

Evaluating performance technology in drama assignment

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After viewing the production of Joy Fear & Poetry, it is evident that the use of performance technologies both live and pre-recorded, effectively enhance the space, mood and overall meaning of the play. The technologies used include digital projection, lighting and sound which are all neatly integrated to produce an insightful performance that frames the daily ideas, perspectives and experiences of children of various ages and cultural backgrounds.

The incorporated performance ultimately used in conjunction with the use of space, enriches the meaning of each scene. The set of Joy Fear & Poetry consists of a plain cardboard structure positioned in the middle of the performance space. With the assistance of lighting and projected images, the space transforms to visually assist the dramatic action and/or meaning. An example of this is introduced in the beginning as the child actors use a couple of weak torch lights to explore the black area surrounding them.

The thin rays are exchanged for spotlights which gradually illuminate the stage. In a dramatic context, this draws on the importance of joy to children and how it explores it can introduce various revenues of the world they live in by "taking risks and make[long] discoveries" (Bell, dir. Bud). The lighting is also effectively used to indicate what the focus of the scene is on. During the first section, Joy, the lighting was outside the house structure, creating an open and much larger area for the actors to work in.

However the lighting gradually creeps closer to the house leading into the second section of fear. This deliberate effect highlights the increasing finding that childhood fears are founded and manifested at home. Projection is a

further performance technology Incorporated throughout the production. One of the most effective examples involved a girl sitting in a cube hole within the structure, behind a scrim with a tinted light projected to see a silhouetted object. This was effective as it proposed an illusion of a huge centre space and drew the focus towards the shadowed Image of a person.

Similarly the child tries to escape her fears, retreating o a smaller area, under the house, to feel superior over her problems. Projection Is later used to Meltzer the space, as the children share scary stones, through projecting their live recorded face, 11th only with a single torch, onto small screens. This represents the engulfing fear around them being in control over them and the single light ray being too small to penetrate the overwhelming gloom. It can therefore be seen that the performance technologies integrated throughout the production, efficiently enhance the space, which provides much dramatic meaning.

Joy Fear & Poetry also successfully uses sound, lighting and projections to create mood, a handy tool for developing dramatic meaning in the play. Through the right use of performance technologies an appropriate and affective mood was created for each section. A prime example can be seen in the first section as the pre-recorded children's laughter, disco lighting and energetic music exemplifies the Joy of childhood and play. This combination further creates an eased, happy mood which relaxes both the audience and actors.

In a later section, a light is focused on a panel of children who are Interviewing a man on two Issues. Pre-recorded music of each situation is

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softly playing in the background, coupled with drawing being projected of interrogated man, separating the children and adult, providing the children with superiority and control over the situation. The combination of lighting, music and images work together to create suspense, provide the audience with context, and arose certain feelings (such as angry) towards the issue being dealt with.

Suspense is further evoked when the girl under the house again, behind the scrim, and common nightmares of children are projected onto the screen followed with flames. The silence and darkness engulfing the projections conjure up feelings of apprehension and helplessness, as the adult instinct is to “manage the risk” (Bell, dir. Bud) not to be exposed to the guarded truths, mercilessly expressed and enhanced through the use of the performance technology. The multimedia used throughout Joy Fear;

Poetry, effectively develops the dramatic meaning through the variety of moods created and expressed. As is evident, Joy Fear ; Poetry takes an honest and insightful approach to exploring a collection of childhoods and looking at the good and bad in each. The performance technology involved allows the audience to interact with childhood and to be exposed to the harsh reality of what it has become today. Further accompanied by the innovative and manipulative use of space and mood, it was quite successful in enriching the dramatic significance of the production.