



For Richer For Poorer: Movement Notes

Resources:

1. Movement in your Play In A Day performance: a general introduction video
2. FRFP video 1: Character movement in *For Richer For Poorer*
3. FRFP video 2: Action on stage

1. Movement in the 'Play in a Day' performances:

Transcript of *introducing movement* video

Introducing movement:

The movement elements in our plays in a day can seem intimidating, on the page, but I'm here to reassure you that they couldn't be simpler. These sections are about telling the story with the pictures we make on stage, rather than the words we say, and for both primary and secondary age groups it's an ideal way to get ideas across, whilst keeping our school audience attention. And of course they can be great fun for you to lead, and your students will love expressing themselves physically, too.

Leading and Teaching movement:

When leading and teaching movement it is important that you enjoy it too – model what you want the students to do, so they can copy you. Make it fun, and use the music included with the play. All our bodies are different, so allow for individual expression, and for students to interpret movement in their own way. Having a clear signal for stopping is also important (a raised hand, a whistle etc.), as these group sections can sometimes be noisy!

Fitting it in:

Movement sections are a great way to pick up the energy after lunch, or after a long period of time learning lines. Rehearsing them little and often, as a warm up is an ideal way to fit them in.

Keep it simple:

Even if the movement sections will be different every time you practice them, they will still need some rehearsal, so it is important to keep it simple, and repeat, rather than doing something complex only once – I know from experience, this is where even professional performers forget everything!

Its up to you:

I'll give a few options here and there, so if dance, movement or theatre is something you love, or you are just feeling ambitious, then I'll give you ways you can make more of these elements, if you want to give them more time leading up to the Play In A Day performance, but there will always be a simple version too, that will work just as well.

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2. Character Movement

Roles and differentiating them:

The breakdown of roles in the script is very useful, and in movement we want all these different characters and groups to be distinct so the audience know who's who. You can workshop this with your class with everyone learning every type of movement, or you can assign roles as you see fit and teach only what each group needs to know. This is particularly useful if you are planning for your students to spend time working independently.

The Rich Regions:

The Rich Regions group arrives with confidence. The world is at their feet, and we show this by putting their chests forward and their chins are high. They take deep breaths of the air around them with confidence, and greet each other warmly, with handshakes, nods and great big smiles. Some may dance on to the music, or break into a run or skip.

The Poorest:

In contrast the poorest people enter together, some leaning on others – some might be old men, others children, but all are weak and tired. Their backs are bent over, they limp and walk slowly, shading their eyes from the sun. When they reach their mat they sit and stand quietly, folding their arms, or putting hands in their pockets, to close off.

The challenge for this group is to play AGAINST the music – the temptation will be to speed up and enjoy it, but remind them that they are acting now, pretending to be something and someone different, and they need to pretend the music isn't there! This contrast of energetic sound and repressed physicality create a strong juxtaposition, and immediately put conflict, and therefore drama, on the stage!

Mr. and Mrs. India:

As characters they can be open, neutral and serene. Hands are open, palms out, with a relaxed, slower rhythm – which, when they rush around in panic, can be completely lost. This sequence is one of our moments of high drama in the play, and is very exciting. The key is the buildup. As they move in this section, begin walking, then more urgent, then running! Every time a line is spoken it is like a wall has been placed in front of her, and she must change direction! Rehearse this with your whole cast, as a centerpiece for the play. It will require a confident and focused performance from your student(s) playing this role, but with rehearsal and encouragement they will remember it!

Dressed as vegetables:

These are great roles, as these characters represent energy and nutrition. You could use hats to represent them, and/or physicality to assist this... You could have a carrot & a potato, like Laurel and Hardy – carrot holds hands down by the side, taking small fast steps, potato has rounded arms and strides out. You could have a pod of green peas... all should be bouncy and happy, with an infectious positivity. Though when the poorer people are prevented from getting to them by the shopkeeper they can droop and look sad...

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Fast Food Workers

Move fast, in straight lines, giving orders, and smiling. They stay together as a group, passing out orders all around them. When they transition to stamping the Fast Food Workers disappear completely, as soon as the line: “you should buy some vegetables” is said – the faster this change the more dynamic and attention grabbing.

3. Action on stage

Actions:

For our actions early in the play, when the characters mime picking wheat and vegetables, or being chickens and cows, it will help to model specific movements for your class. Here are some ideas that can be used and are repeatable:

1. **Wheat and vegetable mime:** could be quick actions or extended... students sway their arms from side to side to represent the wheat. Picking vegetables, by reaching down, standing with a groan and wiping the sweat from their brows. (Remember to ‘look at what you are miming’.)
2. **Chickens and cows:** Chickens cluck loudly, point their toes, and flap ‘wings’ with their hands on their hips. Chickens eyes are on the side of their heads, so to look at something they have to turn their head from side to side – add in this movement for a very authentic animal! Cows are on all fours, maybe with fists as hooves. They chew and moo... and that’s it!
- 3. **“Bigger, Bigger, BIGGER!”** here we can really show a transformation – where with each word the group push out their bellies, bend their knees and expand their arms wider.

To teach this start with your students standing normally. Next ask them to “imagine they have just eaten WAY too much – now show me how big and round you can make your body!” Get them to hold this picture! Now they can go back to normal, and the challenge is for them to go from normal to BIG as they say the words “bigger, bigger, bigger”. Give a few rehearsals over 5 mins, this is simple, but effective.

A note on the Finale: The play ends on a question. This leaves you with a lot of options: You can leave it hanging, for a somber feel – but expect the applause to be a little muted. You could bring back in the upbeat music, for some bows. You could also facilitate some questions here – depending on what parts of the play you want to focus on. You could ask the audience what they think they could do, or the students who have just performed?

Don’t worry about solving the world’s problems in a discussion, but opening the discussion for 2 or 3 different opinions might keep people thinking, and bookend the performance nicely – alternatively, if you have a confident student, maybe you could have them MC, using some prepared questions (with your input where necessary). Choose what will work best for your school and your audience. Whether you do this or not, your students will have fun, and learn something in the process.

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