

Unit 24: The Performance of Mime

Unit code: F/502/5399

QCF Level 3: BTEC National

Credit value: 10

Guided learning hours: 60

● Aim and purpose

The aim of the unit is to develop learners' understanding of the historical origins of mime performance, and to develop practical skills and techniques required to perform mime successfully.

● Unit introduction

Mime has often been misinterpreted, or sidelined, as a white-face 'clown' creating short illusions and sketches purely for comic effect. To define it as such would be like saying all literature is telling a joke!

As well as studying mime for its own intrinsic value, skill in mime contributes to the actor's range of techniques and greatly improves general acting skills. The mime techniques taught through this unit will give learners a better knowledge of their own body; they will help to develop the physical awareness that performers require if they are to have the best opportunities for finding work, not only in this sector but in the wider performing genre.

Learners will explore the work of key mime practitioners and those who have influenced mime, thus helping them develop performance skills and techniques and understand the essence of a physical performance.

Learners will investigate a range of mime techniques through workshops, some leading to demonstration of skills and performances. The unit gives learners the opportunity to build their knowledge, physical, analytical and performance skills and develop their creativity. It encourages learners to develop the ability to be autonomous and work in an ensemble.

As learners develop their own physical skills, so they gain analytical understanding of their own bodies, of others and of the 'bigger picture'. They will become more proactive in their understanding of movement, theatre and life.

By studying mime learners will enhance their opportunities for performing in as many different spaces and in many different ways as there are ideas. At the end of this unit learners will understand, the origins of physical drama, the development of mime and physical theatre and a number of key practitioners who pushed the art form forward. They will be able to use the physical skills developed to devise and perform a show. Learners will develop an ability to look, analyse and recreate their movements, the movements of others and the meaning of physical images and pictures.

Learners will devise two mime pieces: one solo, one group piece to be performed.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Understand the history and key practitioners of mime
- 2 Be able to develop mime skills and techniques
- 3 Be able to create and rehearse mime performances
- 4 Be able to perform in mime acts.

Unit content

1 Understand the history and key practitioners of mime

History: eg Greek and Roman theatre, Mimes and Jongleurs of the middle ages, the Mystery Plays, medieval plays, Commedia Dell'Arte, Debureau and the Pierrot of the nineteenth century, Grimaldi and english pantomime, silent films eg Keaton, Chaplin, Copeau and Dullin, Edward Gordon Craig and the Über-marionette, Antonin Artaud and the Theatre of Cruelty, Meyerhold and bio-mechanics

Practitioners: eg Etienne Decroux and Corporeal Mime, Jean-Louis Barrault, Marcel Marceau and Bip, Jacques Lecoq, Nola Rae, Adam Darius, Steven Berkoff, Theatre de Complicite, Marcello Magni, Rowan Atkinson, Derevo, Theatre de L'Ange Fou

2 Be able to develop mime skills and techniques

Skills: spatial awareness; illusions eg small manipulations, lifting big or small objects, big images; timing eg building rhythm, punctuation; cause and effect; objects, animals; emotions eg working outside in, working inside out; interpretation of colours

Techniques: types of movement eg concrete, stylized, exaggerated, minuscule, abstract; walks eg on the spot, front, profile; slow motion; against the wind; running; weightlessness; connect; weight; lift; tension and release; throwing and catching; pushing and pulling; articulations eg rotations, inclinations, translations, head, neck, chest, waist, pelvis, legs; designs eg neutral, single, double triple; fixed point; isolation; counterweight; Frozen Attitude; tableaux; balance

Forms: corporeal mime; story-telling; masks; archetypes and caricatures; Commedia Dell'Arte

3 Be able to create and rehearse mime performances

Creation: improvisation; inspiration; find different stimuli; use different techniques; experiment; energy and focus; character development; different styles eg comedy, tragedy, expressionism, abstract; decide on final version

Range: abstract or literal; narrative drive; fiction, non-fiction; street performance; site-specific; use of other visual elements eg props, costumes, lights; voice and sound eg recorded or live

Rehearsal: rehearsal schedule; deadlines; scene analysis and focus; physical and mental preparation, warm-up; response to direction eg group or self direction; rehearsal discipline; time management; health and safety; use of space ie spatial awareness, creation and manipulation of performing space; communication of mood and emotion; energy and focus; use of props, costume, sound, lights; working together as an ensemble

