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2016-2017 SEASON

I Like to Move It, Move It: Understanding and Utilizing Movement

June 29, 2018

Hello! My name is Hannah Dobrogosz and I am a junior Acting major at Elon University. With our Movement and Devising summer camp for 10th-12th graders kicking off the week of July 23rd, I wanted to give you a backstage look at the wonderful world of movement and show you why movement training and experience is so beneficial to young performers.

All artists have instruments. A singer's instrument is their voice, a pianist's instrument is a piano, and an actor's instrument is their body. I have found movement work to be exceptionally important while studying to be an actor because it showed me how to live comfortably in my body and move with more variety as I've tackled lots of different characters.

Movement is such a fundamental part of every character and has a direct relationship to emotion. You may not realize it, but your movement is often largely inspired by your emotions and gives those around you clues as to what you are feeling, even if you do not verbalize your thoughts and emotions. Think about body language. You may tell your friend that you're fine when you find out that your crush doesn't like you back, however your crossed arms and slumped shoulders may reveal that you are actually feeling pretty bummed out, even if you say otherwise.

Movement reveals not only emotions, but also character. Perhaps you see the same person every week at Starbucks, but you've never spoken to them. Every time you see them, they are sitting at the same corner table with their back to the rest of the room. They have their shoulders slumped and their head hanging low. You've noticed that they are always shaking one of their legs or tapping one of their feet. They fidget with their belongings a lot and rarely look up. What assumptions have you made about this person's character? Maybe they're shy, nervous, introverted, stressed, overworked, antisocial...and the list goes on and on. All you did was observe this person's movements, but you are already creating a characterization for them in your head. This is the power of movement and physicality.



Even if you are an actor, you are only one person, and you will likely play a wide variety of characters in your life. While you may have mastered how you move, you may have no idea how Ruth Younger or Blanche DuBois or Richard III move. Movement training helps you get out of your normal movement patterns and explore all the ways you can safely and effectively use your body as you step into the shoes of different characters.

So you have just learned that movement is essential in expressing character, but did you know that it can also create inspiration for character? That is where we dive into the creative and dynamic world of devising. Devising is simply creating or inventing a character or story. You can move in a space adhering to different emotions, themes, or patterns and suddenly, you have a character on your hands! Maybe you practice moving in a stiff and bound manner with little flexibility or freedom. How does that make you feel? What type of character began to emerge because of your movements? Perhaps this made you feel emotionally uptight and unfriendly. Maybe you felt nervous and non-confrontational. Maybe you felt shy. Or perhaps you felt more intellectual; there are tons of possibilities!

Personally, I learned the value of movement by jumping in, taking risks, and just doing it. If you only stick to your usual movement patterns and the things that feel the most comfortable and safe, you will never really learn how to tell any story but your own. And of course your story is valuable, but if you are an actor, you have to find ways to put yourself in someone else's story, and then another, and another, and so on.

I had a breakthrough with my confidence in movement when I was challenged to tell the stories of numerous characters unlike myself while using no speech whatsoever. It seemed so scary at first. How was I going to embody these unique characters without giving them a voice? But the answer was in my bones. I stopped thinking, "What would this character say?" and I started thinking, "What would this character do?". I got out of my head and back in my body, and I let physicality be the vehicle for my storytelling. I was shocked at how beautifully it worked and how liberating it felt. My advice is: if you are a performer at heart and you are ready to take your creativity to the next level, don't just stand there; get moving!

Do you want to get in on the action? Triad Stage is offering a wide array of summer camps for students in fourth through twelfth grade, **including a movement class for 10th-12th graders and 2018 high school graduates called Movement and Devising (July 23 – 27).**

[Check our full camp schedule](#) to find a week that catches your eye! If you have any questions, contact Learning Director Lauren Smith at lauren@triadstage.org.

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