

11

PHYSICAL THEATRE: ROLL UP! ROLL UP!

WHY STUDY PHYSICAL THEATRE?

This chapter explores the techniques and conventions of physical theatre. Physical theatre is a unique dramatic form in which the performers focus upon the movement of their bodies to create meaning. Physical theatre is often visually powerful, and may rely upon the power of symbolism to achieve a dramatic effect. By exploring and discussing physical theatre, you will appreciate and understand the ways in which this dramatic form can create powerful and engaging theatre.

This chapter is divided into the following units:

- 11.1 Legs On The Wall: a physical theatre company
- 11.2 Physical theatre exercises
- 11.3 Performing a physical theatre script
- 11.4 Performance task: physical theatre

OUTCOMES

In this chapter you will:

- identify the techniques and conventions of a physical theatre performance
- develop movement skills to create counterbalances and contact roles
- apply a process to create, record and perform a physical theatre performance
- create, perform and evaluate a physical theatre performance.





Newspix/Stephen Cooper

Performers from the
Legs On The Wall theatre
company

11.1 Legs On The Wall: a physical theatre company

Our whole body must adapt to every movement no matter how small. If we pick up a piece of ice from the ground, our whole body must react to this movement and the cold.

Jerzy Grotowski – Polish theatre director



HINT

In the 'metaphoric narrative' of a performance, the dramatic action works symbolically to establish atmosphere and communicate themes and issues. For example, a performance features an actor who uses a suitcase as a prop. The suitcase contains heavy and dark objects. The character never speaks and is very attached to the suitcase, taking it everywhere, sleeping on it and refusing to let others take it away. The metaphoric narrative of the dramatic action is that the character is unable to let go of their 'emotional baggage'.

COMPANY HISTORY

The Legs On The Wall theatre company began in 1986 with the primary aim of creating a performance style that uses circus skills to tell stories as emotional journeys. The company also wanted to understand how visual images affect people emotionally, and how 'intention' adds meaning to a physical skill.

The group has evolved from performing cabaret in a community hall to being recognised as a world-renowned performing arts company, which today receives continuing invitations to perform. Legs On The Wall has regularly toured Australia and has consistently been part of the international circuit, touring to Scotland to perform in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, as well as to Germany, Brazil, New Zealand, Columbia, the Netherlands and Brussels.

CREATING AUSTRALIAN PERFORMANCE WORK

The work of Legs On The Wall is characterised by the willingness of the company to take risks—both in the physical performance of the actors and in the look, style and design of performances. The company's aim is to communicate Australian stories to a broad audience using ideas and feelings in radical yet accessible theatrical contexts. Legs On The Wall achieves this by making theatre that breaks down the barriers between circus, theatre and dance, as well as between literal and metaphoric narrative.

Beginning with a thematic, text, physical or site-based idea, the company uses strong physical language as a primary source for the building of narrative. Each production is a reaction to what is happening in the world at a personal or global level. The company regularly works with new directors, which allows for fresh perspectives and approaches to physical theatre performance.

COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

- 1 Visit the Legs On The Wall website and view images and descriptions of past productions. Choose one production and explain how the choreography helped to communicate the themes and issues of the performance.
- 2 Research circus as a performance form: its origins, features and history. Your research may examine the circuses of China, Russia and Canada, as well as those of Australia. As part of your research, focus on the development of acrobatics as a form of entertainment.
- 3 Using your research on circus and your knowledge of Legs On The Wall, list the similarities and differences between a Legs On The Wall performance and a circus performance.



Legs On The Wall
Legs On The Wall –
Performance Compilation



AAP Image/Katja Ogrin

Aerial performers from Legs On The Wall perform in a scene from *Homeland*.

11.2 Physical theatre exercises

Before undertaking physical exercises, you should make sure you adequately stretch and relax your muscles. Refer back to chapter 1 for other exercises that may be useful in your study of the physical theatre form.

EXERCISE

WARMING UP

1 Align posture

Stand with your eyes closed. Check your posture so that your stomach is pulled in slightly, your shoulders are relaxed, and your feet are under your hips and are parallel. Check your head is not tipped forward or backward.

