

Visual, aural and spatial elements essay



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Our practical task- was to stage a scene from the play in order to maximise its comic impact, with an awareness of its visual, aural and spatial elements and what these communicated to an audience. Our own group's part of the play was from the bottom of page 8-half way down page 13.

This scene involves The Maniac, The Constable, Bertozzo, Pissani and The Super. We tried to use as many Fo-esque styles as we could when possible and take into consideration the visual, aural and spatial aspects and how these combine to create comedy. Our own sceneVisualWhen we first started to direct our part of the play as a group we were able to choose costumes to help with its visual impact. The constable had a Police uniform on and also a plastic police hat, it was a little child's dressing up hat. It was blue plastic with a silver badge on the front of it, I think this worked really well as it came across as very stereotypical to Fo's opinion on people in authority, so it fitted in quite well. It drew attention to the cowardly, childish nature of the Constable.

We decided to have Bertozzo, Pissani and The Super wearing black coloured suits and golden coloured tie. We chose the colour of the tie to be gold because is it a bold colour and also can show wealth and status. This was quite fitting as they all like to think they are in command and of a high status. The Maniac's costume was flamboyant and very wacky and colourful. He had a pink feather boa, a crazy hat and a large multi-coloured coat on and bright yellow shopping bags, which are used to store his costumes. All the bright and bold colours were to symbolise his personality.

The outfit was all jumbled together which worked really well and it gave a great visual impact. He became a sudden splash of exuberance in a drab, dark, bureaucratic office. As well as discussing costumes we also thought about what set we could have had. We wanted quite a minimalistic and realistic set. Dario Fo used to want his audience to know that his plays were in a sense realistic as they discussed real life issues (the 'V'effect), so we thought we should use this style as it would be appropriate.

We as a group chose to have a desk for Bertozzo, like an office desk and I think a coat stand could also have been used. The set would have been enclosed by three walls (box set), like the walls of the office and would have been face on to the audience, with the walls angled to allow for slight-lines. We also decided to use a few 'Epic' devices as we thought it would be very fitting and very much a Fo-esque style. We used asides to audience, for example when the Maniac is trying to explain who Inspector Pissani is to Bertozzo he turns to the audience and says – "I've Struck oil!" Aural-There are different parts of our section of the play where we use a wide variety of volume and dynamics which really helps to add to the aural impact of our section of the play as a whole.

We decided to have the Maniac's accent as Liverpudlian to show his working-class roots and quick-thinking brain. We staged it so that at the beginning of the play the Maniac started off really quietly then as his personality became clearer to the audience he then projected his voice in a much louder, quicker manner to show clearly his energy and liveliness. Fo used to love fast-moving snippets of action so we tried to portray this through the Maniac's voice. To portray the Constable as being a bit thick we decided to have his

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voice as very deep, slow and slightly Cockney which really contrasted aurally with the Maniac's.

There were also parts where we altered the tempo of our voices for added aural impact which really worked well to add verbal humour to the performance. Spatial-To make use of all the space we had, we wanted to use as much as possible when necessary. The Constable and Bertozzo were often standing quite close together, this was done as we wanted to show that the two of them thought they could overpower the Maniac, by showing him that there were two of them together they perhaps thought that the Maniac might have been threatened but it didn't work. However contrasting this there was always distance kept between the Maniac and the other two.

They thought he was a bit crazy so the Constable and Bertozzo never wanted to get up close and personal to the Maniac if they didn't have to. The use of levels was quite important as well throughout our own performance. The Maniac was always up and down to generate lots of energy in the play. We also thought it would be effective if we alienated the audience's space, helping to break the invisible fourth wall. The Play as a whole
Costume
Overall the costumes for each individual character had to suit their personality which will help to enhance their roles and visual impact. Hopefully my designs and sketches show this.

Set
The set would be quite realistic and the furniture would be very minimal. The setting would just be in the office with the three walls enclosing it. There would be a door in one wall for people to exit and enter through- this would help the play aurally as the door could then actually be slammed for a sound

effect. A window would also be needed, preferably in the middle of the back wall so it could be a central focus, and a permanent reminder of the tragic death. Props Apart from the furniture and costumes not many props would be necessary for anyone apart from the Maniac who would need his carrier bags full of his humorous disguises and eccentric objects with which to ridicule the police. Lighting I think only natural lighting should be used as it would enhance the fact that the play does have realistic points.

Using gels etc would cause the play to lose its 'V' effect with the audience. Aural Effects Throughout the play aural effects are very important, whether they are performed by us, like the dynamics of voices, actual sound effects like blowing raspberries, plain silence. They all help to enhance the play itself and give the audience another aspect to consider. Song We decided to only have the Maniac using songs to really show how lively and energetic he is compared to the other characters. The Constable, Bertozzo, Pissani and The Super. He also uses song as a way of confusing them.

Rhythm of Dialogue To show his intensity, we decided it would be appropriate for the Maniac to deliver his lines in a very rushed manner and also this would help create and enhance his character. This would be very dissimilar to the way in which the other characters delivered their lines as the rhythm and pace of their dialogue would be less hasty. The rhythm would have an effect on the aural impact as it would show the characters diversity.

Conclusion Overall the three main aspects, Visual, Aural and Spatial are all enormously important to the play as a whole.

The visual aspects, including the costumes and props help to set the scene in the play and get across diverse characters to the audience and helped towards the visual humour of the play. On the other hand, slapstick is also a visual aspect as well; slapstick can be really comic and can make a play. The aural aspects in the play aren't necessarily needed but they help to make the play more realistic. The other side of aural aspects such as people's volume of voice, or dialogue being delivered at a quicker pace all help to add to the verbal humour and also to create the appropriate atmospheres which is also very important. The spatial elements also help to create the correct ambience; by using spatial elements correctly it can visually help also, just like using levels. All three have relative importance in the play but after taking into account all of them, I find visual to be more important.

There seems to be more ways visually that a play can be influenced, like slapstick, energetic movements, gestures and costumes etc, than there are for Aural and Spatial.