

G401 - Piece One

Unit Content Pro-forma submitted by Centre

PIECES IN INDIVIDUAL ART FORMS

Art Form	Stimulus used and brief description of pieces
Dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Indian classical gestures } stimulus ◦ British gestures ◦ pieces based on communication between different cultures using pedestrian actions + motif development
Drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Stimulus = Fairy tale e.g. The little Matchstick Girl; Red Riding Hood ◦ Various fairytales were reworked (often made modern)
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Wilfred Owen war poetry ◦ linked to Britten's War Requiem ◦ Pieces involved minor / diminished tonalities, overlapping textures ◦ lines from poem

THE COMMUNITY PIECE

Performance Intention/Style

Street Theatre style

Intention to engage + bring to life aspects of slavery + the slave trade in Liverpool.

Brief description of performance

Performances ~~were~~ took place in various spaces around the world museum + reflected slave stories, poems and African music/dance

Location of Performance

World Museum, Liverpool

Opportunities for linking Dance/Drama/Music

African music linked to African Dance
slave stories / poems recreated in movement form
for dance or song form

Teacher's overall assessment of the success of the piece

well structured + varied performances
Often quite creative
Some much more successful than others

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Written work of Candidate: Rebecca

WRITTEN COMMENTARY

Assessment Criterion	Mark	Please refer to specific aspects of the work which support the mark being awarded
Knowledge and understanding of aspects and applications of the performing arts (max 20)	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Assured, wide ranging knowledge of all 3 art forms → Expertise in discussing usage & links → In depth understanding of style & intention → Links 3 art forms & comments on ways they work together.
Understanding and evaluation of process and performance (max 12)	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Excellent ability to review intention/style → Considerable ability to review performance → Thorough analysis
Quality of language (max 8)	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Clear writing style → Most ideas are handled confidently → Good expression → Handles technical language well

PRACTICAL WORK

Assessment Criterion	Mark	Please refer to specific aspects of the work which support the mark being awarded
Devising the community performance project (max 10)	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → work is candidate's original devising → Clear stylistic intent → well crafted piece → Contrast & transitions managed well → Piece communicates effectively & engages audience → Costumes added to overall effect
Performance skills in dance, drama and music (max 20)	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Strong & confident performer → Expressive acting style → Focus maintained → Occasional lack of focus but when performing, gave 100% → Strong in all 3 areas → Sensitive to other performers
Total (max 70)	59	

The Language of Performing Arts.

The study of 'Performing Arts' required a competent level of knowledge in Music, Dance and Drama, therefore, when instructed to create three pieces in each individual art form, we would participate in specific workshops as a group, that related to the task in hand. The workshops enabled students to identify links between the three art forms and built confidence in preparation for the task of developing a community piece which required the use of all three.

IMPROVISING

During each task we were given a stimulus to work with, and in small groups discussed it; for example, in music we listened to 'Britten's War requiem'; a piece of music adapted from the works of poet, Wilfred Owen. We analysed the piece using the five music key words, rhythm, melody, harmony, timbre and texture. We also took note on the instrumentation used and links to other art forms. As a group we read through the stimulus and picked out key phrases and imagery that we deemed to be effective and looked at ways in which we could adapt them into a performance. In the dance piece, we were given a number of Indian and sign hand gestures, and using Merce Cunningham's 'chance method' where a number on a dice corresponds to each action, (the dice is rolled to determine which actions are used and the order they are performed in) we improvised a motif. We thought about how we could incorporate influences into our piece such as DV8's physical theatre, for example in drama; physically creating the nook in which the matchstick girl took shelter, and the use of percussive sounds created manually, such as the incessant drum beat of the marching soldiers in the music piece. Also, Lea Anderson's contact work, restriction of body parts and use of pedestrian actions in 'Cross Channel' enabled us to develop our roles in the piece, and gave us an ability to create unique and captivating imagery in our pieces - Whether it is a deeply sorrowful tableaux image in Music linking to Dance and Drama with the use of characterisation and Space, or physicality used in the nook for the matchstick girl in Drama.