2 Spine rolls

Complete four spine rolls—one over eight counts, one over four counts, one over two counts, and one in one count. Repeat three times. Remember to keep your shoulders and neck loose. (See chapter 1, p. 15 if you need a reminder of how to perform a spine roll.)

3 Neck stretch

Stand with a relaxed and aligned posture. Bring one arm up above your head. Drop the arm from the elbow so that the hand is on one side of your head. Leave your other arm by your side but push down with the heel of the hand while raising the fingers upwards. As you push down with the heel of one hand, simultaneously pull your head gently to one side to stretch your neck. Relax, and repeat using the opposite side.



HINT

Connecting the inhalation and exhalation of breath with your stretches helps to extend the stretch and establish focus. Inhale when you stretch, and exhale when you relax.



4 Wrist and shoulder warm-up

Begin by waving both hands from the wrist so they are loose and floppy. Place your left hand on your left shoulder and your right hand on your right shoulder so that your elbows point forward. In this position, loosen your shoulders by rotating your arms five times in each direction.

Now hold both arms out to either side. Raise your hands from the wrists, and then relax them. Drop your hands even further so that they hang down lower. Repeat this sequence quickly six times, and then relax.

5 Cat stretch

On all fours, form a table shape. Make sure your wrists are under your shoulders and that your middle fingers are pointing forward. Turn the inside of your elbows slightly to face each other. Keep your hands flat and push down into the floor with your fingertips. Make sure your thighs are under your hips and your knees are not too close together. Keep your stomach firm. Using the full motion of your spine, slowly arch your back up like a cat and hold for a moment. Return to the table position. Now arch down by dropping your stomach and raising your head to look at the ceiling. Hold for a moment and return to the table position. Slowly look over your left shoulder behind you and repeat on the right-hand side. Relax.

6 Claw

Staying on all fours, stretch one arm out to one side and form your fingers into a claw position with the fingertips digging into the floor. Rest your other arm on the elbow with the forearm out along the floor. Simultaneously push the elbow into the floor and attempt to draw the clawed hand towards you. Relax. Swap sides and repeat.

7 Downward dog

From your position on all fours, push your toes and hands into the floor while lifting your hips high into the air. Keep your chin to your chest and relax the neck. Simultaneously press your heels down while pushing your hands into the floor.

8 Touching toes

Sitting down, stretch your legs out in front of you. Flex your feet towards the body and away from the body. Lean forward from the hips. Relax the upper body. Gently slide your arms down your legs to a stretch that is comfortable for you. Gently grasp your lower legs. Breathe in and exhale as you count to five. Breathe in and then gently reach forward. Only reach as far as you find comfortable.



COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

While attempting the following exercises, focus on the shapes that are being created. What do these shapes remind you of? How do they make you feel, both as an audience member and a participant? While executing and analysing these exercises, try to remain open to the feelings or stories that the shapes evoke.

EXERCISE

COUNTERBALANCES

The basic principles of counterbalance can be applied in a wide variety of contexts such as partner balance, acrobatics, contact improvisation and the creation of controlled movement.



1 Leaning in

Leaning sit

Stand back-to-back with a partner, with your hips and shoulders touching. Lean into each other, and while maintaining contact with your hips and shoulders, walk your feet outwards so that you arrive in a sitting position supported by your partner. It is important here that you maintain pressure between the contacting points of the body. Remember that this is a 'counterbalance'—your partner should be in balance with you and the weight should be evenly distributed between both of you. The angle of balance will vary slightly for different couples.

From this seated position, try lowering yourselves to the floor by bending your knees and pressing into each other. Then, while maintaining contact with your partner, try standing up.

Variations on leaning in

Following on from the standing up position described above, try to shift the point of contact to a different part of the body, while staying in contact with your partner.

Try rolling sideways onto your shoulder so that you and your partner are both facing the same direction. Continue rolling onto your fronts so that your chests are touching, with your heads on each other's shoulders.

