

Unit 28: Musical Theatre Performance

Unit code: R/502/5102

QCF Level 3: BTEC National

Credit value: 10

Guided learning hours: 60

● Aim and purpose

The aim of this unit is to enable learners to take part in a performance of musical theatre. Learners will rehearse a role (or roles) which require them to use acting, singing and dancing skills in a musical theatre performance.

● Unit introduction

Musical theatre is an exciting and popular art form that combines singing, dancing and movement. It takes many forms, including large-scale Broadway and West End musicals, pantomime, opera, operetta and plays with significant music and movement content. There is a vast repertoire of material available and learners will have the opportunity to interpret and perform in musical theatre work selected to suit their interests and abilities. Musical theatre combines the skills of acting, dancing and singing and this unit is about exploring the interaction between these three performance skills and applying them appropriately to meet the performance requirements of particular pieces.

Staging a musical number demands a high level of concentration, stamina and the ability to coordinate a range of performing skills. Performers in musical theatre need to be multiskilled. As well as being able to act, they are required to take part in dance routines and have the ability to sing. Learners will rehearse and perform a role within a musical theatre performance in order to gain the experience of combining acting, singing and dancing abilities and skills.

This unit provides a particular context in which skills acquired in specialist acting, singing and dancing areas of the qualification can be applied and developed. Musical theatre is a significant area of employment within the live and recorded performance branch of the industry, with opportunities for chorus and ensemble work as well as leading roles. It requires actors who can sing and dance; dancers who can act and sing; singers who can act and dance and performers who may have all three skills in more or less equal measure.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Understand a role or roles in a musical theatre work
- 2 Be able to apply the appropriate performance skills
- 3 Be able to rehearse for a role in a musical
- 4 Be able to perform a role in a musical.

Unit content

1 Understand a role or roles in a musical theatre work

Interpretation: role development through research; response to dialogue, direction, lyrics and/or choreography; reaction and relationship to other roles within the piece

Form and structure: the function of the role/roles within the whole work; the style and genre of the work; the relationship between the book, lyrics and music

2 Be able to apply the appropriate performance skills

Selection and practice: matching own abilities to the role; developing vocal and physical mannerisms appropriate to the role; developing or learning appropriate styles of singing, dancing or acting; following a practice regime; setting personal targets and meeting them

Memorisation: learning lines and/or vocal singing part and/or choreographed movements; repetition of learned material; making corrections as required; responding to changes to previously learned material; awareness of stage positioning

3 Be able to rehearse for a role in a musical

Rehearsal technique: time management (punctuality, following a rehearsal schedule, attendance); focus and concentration; self-discipline; cooperative attitude and approach; commitment to the work; preparation (wearing the appropriate clothing, having the correct equipment or documentation, practising between rehearsals)

Vocal requirements: response to musical direction; identifying personal vocal range; application of breathing techniques; recognition of pitch, tone quality, notes, intervals, pace, chords and keys; rehearsing with a score

Movement requirements: response to choreography; rhythmical accuracy; use of space; technical ability; ensemble work

Acting requirements: response to direction; character development; voice work; emotional register; application of appropriate style; development of role interpretation

4 Be able to perform a role in a musical

Physical and vocal expression: vocal and physical control; effective use of physical and vocal range, awareness of tone, pitch, intonation, balance, poise, dynamics

Communication: maintaining focus and concentration; vocal projection; physical embodiment of a role; communication of mood and emotion; communication of interpretation; communication with other performers; awareness of other performance elements eg lighting, scenery, sound, use of microphones, costume, props

Integration: bringing together of different skills; fitting own role/roles within the overall production concept; working with other production elements; making adjustments to suit the demands of the production

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 discuss an interpretation and realisation of a role or roles [IE]	M1 explain an interpretation and realisation of a role or roles	D1 analyse an interpretation and realisation of a role or roles
P2 use the appropriate skills and techniques with support and guidance [RL]	M2 use the appropriate skills and techniques with minimal support and guidance	D2 use the appropriate skills and techniques autonomously
P3 contribute to the rehearsal process, maintaining a suitable level of rehearsal discipline [TW]	M3 make valuable contributions to the rehearsal process, maintaining a high level of rehearsal discipline	D3 contribute significantly to the rehearsal process, maintaining a consistently high level of rehearsal discipline
P4 use performing skills competently to create a performance that communicates an interpretation to an audience. [SM]	M4 use performing skills effectively to create a performance that communicates a considered interpretation to an audience.	D4 use performing skills confidently to create a performance that communicates a detailed and imaginative interpretation to an audience.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers CT – creative thinkers	RL – reflective learners TW – team workers	SM – self-managers EP – effective participators
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Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

