

Synergic theater

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Synergic Theater Workshop

The workshop is designed to transcend the formal boundaries within and between sound, light and movement media in order to achieve a fresh creative perspective. This perspective is then applied to individual and collaborative improvisations utilizing the media involved. The result is an experience-oriented language, a synergic mentality, that can then be applied to many problem-solving situations - within, among or outside of the arts. Rather than providing formal/technical training within a particular discipline or style, it offers a new context in which to later apply that training. As such, it has value at both beginning and advanced levels. For the artist in particular, it is a basis for further collaborative and/or multi-media work, as well as creative development within his or her own medium.

The process itself involves four phases. The first phase includes an introduction to the workshop as a whole and then to each of the media - sound, light and movement. The participants are led through a series of exercises in each medium at its most organic, universally-accessible level. (Throughout the workshop we deal with "movement" rather than dance style or theory, "sound" rather than musical or dramatic structure, and "light/image" rather than technical design.) The exercises involve a combination of spontaneous perception and expression: group debating an issue in invented language; mirroring a partner's movements; moving through imaginary environments and to adverbial qualities; hand-eye explorations of space, dimension, contour, gesture; 'charades' expressing quality of a sound in movement, image in sound, and/or movement in image etc..

In phase two more external content is added to the exercises, drawn initially from the environment. Here, the participants' creative input is expanded, working more with than just in each medium. For example, small groups will go out and gather sounds from the environment, bring their sounds back to the studio, invent means to reproduce them, then arrange the sounds into a 'score' and teach it to another group. Then they will be told to create and present a one-minute sound piece that summarizes the entire history of the universe. Or they will be taken on a walk blindfolded, sensing rather than seeing their surroundings, then asked to create an environment for others to move through. In phase two they will begin using props, electronic sound and light equipment, sets, costumes, etc. (improvised from available resources).

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Phase three involves applying the language of sound, light and movement developed in phases one and two. The emphasis here is on individual and group problem-solving. The problems are given in such a way that the resulting presentations are created directly from a perceptual experience rather than a predefined solution. For example: In groups of five, spend one hour creating a piece in sound, light and movement with the title "I'd ask you to leave but there isn't any door."

In phase four, the participants work on a larger group problem, spanning several nights, and then the final presentation, drawn from a selection of individual and group works created during the entire workshop.

Note: while the basic structure of the workshop is set, there is always some adjustment in the particular selection of exercises and problems in order to best work with each group's particular orientation and response. Also, there is some overlapping of the four phases due to the interrelationship of parts in a synergic whole. This, however, is better understood in the studio than on paper.