From this position, change the point of contact to the hands, so that you are leaning into your partner hand-to-hand with straight arms (you may need to walk your feet out further to achieve this). Now try shifting your hands to different parts of your partner's body while still leaning into your partner (you may have to bend your arms and legs, or alter the height and angle of your body).

From this position you can also change the points of the body that are in contact. Try locking shoulders and pushing against each other (as in a rugby scrum). Finally, try returning to the back-to-back position without using your hands.



HINT

In counterbalances, always move slowly so that your partner can anticipate your movement and respond accordingly. Always stay in complete control of your movements to protect yourself and your partner. Try to breathe in unison with your partner to establish a common rhythm. This will also help you and your partner to sustain focus.



HINT

In these exercises, it is important that you maintain complete focus. This will create a safe environment for you and those you work with.





HINT

It is best not to talk during your practice of these exercises. Learn to negotiate the changes in position in silence.



2 Contact rolling in kneeling position

In this exercise, you and your partner begin kneeling on all fours next to each other. You take turns to contact roll across each other's backs.

- Kneel on all fours side-by-side next to a partner who is in the same position. Make sure that your wrists are directly beneath your shoulders and that the insides of your elbows are turned to face each other. Check your knees are directly beneath your hips (hip-width apart), and that you are in contact with your partner (hips, sides, shoulders and arms touching). You should also lean slightly into your partner's body, so that there is pressure between you. Keep your back straight—don't arch it. The shape you make should feel very solid.
- Push your toes into the floor and straighten your legs while maintaining contact with your partner, who remains in the original position. Keep your hands and feet on the ground for a moment.
- Lift your outside arm and roll onto your partner's back so that you are looking at the ceiling and lying on your back.
- Continue to roll to the other side of your partner's body, ending in the kneeling position from which you started, but on the opposite side. Your partner then repeats the contact roll over your body, and the movement travels across the space.



Variations on contact rolling in a kneeling position

- Roll onto your partner's back so that you are lying facing the ceiling. Sit up so that you are positioned on their hips (as if you are sitting on a chair). Now carefully experiment with different ways of balancing your body on your partner's back. Try lying on your side in a foetal position, so that your head is near your partner's and your hips are on their hips. Try sliding slowly off your partner's back, feet first onto the floor.
- As you contact roll across the space, make the last point of contact with your partner into the place from which the next roll is initiated. For example, if your partner ends up kneeling next to you with only their arm touching you, try a contact roll that begins from the arm. While exploring this exercise, you may find that you do not end up kneeling in full contact with your partner. This is fine as long as some part of your body is in contact. You should also try to finish each roll on all fours in a stable position for your partner to then roll across.





3 Arena

Work with a partner. Imagine you have a circular performance area to work in. When you stand outside the circle you are 'offstage'. When you step into the circle you are 'onstage', and need to provide the appropriate level of focus and energy. One of you enters the arena and creates a strong shape. The other person enters the arena and connects with their partner by creating a gentle lean or a counterbalance. Hold this for a moment and then, finding your own weight, exit the arena. Repeat with each person alternately offering a starting shape.

4 Mirror or complement

Using the concept of the arena, the class sits in a circle. One person enters the arena and creates a strong shape. One at a time, four or five others enter the arena and create a shape that either mirrors or complements the shape of the first person. Look for ways to create interesting tableaux using physical shape, space and levels.

5 Moving as text

In a physical theatre, process text can act as a starting point for creating action. Here are some methods for devising movement from a text. The text can be anything, such as a monologue in a play, a passage in a novel or an article in a newspaper.

- Read the text first. Look for the rhythm of the text, including pauses. Also identify significant images and metaphors.
- Underline the verbs in the text. Create a physical movement for each verb (for instance, a star jump for the word 'catch', or a swinging of the arms for the word 'write').
- Link the movements together to form a sequence. Consider how you will create transitions from one movement to the next.
- Now analyse the sequence in view of the text from which it was created. What does the sequence express? Is it similar or completely different to the themes of the text?
- Choose an aspect of your chosen text that appeals to you and use this as the basis for creating a short sequence. For instance, how does the text make you feel? If it fills you with wonder, create some movement based on this sense of wonder. Try to be lateral in your thinking. For example, you could create a movement for each letter of the word 'wonder' and link the movements into a sequence.
- Memorise your chosen text. Devise a counterbalance sequence using one of the suggested methods listed above. Now recite your text while performing your counterbalance sequence, allowing the physicality of your sequence to affect the way in which you recite your text. What does the movement do to the text? Is it easier or harder to speak text while moving? What new meaning, if any, does this combination of exercises create?