This unit enables learners to put into context the practical performance skills developed and honed in acting, singing and dance technique classes within the genre of musical theatre. Work for the unit is best approached through casting learners for a role or roles in a musical theatre work selected by the centre. The emphasis in this unit is on the interpretation of a role or roles, the application of the necessary skills as defined by the nature of the work and the context of the production, rehearsing the role effectively and performing it to an audience. The balance of acting, dance and musical elements will vary according to the nature of the chosen work and the individual roles within the piece. The role of Charity in *Sweet Charity*, for example, requires acting, singing and dancing skills in almost equal measure whereas the roles of Jean Valjean and Fantine in *Les Misérables* are principally acting and singing roles.

Before embarking on a role within musical theatre work, learners will need the appropriate technical and interpretative skills in order to engage with a role effectively. For a performer in a musical theatre work, the role should be approached in a similar way to that of any work written for the theatre. The text (meaning the dialogue, the lyrics, and the musical and choreographic elements) requires reading and analysis and the context of the work and the production requires research. A role will be developed through a synthesis of personal research and understanding of the work that is developed in rehearsals with the director, the musical director and the choreographer. Understanding the performance style required by a particular piece in line with a director's concept of the production is equally important. The tone and style of *Chicago*, for example, is very different from that of *The Sound of Music*.

While it is preferable to cast a complete performance of a recognised musical and for learners to develop a role within a full-scale production, it is equally possible for learners to develop a role taken from selected scenes of a musical under workshop conditions. Centres may also consider presenting a *Songs from the Shows* type event but the material needs to be carefully chosen to ensure that learners can interpret roles effectively.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to proposed production.
Read through of script, listening to musical content, watching performance (if applicable). Workshop around themes, content, musical numbers, scenes, choreography.
Preparing material for audition or selection process and taking part in the process.
Assignment 1: Getting to Know You – P1, M1, D1 Personal research and analysis of role/roles from the text and in rehearsal. Placing the role within the context of the work in particular and the musical theatre genre in general. Documenting the development process of the role and justification of the interpretation within the context of the overall production concept.
Assignment 2: Putting it Together – P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3 Taking part in scheduled rehearsals. Rehearsing own role(s) solo and with others. Undertaking own practice regime. Attending meetings, eg costume fittings, as required. Recording the rehearsal process in terms of setting targets and reflecting on progress.
Assignment 3: Another Openin', Another Show – P4, M4, D4 Perform role(s) to an audience.

Assessment

Each learning outcome can be documented in a number of ways to produce sufficient and reliable evidence for assessment purposes. Some assessment can be through the presentation of a written or practical research project which can include the use of ICT in the form of visual, textual and/or aural material. Learners should maintain a working log that will include research material, putting the piece of musical theatre they are working on into a social, historical and cultural context. Evidence will be gathered through the rehearsal process and in the performance. A working log should document the way in which learners have developed a deeper acquaintance with a role and how ideas have been explored and developed in the interpretation.

The extent to which learners have gained knowledge and understanding of the material will also be manifest in the performance. Rehearsals relate to the developmental nature of applying and adapting skills and techniques as appropriate.

Video evidence should be captured of milestone points during the rehearsal process. This evidence might include extracts of a rehearsal, as well as tutor observation records. Final judgement will be through the quality of the final performance or performances of the work. Audience and peer feedback can be used to arrive at a judgement as to the quality of the performed work as well as learners' own evaluations of the level of performance achieved.

Learning outcome 1 requires learners to demonstrate their understanding of the role or roles they are undertaking in the selected musical theatre work. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be apparent through the depth of understanding shown. Learners will need to articulate their understanding in written and/or oral form, so it will be necessary for them to produce some kind of actor's log (which can be written or recorded, or a combination of the two) that will enable them to talk and/or write about their role or roles. An alternative form of assessment is for learners to give a presentation about their role or roles.

For P1, learners will be able to discuss the role but there will be little justification given that explains how or why they have arrived at these decisions. There may be some explanation but it is either limited or it is not an approach that has been used consistently.

For M1, learners will be able to explain their role or roles and give reasons for their decisions based on the text, on research and on the rehearsal process. Learners achieving merit will be able to explain how they have arrived at their decisions about their role or roles. There will be occasional use of research.