Review: review own strengths and weaknesses as a mime/physical performer; setting targets for development; apply feedback and findings to work in progress; ability to respond to instructions; ability to give instructions; physical and facial control

4 Be able to perform in mime acts

Performance: communication through movement, gesture, sound, voice; timing; spatial awareness; communication with audience and/or other performers; focus and concentration

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 explain the origins and development of mime, recognising key influences in methods and techniques [IE, CT, RL, SM]	M1 explain the origins and developments of mime, making clear judgements about key influences, working methods and techniques	D1 analyse the origins and developments of mime, making salient judgements concerning key influences, working methods and techniques
P2 develop individual mime skills, with support and guidance [IE, CT]	M2 develop and hone individual mime skills, with minimum support and guidance	D2 perfect individual mime skills, with minimum support and guidance
P3 devise and rehearse one group and one solo piece with support and guidance, using some appropriate skills to communicate meaning to an audience [IE, CT, TW, SM, EP]	M3 devise and rehearse one group and one solo piece with minimum support and guidance, using appropriate mime skills and techniques in the development of performances	D3 devise and rehearse one group and one solo piece independently, using advanced mime skills and techniques in the development of the performances
P4 perform one group and one solo piece, communicating with the audience. [RL, SM]	M4 perform one group and one solo piece, demonstrating technique and concentration and communicating effectively with the audience.	D4 perform one group and one solo piece, demonstrating a high level of focus and skill and communicating successfully with the 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

The unit should be delivered through a combination of research, discussions, practical workshops, rehearsals and experimentation to allow learners to both analyse the key influences of mime and to create and explore material and subject matter. Learners should be encouraged to use a working diary and or/portfolio for their research and development work. It is essential that learners explore the development of mime technique together with its usage in a range of performance work. In exploration, learners may analyse mime in antiquity, medieval mime, Commedia dell'Arte, Elizabethan dumb show, pantomime, silent film comedy, the French Mime school, corporeal mime and contemporary mime in order to provide a broad basis for their work. The learner should analyse working methods and techniques, aesthetics, style and themes and the content of the practitioners' and artists' work. This should be related closely to the social, cultural, political, historical and economic conditions. Learners should be encouraged to try as many different techniques as possible before deciding on the 'best' to demonstrate for the assessment. The learner needs to be made aware of the artistic choices that are available which must enhance their performance, so props must become an integral part of the piece and controlled; clothes must assist in movement and not change or obscure it and technical operations should be used when essential.

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
<p>Introduction to the unit.</p> <p>Outline of assignments and projects.</p> <p>Visit to performance/post performance discussion.</p>
<p>Assignment 1: Origins and Development of Mime – P1, M1, D1</p> <p>History and development of mime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• research the work of two key practitioners• taking part in lectures, research, discussions and practical workshops• watch examples of mime on DVD• present research findings to group.
<p>Assignment 2: Demonstrate Two Contrasting Techniques – P2, M2, D2</p> <p>Skills audit of learners' skills and performance techniques.</p> <p>Identifying own area of interest and possible application of skills and talent.</p> <p>Workshop and practise two contrasting techniques developed by one of the key practitioners leading to a demonstration.</p>

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Assignment 3: Devise, Rehearse and Perform Solo and Group Pieces – P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4

Rehearsing the material, setting, recording and reviewing targets.

Responding to feedback and modifying the 'acts' as they develop.

Working with other production elements eg costume, lighting, set (if appropriate).

Taking part in 'run throughs' with other performers.

Rehearsing and performing one solo piece and one group piece.

Assessment

There are four elements to the assessment of work for this unit:

- demonstrating understanding of the origins and development of mime
- developing individual mime skills
- creating and rehearsing two performances; one solo and one group
- performing the work to an audience.

Evidence of understanding of the history and key influences in mime and of the chosen practitioners will be provided by discussion, the working portfolio/notebook and practical exercises in the studio related to them. Tutors will observe, record and assess development in mime technique and skills in the workshop and then record a formal assessment of the demonstration of the contrasting practitioner techniques, the solo and group performances.

Learning outcome 1 requires learners to demonstrate their understanding of the origins and development of mime performance, having looked at the historical and cultural context of mime as an art form. Differentiation between pass, merit and distinction will be apparent through the depth of understanding that is shown. Learners will need to articulate their understanding in written and/or spoken form, so it will be necessary for them to produce some kind of report (which can be written or recorded on DVD, or a combination of the two) that will enable them to talk and/or write about what they have understood about mime. A suitable alternative form of assessment is for each learner to give a presentation comparing at least two mime practitioners or historical periods.