We assigned characters, such as the matchstick girl and the grandmother and explored ways in which we could emphasise these characters in a way the audience could relate to. After understanding and interpreting the stimulus we established that the theme was that of sorrow and suffering in the case of the Drama and Music pieces and developed ideas that could illustrate this to the audience through techniques such as, our facial expressions, dialogue and timbre. In the music piece we began improvising Latin phrases picked out from the piece such as 'Dulce et Decorum est, pro patria mori' which translated as 'It is sweet and fitting to die from ones country' and conjured a melody using techniques such as chromatics to incorporate deeply, the themes of sorrow and heartache that is endured in war.

After noting ideas in a mind map we experimented in a 'Trial and Error' mindset after being inspired by such words from Samuel Beckett - **'try, fail, try again and fail better'** and chose which ideas worked well, then fitted them to improvised chord structures and added dissonant harmonies to the melodies. We felt that working practically was more effective and beneficial to developing the piece and enabled us to embrace ideas thrown at us with ease. We decided upon a rough structure for the pieces that could be developed using the five key words for each art form listed below and added

improvised sections to it. Music and dynamics were selected in direct correlation with the Dance and Drama pieces to form a tight music and dance and drama relationship. ✓ PP

In the drama piece, we used a technique called hot seating to help us establish characters more. On one occasion the little matchstick girl was questioned on how she felt about her father and how it felt to be left out in the cold. We then scripted responses that we deemed thought provoking and would make the audience empathise with her. This aided group members to become familiar of cues and lines. ✓ PP

DRAMA: Character, Physicality, Dialogue, Tension, Proxemics.

DANCE: Space, Relationship, Motif, Action, Dynamics.

MUSIC: Timbre, Rhythm, Harmony, Melody, Texture.

REHEARSING

✓ PP Rehearsing all three pieces took on a similar format; we would show our work as a work in progress and receive feedback from others on what needed improving, and then adapted our pieces and perfected them.

By repeating the piece a number of times it became refined and polished which built confidence and focus in group members. We deemed it important to rehearse timings with each other, in the sense that each group member knew cues, harmonies, words and timbres when appropriate. Specific things needed to be rehearsed in each art form; such as in Dance, the use of peripheral vision was used to ensure we were working in unison. We rehearsed, taking into account the use of space and proxemics to portray relationships, and create tension. We concentrated on what how we wanted the audience to feel whilst watching/ listening to the piece and developed our characters to enforce a relationship with the audience; for example, through Abbie's physicality and dialogue in the Drama piece, we rehearsed ways in which we could portray the idea that she was playing the part of the little match stick girl. In music, special consideration was taken into ensuring that all harmonies were in tune and that diction and pronunciation of words was clear and projected at a sufficient level. We also refined whispers, using a great deal of projection to allow them to be heard over the harsh minor notes of the keyboard. It was also beneficial to rehearse in disassociation with the music as to ensure that all members of the group for example knew dance moves, cues, and harmonies. ✓ PP

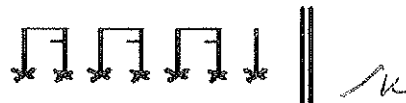
✓ We rehearsed and decided upon our eye contact with the audience within the piece and in the case of Music we deemed it effective if eye contact with the audience was limited however in the Dance piece, eye contact with the audience was strong as to enhance relationships with the audience. We ensured that the rhythm throughout the piece was rehearsed as cues could be affected if not executed correctly, also choral speaking and overlapping dialogue was rehearsed, enabling us to build up the texture, which adds tension and a change in dynamics, bringing uniqueness to the drama. We rehearsed our piece with use of the full space as to refine cues and travel sequences with the music and realised the links in the art forms, for example how the dynamics of the music can effect the dance, if it is loud and fast our movements were bold and sharp, and if it was soft our

✓

music correlated with bound, fluid movements. We made sure that the original stimulus, although developed was clear to identify throughout. For example, in Dance, the original literal Indian and sign hand gestures had been developed into rhythmic motif which correlated to music and contained numerous techniques from the key terms for each art form. ✓

Before each rehearsal we would warm up the areas of our body used during the dance, be it a ^{PP} physical warm up of muscles, a vocal warm up or a mental warm up to ensure we were in the correct mindset for the theme of the piece. An example of this would be in the Music piece the themes were that of sorrow and heartache that is endured in war. This was important as to prevent injury and developed our focus and energy. This improved our overall balance and coordination. ✓ ^{PP}