For D1, learners will carry out relevant research into the role or roles both 'on the text' and 'off the text'. In addition, they will use secondary sources which they have analysed to inform their interpretation. Learners achieving distinction will be able to demonstrate a consistently informed approach to their understanding. Distinction level work will be characterised by the ways in which artistic and intellectual decisions about the role or roles are fully supported by a reasoned argument based on evidence from the text, the performer's intuition and other sources. Distinction level learners will be able to communicate their understanding using the appropriate language and terminology confidently and accurately.

Learning outcome 2 requires learners to demonstrate that they know how to apply the appropriate performance skills to their roles or roles. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be apparent through the level of autonomy learners are able to demonstrate in the way they approach workshops and rehearsals. The primary sources of evidence for this outcome will be through video evidence of learners applying their skills and techniques and tutor and/or peer observation.

For P2, learners will require most things explained or demonstrated to them in rehearsal several times and may need reminding of what was done and how it was done; they may require extra support from the tutor to ensure the work is performed correctly.

For M2, learners are able to follow instructions, and ask questions when required, but on the whole are able to apply previously learnt skills to new contexts with only some guidance. It may take merit level learners some time to find out how to apply a skill to new tasks but they will be prepared to work at it and organise their time effectively outside class time in order to consolidate new learning.

For D2, learners are confident in using their skills and quite independent in the way that they are able to find the right gesture, tone of voice, dance move, rhythm and pitch of a note and apply them to the context of the work at hand. Distinction learners will still question the tutor but they will be framed as 'Do you mean this?' or 'How about trying it this way?' type questions. Distinction learners are likely to be supportive of other less confident or less experienced learners.

Learning outcome 3 requires learners to demonstrate their contribution to the rehearsal process and the extent to which they are able to maintain the necessary discipline in order for effective work to take place. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be evident through the tutor's judgement of how well-disciplined learners have been during the rehearsal process and the way in which learners record their contributions to the rehearsal process in their log. Note that in order for learners to be at distinction level, they have to be consistently well disciplined and will have had to make a significant contribution to the rehearsal process. For example, learners who have been consistently well disciplined but who have contributed relatively little to the rehearsal process will be pass level learners.

For P3, learners will contribute to the rehearsal process by being present and following instructions. There will be some contribution of ideas or some suggestions made about alternative solutions to problems but they are not always appropriate, timely or necessarily applicable to the rehearsal circumstances. Rehearsal discipline is such that there are minor issues with punctuality and attendance which, once addressed, are corrected. Lack of focus and concentration in rehearsal is sometimes an issue and the tutor (or director, choreographer, musical director) has had occasion to point this out.

For M3, learners will be able to focus and concentrate on tasks and contribute ideas which make a notable difference to the rehearsal process, or the shape and content of a scene, song or musical number. Equally, where and when appropriate, any research requirements will have been fulfilled and learners will usefully contribute their findings to the rest of the group. Learners will be 'in tune' with the musical material being rehearsed and with the overall production concept. There will be very few, if any, issues with regard to absence or time keeping. There will be some effort made to ensure that they arrive at rehearsal fully prepared in terms of warming up, having learnt lines, songs and/or moves, wearing the correct clothing, and having carried out any required research.

For D3, learners will have a professional attitude to rehearsals and will be fully focused on the task of interpreting and engaging with the musical theatre material. Distinction level learners will contribute at least one idea that makes a significant impact on the shape, content, structure and possibilities of a scene, song or musical number. Throughout the rehearsal process, distinction level learners will help to energise the creative process and make many insightful suggestions that help to move the work on. They will also provide contextual material and ideas which are communicated effectively to the rest of the cast. Learners at distinction level will be fully empathetic towards the musical material being rehearsed and with the overall production concept. There will be no issues with regard to attendance or punctuality and any matters to do with absence or time keeping will be fully justified and agreed in advance. Distinction level learners will arrive at rehearsal fully prepared in terms of warming up, having learnt lines, songs and/or moves, wearing the correct clothing, and having carried out any required research.

Learning outcome 4 requires learners to demonstrate their effectiveness as performers in a musical theatre performance. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be evident through the tutor's judgement, audience and peer feedback on the quality of learners' work as performers. The ephemeral nature of performance work means that the evidence has to be a combination of an assessor's response to the live performance usually recorded in note form and a recording of the performance. The kinds of things that an assessor is looking for in a performance will include the following:

Vocal quality: how effective is the performer's use of voice in terms of intonation, diction, projection, characterisation, clarity? for singing: the accuracy of pitch and rhythm, stylistic appropriateness and use of dynamic range?