HINT

A 'metaphor' is a figure of speech in which one thing is identified with another. For example, 'She was a tower of strength during the crisis'. In drama, an object or effect can be a metaphor, or symbol, representing something other than itself.



HINT

As you rehearse your text interpretation, be aware of how the use of breath, pauses and silences affects the rhythm of your performance.



National Theatre Discover
– Frantic Assembly
Masterclass: Building
Blocks for Devising
National Theatre Discover
– Frantic Assembly
Masterclass: Learning
To Fly
KAGE – Contemporary
Dance Theatre

11.3 Performing a physical theatre script

INTERPRETING TEXT USING PHYSICAL THEATRE

Use the following poem as the basis for a physical theatre performance. You may choose to perform all or only part of the poem. Use the guidelines for interpreting text outlined in the ‘moving as text’ exercise. In your preparation, consider how your performance might incorporate an effective use of space, levels, movement, counter-balances, contact rolls, dialogue and vocal dynamics.

SONG FOR AN EXILE IN AUSTRALIA

in a loveless season in Australia
the body is passing through the sun of spring
decaying gradually disconnected with life
so I cover up every face of clocks
to forget time
to forget every face that lifts up
from under the white shroud of corpses
the spring has lost its power of medium
and the body can't understand its own meaning
woodenly I wait for the coming of dusk
knowing very well that nothing will come out of it
like every disappearing season
that will not leave her shadows

in a poemless season in Australia
I read my poems of the past
like a stranger in hundreds of years
reading books left to him by his ancestors
I see thousands of lines
shoot past the edge of dreams
but my paralysed brain can't pull itself out of
the wheel-chair of imagination
like my decayed body

in a riverless season in Australia
the boundless grass land drives me crazy
for my skin is thirsty for the baptism by murky rivers
and my train of thoughts is chasing waves
that can rush a thousand miles a second
listen! the lawn-mower next door starts its routine

cutting hair for the spring mourning for the season
hoping to find a fault in the ground
where there is a fault there is life running

in a season without language in Australia
I have lost my weight in undeveloped no-person's land
like a wild devil roaming
I sow my language into the alien soil
where it sends forth strange flowers that no one recognizes
and all of a sudden I find my tongue held
between two languages like a vice

in a season of self-exile in Australia
I feel doubly alienated
the death of the old world has such weird attractions
while the light of the new world has somehow darkened

in a season without love in Australia
my body my poetry
in a season without language in Australia
my interference, my waves of electricity
in a season without death in Australia
I see the black cat acquiring an eternal existence
in the afternoon sun and I see
the reflection of a car above the distant trees

in a season without imagination
in a desireless season
in Australia
in Australia

in Australia

Ouyang Yu, Moon over Melbourne



COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

Evaluate one group's performance of the poem *Song for an Exile in Australia*. Comment on their use of movement, space and vocal dynamics to realise the intention of the poem. In your evaluation, describe two specific moments that helped establish tension for the audience.

PRACTITIONER PROFILE

CONRAD PAGE

Physical Theatre Teacher, Director and Actor

Conrad Page studied a Bachelor of Arts (Performance) at the Victorian College of the Arts and later completed a Diploma of Education. He also trained with Circus Oz and the Fruit Fly Circus. Conrad has performed with the Sydney Theatre Company, Belvoir Company B and State of Play; he has toured the world with self-devised physical theatre shows. Conrad has taught theatre skills at the Corrugated Iron Youth Theatre in Darwin, the Australian Theatre for Young People, Theatre Nepean at the University of Western Sydney and the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA). As senior Drama teacher at Saint Ignatius' College in Riverview, Sydney, Conrad manages the co-curricular Drama and productions.