We performed our piece in the concept of it being a work in process and were given responses to which areas needed improvement. After hearing the feedback in the case of the Drama piece, we thoroughly rehearsed and worked on spacing and proxemics as some members of the group could not be seen at a point the drama. We focussed on creating obvious relationships between the characters on stage and worked on portraying the suffering of the little match stick girl to the audience, so they would empathise with her. To enhance relationships in the dance piece we split the group in two, as to ensure each group member was confident on their specific dance routine and also to insure cues and timings with each other were rehearsed. When confident on the performance of our piece we marked though it chronologically, as to save energy and to familiarise ourselves with the choreography. ✓ ^{PP}



PERFORMING

We performed the piece to the class and were given feedback on how we incorporated the techniques. In the opening moments of the Music piece, dissonant harmonies were used, created as each chromatic note in a scale was built up in the form of an 'ah' sound. This was held with increasing dynamics before a sudden stop. The 'ah' vowel began with soft timbres and developed into a harsh constructing a variety in timbre, also the sudden silence created tension. The drama piece also embodied a build in tension from the music and there was a good use of the key words throughout which linked the three art forms together successfully. During the closing scenes it was commented on that a 'filmic technique' was used, like that used in Christopher Bruce's 'Swansong' where one part of the scene is frozen as if nothing has changed, yet one character is moving, as though ahead of time. We incorporated this technique in the last scene; whilst the child had died and moved on with the aid of her grandmother and is frozen up stage left, a crowd gathered round the imagined remains of the child's body as they fought to resuscitate her. ✓ ^K

The dominant melodic motif sung in unison showed unity of the soldiers and the 4/4 beat was rhythmic and created by manually beating a percussive tom (as shown above) symbolised march time. A stanza in the poem was recited over an ostinato rhythm consisting of acapella whispers. The use of syncopation within the melodic line, and the overlapping rhythmic voices created a polyphonic texture. The short melodic motifs and dissonant harmonies created tension which linked to the art forms dance and drama, as did the characterisation and physicality shown in the Tabloid image. ✓ ^K

The aural setting of the wind helped to enforce the idea that the child was all alone and that she was isolated. The proxemics and levels stressed the child as a focal point and portrayed her helplessness - drama? ✓ ^K

to the suffering she faced. The insular physicality of the matchstick girl emphasised the bitterness of the weather, as throughout the piece the child was huddled and compacted, desperate for warmth, this also suggested the season, as did the chorally sung 'silent night'. The relationships were enhanced when certain parts of the drama were executed in unison, such as the look for the shooting star. Also finally, it was effective how the recurring physical imagery was used in a variety of ways, for example, during the first part of the piece, the nook symbolised a safe place for the girl, warmth and happiness, however the second time the nook is created it reveals that in fact the girl has died. Yet the ideas behind the physicality of the nook juxtapose, as in the first instance the nook is intended to be comforting, yet the body language is shown in a negative manner as proxemics are vast, whereas, in the scene where the girl dies, the proxemics are close, suggesting comfort, whereas in fact the close proximity symbolises the wind engulfing her and in the end taking her life.

The original motif which consisted of eight gestures from sign language and bollywood was developed into a dance using traditional and understand actions such as the 'pivot footstep in parallel', and the physical 'shush action with a finger to the lips' linked to the theme and to the art form drama by incorporating action and characterisation. This was shown, as the original literal actions were used to create a short piece of drama, shown below.

"Shush"



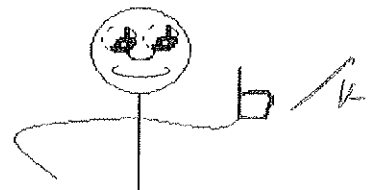
"No Talking"



"Time out"



"Okay"



