



Fat of The Land:

Movement Notes

1. Movement in your Play In A Day performance: a general introduction Video
2. FOTL Video 1: Movement and *The Chorus in Fat of The Land*
3. FOTL Video 2: Character groups

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.

Created by Robin Guiver



2. Movement: the chorus in *Fat of The Land*

This play uses the ancient theatrical device of the Greek Chorus: a group of actors who help to tell the story by representing powerful forces in the plays theme and narrative.

In practice this means having your groups of characters represented by many students who take on different roles and situations throughout the play:

Businessmen, Children, Labourers, Villagers and even the Truck!

It is a very effective way to visually tell the story, and keep your play dynamic and interesting for your audience.

We will give more specific detail on the character groups in the other video, but here are some more specific sections of chorus movement for you to draw on.

Chorus exercise:

Have your students practice moving together as a group – ask them to walk around your classroom or hall all at the same time, without bumping into anything. Next add that they should imagine they have a 1 metre bubble around them, and they must try and keep this space between them at all times. This will help them build spatial awareness, as a group.

For a real challenge ask them to try to all slow down and stop together, with no one being the first one to stop moving. Try this a few times, and ask them to feed back about when it felt easy or difficult.

Scene Changes:

The actors create all the scenes, and so the scene changes, or 'transitions' depend on your students working together, arriving and leaving at the same time. These will all need practice, so they can feel like confident moves - rehearsing with the music will really help this.

Whenever the students move like this they will mostly want to stay IN CHARACTER, as the character they are in the specific scene. Any actions done by groups of people together are captivating for an audience, so it is worth the time practicing them, perhaps whilst others have lines to learn or get familiar with, it will definitely pay off!

The Four Corners:

Four students all form a truck and chug in place – they can chug forward, or in profile, but give them an impulse at the top of the sound, to establish what they are. You could couple this with a 90 degree turn, too, if that fits for your class?

Cash Registers to slump:

Children in the four corners of the stage creating the locations. Beginning on the cash registers, up straight, scanning smiling, handing out trays, on repeat, all their text is mimed. We want a big contrast when they slump down, smiles drain as the music starts, then shoulders slump, and finally heads drop, as hands go to the sides.

Created by Robin Guiver



Factory workers to Factory Machines:

As the factory workers become machines in scene 5 their movements can become jerky – repetitive. Responding to the music. They can create gestures they repeat, or improvise, depending on your students, guide them so they feel confident, but challenged.

The Circle:

In scene 8 the tension really builds. With the stamping, and the circle closing in there is a lot to contend with, but they are powerful images, and key to illustrating the themes we are dealing with.

The circle of people surrounding, wants to begin as a semi circle, open to the audience – but as the scene goes on it begins to close, and after the final line is spoken it can completely conceal Miguel, closing in on him, before exploding out!

In practice, this will require the cue lines that signal when people should be where, to be VERY clear. Rehearse this and talk your students through it, and give them a chance to really learn it. Put a leader in charge of the 'explosion' out – who can give the rest of your group a count down, 3... 2... 1... given enough time this sections will look very powerful.

You can repeat this again in the final scene, but this time when the circle of businessmen closes on both Francisco AND Miguel, the final image can be them trapped, the circle closing completely.

3. Character groups:

The Businessmen:

They move fast, with mimed mobile phones – talking (or mime talking), with jerky head movements. Their chests are pushed out forward, and the gesture with their hands when they speak.

When they 'move frantically around the stage with no direction' in scene 7, the businessmen are representing the rising tension of the story, and so should keep their 'one meter bubble' around themselves, but be careful not to move between the audience and Miguel and Francisco, as we really want to follow their story here.

The Buyers are a subsection of the Businessmen – the four who surround Francisco and walk with him. This configuration can be tricky, so give them a chance to rehearse – walking together, changing direction together, moving together again... it's the same as the chorus exercise we talked about in the first video – and will make for a very striking image – Francisco is trapped, and we show this here in a real and dynamic way.

The Children:

For overweight characters, costume can augment this, but so can the physicality – making the body big and expansive. It's not about what the performers bodies look like, but how they act 'overweight', and create the space around them.

What really counts is that the two sets of children, Francisco's and Miguel's, are clearly different. One set tired, weak and slow, the other big, confident and getting BIGGER! Ultimately it is their physicality that needs to tell this story.

Created by Robin Guiver



Workers:

They wipe their brows, and they pack potato's, breathing heavily in the heat. They are tired. They sigh loudly.

When one Worker collapses practice getting to the floor safely – either sitting first then lying down, or passing out near another character who can help them down safely... no sudden drops – they're exhausted, not dead, and the longer it takes the more drama in this moment...

Boxing potatoes becomes a robotic action in scene 8, with hard angles and blank expressions, around Miguel – whose expression we really want to see as a contrast to their blankness.

Villagers:

They are also tired, but to make sure you create a different tableau here – perhaps putting people in groups of 2 or 3, sitting, begging to imagined people, ask each student what their character is doing – make them be specific... fixing their broken home? Digging for roots? Sewing up torn clothes? Asking for help with their family? The little details in these moments are very powerful.

This is a sombre story, but a great acting challenge for both your speaking characters, and your chorus – and everyone should have a great time really embodying the world of the story.