Conrad writes, 'I believe that the use of physical movement is an essential tool for every performer when exploring character, text and ensemble work. The performer learns to explore text from a "visceral" (emotional) base by grounding the body and connecting to the action. This allows the performer to push boundaries and welcome new possibilities. A connected body means a connected audience.'



Courtesy of Conrad Page

Conrad Page

PHYSICAL THEATRE SCRIPT EXTRACT

A physical theatre script extract has been provided as an example of how you might record a physical theatre performance. The extract is from the *Legs On The Wall* performance of *Runners Up*. It contains examples of the techniques and conventions used in physical theatre. As you read through the extract, identify the techniques and conventions that have been used; for example, the use of minimal dialogue. To do this, ask yourself the following questions:

- How does a physical theatre performer use movement, body language and gesture? Is the use of movement realistic or non-realistic? In your evaluation, consider rhythm, energy, control and facial expression. How is this use of movement different to a performer's use of movement in other dramatic forms?
- What is the actor–audience relationship in a physical theatre performance?
- Have you seen any forms of theatre that are similar in performance style to *Runners Up*? What are the similarities? What are the differences?

It is recommended that you do not perform the *Runners Up* script without the appropriate training, rehearsal and precautions.

RUNNERS UP (EXTRACT)

In the following scene from *Runners Up*, the central character is an 'armchair athlete', whose fantasy, to become his sporting hero, is played out on and around his armchair. The three other characters are his mates, real and imagined. They are dressed in singlets (which have individual colours, like jockey silks) and black shorts.

After a hard Saturday morning at work, the main character comes home to watch the football final. He is glued to the television, as are his mates. As they watch the game,



Theatre Links – Physical Theatre
Devising Physical Theatre
BBC Bitesize – Physical Theatre

their passion for sport and the highs and lows of the competition are symbolically represented and heightened through physical theatre.

The players use their own names: Kerry (KY) is the main character, and the others are Telford (T), Rowan (R) and Kirk (K). In the production, the armchair was reinforced to support the choreography and protect the performers. It was located in a central pool of light, and at points in the performance the players would disappear into the surrounding shadows.



RUNNERS UP – ARMCHAIR ATHLETE

KY *(Brings out the armchair as he enters from upstage centre; he is muttering but becoming clearer.)*

This is it ... Today's the day ... the big one.

(He places the chair in the centre of the stage, walks forward toward the audience and mimes pushing the button on the television.)

That trophy's ours ...

(Walks backward to the chair.)

Yes ...

(He takes off his suit jacket, swings it around his head and throws it behind the chair as he says ...)

... Eighty minutes of ecstasy ...

(Loosens tie, sits and sings ...)

Hear the barrackers shouting, like all barrackers should ...

(He moves through three sitting positions, never taking his eyes off the television. On the third position he leans forward.)

Enough of the dancing girls—bring on the men!

Gird the loins for battle, boys ...

**KY, T, K
AND R** *(together) Gird the loins for battle!*

PLAY #1

- (KY leans back in the chair.)*
- T** *(Runs in front of chair right to left; stepping off arm of chair.)*
- KY** Kicks off ...
- K** *(Runs in front of chair left to right.)*
- KY** ... takes it up ...
- R** *(Dive rolls over front of chair.)*
- KY** ... bunnies ...
- (T runs diagonally downstage to upstage; steps on arm of chair; then places one foot on KY's head and leaps over the back of the chair.)*
- KY** ... like a ballerina.
- (R steps off KY's head too.)*
- KY** Elegant.
- (K steps on arm of chair, balances as KY grabs his leg in a frozen running shape.)*
- KY** Hold the line.