Transitional actions such as a jump or a travelling footstep were added to enable a change in space, formation or relationship. The dance correlated well with the music as sharp dynamics were used during moments of a related timbre and rhythm, as were soft dynamics. This was also the case in Music as throughout the piece minor, chromatic and dissonant harmonies were used, enforcing a sad tone to the piece upon the audience. Towards the end of the piece the tempo of the drum beat quickens to show a build up of tension and the texture is built up as voices are layered and overlapped. The tempo decreases, and the voices recede to whispers as the piece ends and the soldiers are dead. The way in which the dialogue overlapped in the drama piece created tension and texture, and developed a relationship between the audience and the little matchstick girl as they empathised with her. The physicality that ran throughout the drama made the piece interesting to watch, for example when personifying the nook and the match's flame that burned out. The characterisation and physicality of Abbie and the little matchstick girl portrayed the idea that she was a child effectively, allowing the audience to empathise with her effortlessly in the more emotive parts of the drama.

It was excruciatingly important in our performances for the audience to develop a relationship with the performers on stage as to ensure the desired effect and emotional response was achieved. I believe that in each piece we created the desired effect and in the case of Music and Drama the audience empathised greatly. There are many similarities between the three art forms, for example each can create a build up of texture and tension, in all cases music can undoubtedly change the

mood of the piece and each relies on space and timing to create an effective and thought provoking atmosphere. It is my opinion that the drama, music and dance key words as listed previously work hand in hand and are the building blocks and foundations of a fantastic piece of theatre.

Community Performance.

For our community performance we will be performing at the Liverpool Slavery museum a 15 minute episodic piece containing a balanced level of music drama and dance. It is based on the theme of slavery. We are using the style street theatre as we are performing in public and are using features such as physicality and choral speaking. Our audience members will be un-paying public and can stop watching whenever they feel like it. We will perform without props and costumes and will rely on the lighting in the museum for to aid our piece. /spp

Street theatre is performed in public for an un-paying public audience. They are not seated and can come and go as they please throughout the duration of the piece, therefore it is of an episodic structure. There are no props and costumes are limited as they may obstruct the walkways and there is no backstage to store unused items, also, performers rely on nature for lighting. Large amounts of physicality are used throughout which are over exaggerated to attract the audience's attention. Grotowski's idea to use all of the body is seen heavily in street theatre. Performers have to compete with everyday sounds in the surrounding area therefore they must ensure they project their voice so the viewing public can hear them. Choral speaking is often used in street theatre as the united voices attract attention and is effective. As the audience is the un-paying public audience members can vary from small children to old age pensioners, therefore our performance demands a varied approach to the issue of slavery to keep all audience members entertained. /k

Living in the community of Liverpool, the topic we have chosen, slavery, is relevant as much of Liverpool's wealth was gained from the docks in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This was as it was home to a major trading port of the slave trade of that era. Our venue, the Liverpool Slavery museum is situated in the docks and has an exhibition which uncovers the dark past, narrated by the African slaves all those years ago. We therefore deemed it appropriate to perform here. /spp

As Antonin Artaud said, our intention is to 'empower the audience, we do not wish to educate our audience, yet inform them in a visual way of the slave trade legacy, broadening their minds to the suffering endured and of the slavery that still occurs in modern day society in countries such as Africa. /k intention

Research is always essential as different aspects must be taken into consideration, such as:

- Is there room to perform?
 - Have we sought permission?
 - Do we need a risk assessment?
 - Is it easy to get to?
 - Is the venue accessible for us and/or the disabled?
- /spp

In all cases, the Liverpool Slavery museum had a very positive response to all of the above as the venue is situated locally and is accessible by means of lifts, stairs and escalators. After a risk assessment had been carried out it is clear there are numerous places in which we could perform without obstructing those who do not wish to watch. /spp

BP In our group we began researching various practitioners and our general knowledge gained for inspiration on our pieces. We decided upon an episodic structure to allow audience members to choose when they wanted to stop watching. Each episode was in the style of a certain practitioner we had looked at. Following Meyerhold's words "I have no use for actors who can move but cannot think" we ensured that we fully understood each character we portrayed throughout the performance and their reasons behind their actions and dialogue. ✓ EPP