For learning outcome 2 learners are required to develop mime skills and techniques; they should be introduced to a range of skills, techniques and forms before decisions are made on which skills will be developed for performance and assessment.

For learning outcome 3 and 4, learners should have a sustained involvement of at least three minutes in the group piece and evidence of ensemble work in devising and rehearsing. The solo work should last between three to five minutes. Evidence of development of skills and performance review can be presented through portfolio/notebook video/DVD recordings, tutor observations and peer assessment. Performances should consist of material that has been developed through rehearsals, with evidence of all the processes recorded on video/DVD and in the working diary/portfolio.

For P1, learners will be able to recognise key influences in the history of mime performance with examples. There will be some explanation of why the selected acts are important but any conclusions will rely heavily on the sources that have been used for research.

For M1, learners will be able to explain mime acts and their cultural context with examples and give reasons why they have chosen them. There will be some attempt at personal insight and an explanation given as to why the particular artists chosen might be considered important examples.

For D1, learners will carry out research which is detailed and relevant to the mime performers chosen. The acts and historical information will be chosen with a clear justification and the research material will be carefully analysed and used in a selective way to inform their learning about the selected aspects. Learners achieving distinction will be able to demonstrate a consistently informed approach to their understanding. Distinction level work will be characterised by the use of comparison between acts, a personal response informed by research and knowledge and a sense of curiosity illustrated by the extent and detail of the work. Distinction level learners will be able to communicate their understanding using the appropriate language and terminology confidently and accurately.

For P2, learners will show they can explore a range of mime skills but will rely on tutor support to develop their technique. For M2, learners will use their imagination in their explorations; they will have started to take risks and will work hard to improve and refine their technique. For D2, there will be a clear sense of willingness to experiment with ideas and stimuli. The learners will develop their skills with confidence and dedication; the results will be impressive and sophisticated.

For P3, learners will take their explorations towards the building of the two performances; they must rehearse using relevant rehearsal and mime skills, giving and accepting criticism, mastering the means to improve and refine their work through reviewing their work. They will work cooperatively with their peers. For M3, learners' development will show some sensitivity to the needs of the material, and the audience for whom it is intended; there will be full cooperation with peers and learners will show full commitment to the journey that the rehearsals are taking. For D3, the use of mime skills will result in sensitively interpreted and realised performances; rehearsals will be creative experiences, where risks are common and imagination is an important influence.

For P4, learners will perform their work to audience with clarity and skill. For M4, learners will fully communicate the meaning, style and aesthetic of the performance to the intended audience. For D4, learners will perform with precision, focus and confidence.

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 Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1	Origins and Development of Mime	Write and present a short introduction of the work of two chosen practitioners for a young audience.	Learners must submit the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• written document• portfolio of research audio/visual recordings.
P2, M2, D2	Demonstrate Two Contrasting Techniques	Develop skills as a mime artist and physical performer.	Tutor, peer and personal assessment. Audio/visual recordings of workshops and rehearsals.
P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4	Devise, Rehearse and Perform Solo and Group Piece	Perform in a series of short sketches in a variety of locations in and around the theatre space.	Tutor, peer and personal assessment. Audio/visual recordings of performances.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Performing and Production Arts sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Performing and Production Arts suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	Developing Physical Theatre Performance	Developing Physical Theatre
	The Development of Drama	Applying Physical Theatre
	Acting Skills and Techniques	Principles of Acting
		Applying Acting Styles
		Storytelling as Performance
		Developing Styles in Clowning
		Movement in Performance

Essential resources

It is essential that learners think about what they train in; appropriate clothes to be able to see the body move. A suitable space is required for this unit: a studio/workshop/performance space with mats and mirrors. Access to a well equipped library is important. It would be useful, although not essential, to have access to sound and lighting equipment, video camera and video/DVD playback facilities. It is essential for learners to have access to video/DVD and live performances by mime/physical theatre practitioners. Centres should encourage practitioners to come into the centre to deliver workshops to learners.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Artaud A – *The Theatre and Its Double* (Grove Press, 1958) ISBN 9780802150301

Aubert C – *The Art of Pantomime* (Dover Publications Inc., 2003) ISBN 9780486428574

Avital S – *Mime and Beyond: The Silent Outcry* (Hohm Press, 1985) ISBN 9780934252102

