



CLOWNING, PHYSICAL COMEDY AND SLAPSTICK.

This workshop introduces the student to basic clowning skills including: presentation, character, improvisation, physicality and timing. It is a playful and inquisitive journey into spontaneity and the joy of being a "joker". The theoretical component examines the history and various types of clown including Charlie Chaplin, Mr. Bean, Lucille Ball and Katherine Tate, whilst the practical component involves learning a basic routine and improvising one's own. The workshop is centred on working safely, respectfully and collaboratively; using body awareness and technique.

1. INTRODUCTION AND WARM UP

Prior to the workshop, Legs On The Wall sends links to on-line examples of well-known clowns and routines, including Mr Bean, Lucille Ball and Charlie Chaplin. Students are encouraged to watch these prior to the class and research other examples on their own. Starting with the students' response to this material, the tutor leads a discussion on the principles of clowning and its relationship to physicality. This is followed by warm up exercises that include gentle stretching and 'core' strengthening techniques.

2. CREATING A SENSE OF PLAY

The next section of the workshop introduces the student to the nature of improvisational work through game playing and playful exercises with imagined and/or real props. This includes setting tasks that ask the student to make a succession of quick, off the cuff responses using visceral rather than cognitive responses to bring about a sense of pleasure and fun - an important foundational element for the student to understand and embody.

3. CREATING CHARACTER, BUILDING CONTEXT

Incorporating this sense of fun from the previous tasks, students are asked to work with others in improvised settings. Tasks are given which extend the student clown's awareness. Including: being generous, making and receiving an offer, raising the stakes, less is more and high + low status.

4. LEARNING SKILLS

Students are led through a series of exercises that include basic skills in counterbalance, acrobatics, slapstick and 'falling' with an emphasis on safety, sustainability and low impact. This creates a common vocabulary for the students to use in their improvisations.

5. LEARNING & PERFORMING A ROUTINE

Using the principles of stage combat the students are taught a basic slapstick routine and encouraged to improvise using character and clown in their responses. Once learnt, students perform these with props and costume elements in front of their peers.



6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The tutor leads a discussion and analysis of the performances, encouraging the students to actively engage and respond to their peers' routines. To integrate the theory with the practice, this discussion ties in the various themes and ideas explored during class such as timing, physicality, focus, attention, high/low status and making an offer.