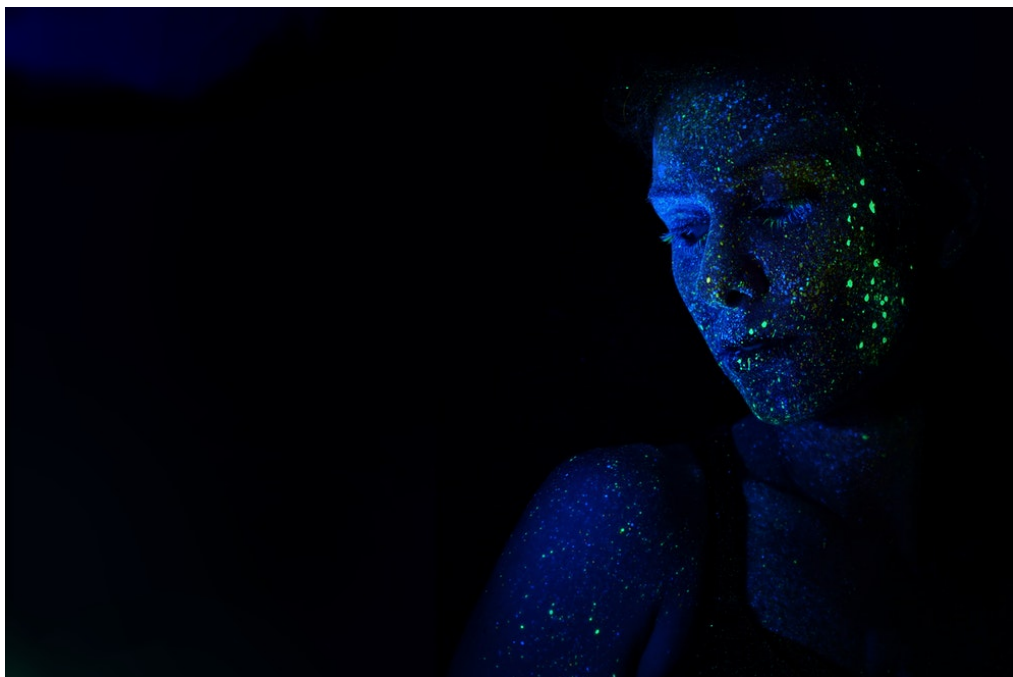


When the frozen sculpture is completed, move together for a few seconds and then freeze again. After a couple of seconds, you can all straighten up and bow together.



The Story

A member of the audience is invited to sit with the Storyteller and to share a personal story. It can be funny or sad, whatever comes to mind. The Storyteller should then repeat the story and check with the audience member whether it has been retold correctly. When they are happy that it is correct, it's time to perform the story.



Using the props available, Players should take their cue from each other in re-enacting the story. It is important to work together spontaneously. The Music Team can begin to set the atmosphere, or they could wait for the right dramatic moment to come in.



The Three Voice Chorus should do the same, either with words or sounds, again taking their cue from each other. Material can be used to create waves etc. or to depict situations e.g., black or purple for sorrow or death, orange for the sun or sun holiday etc. It is totally open to each Player's imagination.



When the performance concludes and the Storyteller should ask the audience member whether the group captured the story correctly. If they are unhappy with it, they can clarify parts of the story, which can then be re-enacted.



After performance, each member of the cast should step forward and make a statement and sculpture about the performance, creating another frozen sculpture. Again the same ritual as the introduction takes place and finally the cast bows. Congratulations, you have just completed a Playback Theatre Performance!



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