PLAY #2

- KY** In there.
- (T and K run from behind to jump on arms of the chair in a squat; T comes from right side, K from left side. R runs in to stand behind chair.)*
- KY** Get in there.
- T** Get in there.
- (R supports T around the belly. T reaches behind KY and turns upside down.)*
- KY** Get in there.
- T** Get in there *(one leg bent, one leg diagonally up).*
- K** Get in there *(holds T's leg, stands on arm of chair).*
- (R is supporting T around the belly; T's legs frame his face.)*
- KY** Get in there.
- T** Get in there.
- (Getting faster and more intense.)*
- K** Get in there.
- R** Get in there.
- ALL** Get in there.
- (Pause, hold the moment, then melt down in disappointment.)*
- Aagggghhhh ...
- (Return to original position.)*

T ... aagggghhh ...
(KY, K and R all look at T who stops the extended 'aghh'.)

KY *(exploding after returning to television)* Noooo *(his arms hit the others).*
(T, R and K leap off the chair.)

PLAY #3

KY *(Stands on the chair.)*
Bring him down ... Go for the legs ... he can't run without his legs ... round the ankles ... take his ...
(He sits into the back of the chair. T runs from downstage, body slams KY and chair is tipped over backwards.)
... head off!
(KY is on his back with T on top with chair under both on its back.)

R Stacks on. *(Runs in leaps and dives on top. K steps on R's back, then onto chair, standing it up.)*

PLAY #4

K *(Sitting in chair)* Make a decision, mate. If you can't think 'n' chew, spit it out.

KY *(Dive rolls over K, steps to television, then backward shoulder rolls and sits on top of K.)*
Pin him down.

K *(pushes KY to one side)* Get off him. *(Wiggles in front of KY.)*

KY *(pushes K back behind him)* Pin him down.
(T and R do 'the whizzer' behind the chair.)

R *(chanting the nickname of a footballer)* Telf, Telf, Telf.

T Round, round, round.

R AND T Down, down, down.

K Off him.

KY Down.

K Nooo *(as KY pushes K out of the chair to left, reclaiming his territory).*

T AND R Oooohhhh *(like a crowd noise, with hands around mouths)*



COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

After reading through the script extract from the Legs On The Wall performance of *Runners Up*, choose one scene that you enjoyed. Use a pencil to sketch a storyboard of the action in your logbook. You will need to divide the scene into key moments. You only need to draw simple shapes and figures.

EXERCISE

UNPACKING *RUNNERS UP*

1 Interpreting role

After you have read the script extract, choose one role you like and one line that belongs to this role. On the signal from your teacher, adopt a pose showing your interpretation of the role. Make sure the shape you create and the energy conveyed are both strong. On the next signal from your teacher, make a substantial change of physical shape and say the line belonging to the role. Divide the class into thirds. Each group performs their role interpretations for the rest of the class.

2 Comic strip

Divide into groups of four. Allocate the roles of Kerry, Telford, Rowan and Kirk. Using one group member's storyboard from the 'collaborate and think critically' task, re-create a tableau for each frame of one scene. If the scene you have chosen contains any inversions (in which a performer is upside down), change this position so that the performer is safer. Control your use of movement, rhythm and timing to find smooth transitions from one frame to another. Once you have completed your tableaux, add a moment of sound or dialogue to each one.

3 Adapting *Runners Up*

If there are a large number of girls in your class or you are in an all-girls school, convert *Runners Up* into a version where all the characters are female. You might want to continue with the football references or use a different competitive sport as the situation for the stage action. Adapting the script will require you to think about possibilities for keeping or changing colloquial references and terms.



COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

- 1 What messages and ideas about people and sport are communicated through the action of the script?
- 2 Explain how the style of physical theatre performance is effective in communicating the messages and ideas of *Runners Up*.
- 3 What messages about the character Kerry (KY) are conveyed through the performer's use of physical shapes and actions?
- 4 Imagine you are a physical theatre company performer. Outline the steps you would take to prepare for and devise a physical theatre performance.

PERFORMANCE TASK



11.4 Performance task: physical theatre

The task

You are to prepare a four- to six-minute physical theatre performance exploring one day in the life of a character you create. Your performance may be comic or dramatic. You may choose to start the performance at a particular point in the day or from when the character wakes up. The events of the day need to be part of an overall journey for the character. The style of this performance allows for group members to represent objects, feelings or thoughts, as well as other characters. Some ideas for performances are:

- Murphy's law
- wedding day
- moving house
- 21st birthday
- blind date
- waterskiing lesson
- job interview
- animal farm
- detective.