Movement quality: how effective is the performer's physicality in terms of stance, use of gesture, control (both in stillness and in movement), use of the space, use of props? for dancing: the accuracy of the movements, use of line, rhythmic accuracy, effectiveness as an ensemble dancer (where applicable), fluidity of the movement, positioning of arms, focus?

Communication: how effective is the performer in communicating intentions to the audience in terms of presence, understanding, confidence, appropriateness of style, use of acting techniques, embodiment of the character (where applicable), believability, level of physical and vocal confidence and skill, the ability to 'hold' an audience's attention?

It is recognised that there is much about responding to a performance that is subjective and governed by individual taste but it is possible to be objective about the quality of a performance in relation to its suitability to the material being performed and the level of consistency at which skills and techniques are being deployed.

For P4, learners will produce a performance that is watchable and fits the bill. There may be some inaccuracies that are difficult to ignore, but overall this does not detract from the overall performance. Pass level learners will be competent ensemble players able to portray an individual role that communicates the essential characteristics of the role.

For M4, learners will provide a performance which is technically secure and that has aspects to it that are occasionally inspired and/or inventive. The performance will be consistently watchable and will have memorable elements. There is engagement with the material and an interpretation which works, although it may not be necessarily inspired or stylistically appropriate. Merit learners will be performers who attempt to give a role or roles that bit extra but the skill and/or confidence level is not quite there to achieve it.

For D4, learners will have an unmistakable confidence in everything they do on stage. There is something undeniably 'watchable' about their performance and they have the ability to communicate their role or roles with a complete sense of ease and commitment. The distinction learner's grasp of technique is such that they are able to garnish and imbue their performance work with particular qualities marked out by inventiveness, dexterity and complete concentration. Distinction level performers can still make mistakes but the recovery from them will either hardly be noticed or be handled in a spontaneous way that makes a virtue out of necessity.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Pearson assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	Getting to Know You	Personal research and analysis of role/roles from the text and in rehearsals. Placing the role within the context of the work in particular and the musical theatre genre in general. Documenting the development process of the role and justification of the interpretation within the context of the overall production concept.	Portfolio of evidence consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">contextual and personal research noteswritten or recorded summary of interpretation.
P2, M2, D2 P3, M3, D3	Putting it Together	Taking part in scheduled rehearsals. Rehearsing own role(s) solo and with others. Undertaking own practice regime. Attending meetings, eg costume fittings, as required. Recording the rehearsal process in terms of setting targets and reflecting on progress.	Portfolio of evidence consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">rehearsal log/rehearsal video footagetutor observation reports.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P4, M4, D4	Another Openin', Another Show	Perform role(s) to an audience.	Recording of performance.

Links to other BTEC units

This unit forms part of the BTEC Music and Music Technology sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Music and Music Technology suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
		Singing Techniques and Performance

Essential resources

In addition to suitable rehearsal facilities that can accommodate the activities of dancing, singing and acting, learners will require access to musical scripts, scores and recordings.

It is important for learners to see live or recorded examples of musical theatre work through theatre visits or watching recorded examples.

Learners will require sufficient time and space to rehearse and prepare for a performance.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

To emulate vocational conditions, learners should experience working with a musical director, choreographer and director, and roles that can be fulfilled by other learners or by teaching staff.

It should be noted that working on an ensemble or chorus role is as valid and important as taking on a leading role.

While the use of backing tracks is a useful rehearsal and learning resource, learners should be given the opportunity to work with music played live.

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	interpreting a role or roles within a musical theatre work
Reflective learners	reviewing and reflecting on the appropriate skills to use in interpreting and communicating a role or roles
Team workers	collaborating with others to rehearse a musical theatre work for performance
Self-managers	performing a role to an audience and ensuring that cues are responded to on time and that props and costume are being used correctly.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	researching the social, cultural and historical context of the musical theatre work and the role or roles within in
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	using an ICT based planner to develop a rehearsal schedule and to monitor progress
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	using a range of internet based information to provide a context for the role or roles
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	selecting appropriate material from a range of sources to provide background information or rehearsal material
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	using software to create rehearsal log
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	producing rehearsal log and background portfolio
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	contributing to rehearsal discussions and decisions
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	using a range of written sources to provide contextual background to the interpretation of a role or roles
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	producing a reasoned argument for the interpretation of the role or roles.