Avital S – *Mime Work Book* (Lotus Light Publications, 1975) ISBN 9780914794301

Barba E and Savarese N – *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer* (Routledge, 1991) ISBN 9780415378611

Bermel A – *Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty* (Methuen, 1977) ISBN 9780413766601

Braun E – *Meyerhold on Theatre* (Methuen, 1969) ISBN 9780413387905

Callery D – *Through the Body* (Nick Hern Books, 2001) ISBN 9781854596307

Campbell L H – *Mime and Pantomime in the Twentieth Century* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008) ISBN 0773450254

Chamberlain F and Yarrow R (editors) – *Jacques Lecoq and the British Theatre* (Routledge, 2002) ISBN 0415270251

Craig E G – *On the Art of the Theatre* (Routledge, 2009) ISBN 9780415450348

Dennis A – *The Articulate Body* (Drama Book Publishers, 1995) ISBN 9781854596833

Dorcy J – *The Mime* (Robert Speller & Sons, Publishers Inc, 1961)

Farley T – *The Mastery of Mimodrame* (Meriwether Publishing Ltd., 1991) ISBN 9781560434047

Felner F – *Apostles of Silence* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985) ISBN 0838631967

Jamieson L – *Antonin Artaud: From Theory to Practice* (Greenwich Exchange, 2007) ISBN 9781871551983

Kipnis K – *The Mime Book* (Meriwether Publishing Ltd., 1974) ISBN 9780916260552

Leabhart T – *Modern and Post Modern Mime* (Macmillan, 1989) ISBN 0333383109

Leabhart T and Chamberlain F (editors) – *The Decroux Sourcebook* (Routledge, 2008) ISBN 9780415478007

Leabhart T – *Etienne Decroux* (Routledge, 2007) ISBN 9780415354370

Lecoq J – *The Moving Body* (Methuen, 2000) ISBN 0413752607

Lecoq J – *Theatre of Movement and Gesture* (Routledge, 2006) ISBN 0415359449

Lust A – *From the Greek Mimes to Marcel Marceau and Beyond* (Scarecrow Press, 2000) ISBN 9780810845930

Marceau M – *Bip in a Book* (Stewart, Tabori & Chang Inc., 2001) ISBN 1584791306

Marshall L – *The Body Speaks* (Methuen, 2001) ISBN 9781408106822

Martin B – *Marcel Marceau, Master of Mime* (Paddington Press, 1978) ISBN 0448226804

Murray S – *Jacques Lecoq* (Routledge, 2003) ISBN 0415258820

Pitches J – *Vsevolod Meyerhold* (Routledge, 2003) ISBN 0415258847

Richards T – *At Work with Grotowski on Physical Actions* (Routledge, 1995) ISBN 978-0415124928

Rolfe B (editor) – *Mimes on Miming* (Panjandrum, 1979) ISBN 0915572311

Rose M V – *The Actor and His Double, Mime and Movement for the Theatre of Cruelty* (Actor Training & Research Inst. Press, 1986) ISBN 0961608706

Schumacher C (editor) – *Artaud on Theatre* (Methuen, 1989) ISBN 9780413737700

Shepard R – *Mime: The Techniques of Silence* (Vision Press Ltd., 1971) ISBN 9780896760080

Stolzenberg M – *Be a Mime* (Sterling Publishing co., Inc., 2001) ISBN 9780806983943

Walton M (editor) – *Craig on Theatre* (Methuen, 1999) ISBN 0413472205

Journals

Mime Journal

Total Theatre Magazine

Websites

www.mime.info

The World of Mime Theatre

www.mimefest.co.uk

London International Mime Festival

www.totaltheatre.org.uk

Total Theatre Network

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	researching the origins and development of mime developing individual mime skills devising, rehearsing and performing solo and group pieces assessing the solo and group pieces assessing personal strengths and weaknesses
Creative thinkers	developing individual mime skills devising, rehearsing and performing solo and group pieces
Reflective learners	evaluating the solo and group performance evaluating personal strengths and weaknesses as a performer
Team workers	devising, rehearsing and performing a group piece
Self-managers	researching the origins and development of mime devising, rehearsing and performing a solo and group piece evaluating the solo and group piece evaluating personal strengths and weaknesses
Effective participants	devising, rehearsing and performing group piece.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	reviewing own progress and development as performers
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	researching the origins and development of mime
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	explaining and analysing the origins and development of mime.