BP Our first episode explored the work of Antonin Artaud, looking at his 'agit-prop' and decided to do a piece looking at modern day slavery through his 'living newspaper' idea. We were given the headline 'The Dark Side of the Free Market Corporate Capitalism' and from this created a rhythmic mime to the sound of a heartbeat showing workers in the field pleading for a break. This modern day slavery was then linked back to the African slaves as the three workers stand up to form a line bounded by chains. The next episode we looked at was in the style of Greek theatre, which is an ancient form of street theatre involving episodes, prologues and mask work, and therefore completely relevant in our performance. We recreated slavery images and brought them to life by arranging them into a number of tableaux concrete and tableaux vivante images with the use of over exaggerated masks. The masks obstructed our peripheral vision throughout the piece, yet fitted in perfectly with our chosen style and added greatly to the visual element of the piece. The imagery was deemed moving and thought provoking after peer analysis in feedback sessions. We then used our free time to write a rhyming prologue and an epilogue on what we had researched so far, as we intended to develop it into a song/chant of the slaves. ✓ EPP

BP We later explored the practitioner Brecht, and were inspired by his 'V-effect', as it related well to our venue and deemed the non naturalistic approach which he favoured to be interesting. We brought to life events from the past when retelling African stories, however added a Brechtian twist by performing un-chronologically and by swapping the main character by using an item of clothing which alienated the audience who would expect to see a naturalistic performance. This also added to our non naturalistic street theatre style. ✓ EPP

BP Boal's principle of 'invisible theatre' was present in another of our episodes in which we brought to life a poem on slavery. We stuck to one dominant reader whilst others in the group acted out the lines in a physical/mimetic way. The dominant reader would approach the audience and involve them in what they are saying. This was his idea of breaking down the barrier between the audience and the spectator, allowing an audience member to be part of the performance. As part of the process we performed our episode in different areas around college, such as the administration corridor, reception area and the refectory. This enabled us to focus on working in a naturalistic setting and the problems that may arise in doing so. ✓ EPP

? BP For our next episode we explored the work of Christopher Bruce, taking inspiration from his approach to (imbed) historical, social and cultural issues into his choreography. We looked at ghost dances which are based on the civil rights movement in Chile which seemed appropriate for our theme. We were taught a small part of a dance from this repertoire and found the predatory nature of the Ghosts to be something which we wanted to explore in our slavery pieces. We devised a short movement piece in the style of Bruce and performed these with African sounding instruments to create an eerie, thought provoking piece that could be visual for passing audiences. ✓ EPP

Finally we explored African folk music and movements to bring all the episodes together and focus on the roots of slavery. The tempo was upbeat and lively which provided a much needed contrast to the intense piece of theatre we'd done previously. We analysed Negro spirituals and blues songs which aided the music aspect, giving us ideas, and composed melodies using tonic and subdominant harmonies and added in blues notes for effect. We took lyrics from African poetry and performed our songs in an acapella style like the African chants we had heard during lessons. Ostinato rhythms created using African drums and percussion instruments like guiros overlapped over the voices to add texture and varied timbres, making the performance upbeat and exciting.

Evaluation.

After creating a short episodic piece of drama we then performed it at the World museum for an unpaying public audience in our assigned spaces. As we did not choose where our performance would take place we had to adapt quickly to the environment, therefore our piece had to be flexible. We wore black catsuits and painted our face and body in traditional African designs to aid the visual elements in our piece and attract the audience's attention. We used choral speaking and ensured we projected our voices so we could be heard over the natural noises in the environment and to also attract the audience's attention. Our piece was comprised of short episodic, energetic, bold balances of dance, drama, and singing to appeal to a wide range of audiences. An example of this would be, when I and Sarah become predators and begin to eat another member of the group. This movement was bold, visual and unexpected which would help attract the audience. It was spontaneous and was over the top physicality created the mindset of 'breaking down the fourth wall'. Throughout the performance there was a lack of props to truly inhabit the street theatre style to the piece. All three group members took on the technique of multi role which again adds to the style of street theatre. We made sure that the piece kept a steady pace which was not too fast or dragging where in both the audience would not be able to take the crucial messages and information out of the performance. In the performance there were two songs and we sang in a typical African manner which boosted community spirit. We worked again with the environment; using the tiles on the floor to create a scraping noise as we ran our fingers across it during of the song. We were lucky as the lighting in the museum enabled the audience to see us easily. We used mask and mime work to give a variety to the performance and keep a wide range of audience interested.