Your performance can include:

- dialogue
- music (live or recorded)
- projected images
- sound effects (live or recorded)
- dance.

You are also required to script your physical theatre performance. Your script can be made up of illustrations or sentences, or a combination of both.

Creating and making a physical theatre performance

- Research ideas for your physical theatre performance—you will need to create an interesting central character.
- Decide on a central focus and intention for your performance.
- Devise the events in the character's day.
- Consider how dramatic techniques such as minimal dialogue, projected images and mime can be incorporated into your performance.
- Consider integral and efficient ways of creating scene transitions.
- Use improvisation in rehearsal to workshop your performance.
- Use appropriate preparation and safety procedures for all physical work.

Performance checklist

You and your teacher will evaluate your work individually using a list of criteria. These criteria relate to your achievement in this task. Some criteria will relate to the achievement of the group. The criteria are listed on the evaluation sheet at the end of this chapter and will be used to evaluate your ability to:

- create an original and engaging physical theatre performance
- incorporate physical theatre techniques and conventions
- demonstrate a high level of energy and control in the use of movement
- incorporate effective and appropriate use of vocal dynamics
- create interesting and appropriate characters
- manipulate the elements of drama to establish tension and to create atmosphere
- incorporate the use of symbol where appropriate.

COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

- 1 Recount the process of developing your physical theatre performance. What problems did you encounter and how did you overcome them?
- 2 Evaluate your physical theatre performance. In your evaluation, comment on the ways in which your piece effectively incorporated the techniques and conventions of physical theatre. For example, an evaluation might read:

Our physical theatre performance was great fun to do. We decided to only use four lines – one for the start of each scene. We also worked on our timing so our synchronised movements were perfect. We incorporated lots of energy in our movement to make the performance exciting. In the running scene, we controlled pace and rhythm to build tension.
- 3 Evaluate one other group's physical theatre performances. In your evaluation, discuss how successful the group was in using movement to communicate character and role. Consider how effectively they chose dramatic form to suit their intention.
- 4 Research the work of the Canadian theatre company Cirque du Soleil. Compare their work with the work of Legs On The Wall. Look for similarities and differences between the two companies.
- 5 Visit the Circus Oz website and prepare a brief report on the company. In your report, identify the key features of the company.



Cirque du Soleil
Circus Oz

Performance task: physical theatre

Student Teacher

Group names

By completing this task you should be able to:

- identify the techniques and conventions of a physical theatre performance
- develop movement skills to create counterbalances and contact rolls
- apply a process to create, record and perform a physical theatre performance
- create, perform and evaluate a physical theatre performance.

Key learning areas	Level of achievement			
	Beginning	Consolidating	Mastering	Excelling
<p>Creating, exploring and presenting ideas using skills, techniques and processes</p> <p>Have you prepared for your physical theatre performance by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • researching ideas for your performance? • selecting a central focus and intention for your performance? • using appropriate preparation and safety procedures for all physical work? <p>Have you incorporated elements of dramatic form, techniques and conventions by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • incorporating physical theatre techniques and conventions? • demonstrating a high level of energy and control in the use of movement? • incorporating an effective and appropriate use of vocal dynamics? • creating interesting and engaging characters through an effective use of focus, energy and belief? • manipulating the elements of drama to establish tension and to create atmosphere? • incorporating the use of symbol where appropriate? <p>Have you completed your physical theatre performance task by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structuring moments of your physical theatre performance into a coherent and polished performance incorporating effective scene transitions? • establishing an appropriate actor–audience relationship? 				
<p>Responding</p> <p>Have you used your critical thinking and communication skills to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effectively convey your understanding of the skills and precautions needed for physical theatre? • effectively communicate a creative process that shows evidence of testing ideas in rehearsal and effectively selecting and shaping a performance in rehearsal? 				

Comments

