

TH257-30 On Its Feet: Approaches to Devising and Developing Ensemble Performance

24/25

Department

SCAPVC - Theatre and Performance Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Bobby Smith

Credit value

30

Module duration

18 weeks

Assessment

70% coursework, 30% exam

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module is aimed at developing advanced skills in the composition, rehearsal, and performance of an ensemble theatre piece. In practice, it has two strands. The first strand is a series of workshops and discussions on approaches to devising and developing performance as an ensemble. The second strand is working with a theatre company or artist to create a devised project (or projects) for presentation. Over the course of the module, students will be introduced to a diversity of concepts and techniques, building up a creative 'tool box' that will help them to get their ideas on their feet in the rehearsal room. Students will spend time on research; engaging with contemporary socio-political contexts, issues, themes and debates. They will also engage in group work as an integral part of the compositional process; commenting and reflecting on their development as collaborative artists.

Module aims

To explore professional and contemporary approaches to devised and ensemble performance.
To develop an understanding of practice-based research methodologies within contemporary

performance.

To build skills in group work and collaboration.

To engage with the work of professional theatre companies and/or artists.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

TERM 1: Approaches to Devising and Developing Performance as an Ensemble. Week 1 Introduction to module. Week 2 - Building an Ensemble. Week 3 - Building an Ensemble Cont. Week 4 - Approaches to Devising. Week 5 Approaches to Devising Cont. Week 6 - READING WEEK. Week 7 - Reflection. Week 8 - Finding a Starting Point. Week 9 - Practice-Based Research. Week 10 - Practice-Based Research Cont.

TERM 2: Working with a Theatre Company or Artist. Week 1 - Reflection. Week 2 - Preparing to Devise. Week 3 - Devising 1. Week 4 - Devising 2. Week 5 - Devising 3. Week 6 - READING WEEK. Week 7 - Devising 4. Week 8 - Devising 5. Week 9 - Assessment. Week 10 - Reflection.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Students will be able to critically and productively reflect on their own creative processes as well as those of their peers.
- Students will learn a diversity of skills and techniques for getting an idea 'on its feet' within a devised ensemble performance process.
- Students will build confidence in their ability to work with others in the context of a devised ensemble process.
- Students will gain an understanding of how professional theatre companies and/or artists create work within the industry.

Indicative reading list

Crossley, Mark & Yarker, James (2017) *Devising Theatre with Stan's Cafe*, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama.

Hill, Leslie and Paris, Helen (2021) *Devising theatre and performance: curious methods*, Intellect: Chicago IL.

Scott, Graham and Hoggett, Steven (2009) *The Frantic Assembly book of devising theatre*, Routledge: London.

Oddey, Alison (1994) *Devising theatre: a practical and theoretical handbook*, Routledge: London.

Sell, Mike (2005) *Avant-garde performance & the limits of criticism: approaching the Living Theatre, happenings/Fluxus, and the Black Arts movement*, University of Michigan Press.

Mederos Syssoyeva, Kathryn and Proudfit, Scott (2016) *Women, Collective Creation, and Devised Performance*, Palgrave Macmillan New York.

Lichtenfels, Peter and Rouse, John (2013) *Performance, politics and activism*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Research element

Student will be required to undertake research related to the themes and issues being explored by the piece they are creating. The nature of this work will likely shift each year but could include, for example: research interviews with members of a particular community, ethnographic visits to specific sites, visits to museums or galleries.

Subject specific skills

By the end of the module students will:

- have acquired skills and knowledge in terms of approaches to devising performance
- have acquired skills and understandings concerning ensemble-based work
- be able to collaborate effectively and creatively
- be able to present devised and ensemble-based work to a high standard
- be able to give and receive constructive, critical feedback
- have confidence to bring together research and creative practice
- have created an original piece of live performance

Transferable skills

- group collaboration skills
 - research skills
 - communication skills
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Study

Study time

| Type | Required |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Project supervision | 4 sessions of 1 hour (1%) |
| Practical classes | 18 sessions of 4 hours (24%) |
| Fieldwork | 2 sessions of 1 hour (1%) |
| Other activity | 16 hours (5%) |
| Private study | 56 hours (19%) |
| Assessment | 150 hours (50%) |
| Total | 300 hours |

Private study description

Students will need to engage in their own research, reading and study concerning the approaches, skills and theories we are working with. They will also need to engage in their own research in terms of the issues and themes being explored in the devised piece(s). Outside of scheduled

classes, students will also need to independently organise their own devising and rehearsal sessions.

Other activity description

Full day rehearsals - including technical rehearsal and dress rehearsal

Costs

| Category | Description | Funded by | Cost to student |
|----------|-------------|------------|-----------------|
| Other | £2000 | Department | £0.00 |

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group D

| | Weighting | Study time |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Devised piece | 70% | 100 hours |
| A devised, ensemble piece of performance that has been co-created with staff, other students, and with an external practitioner or company. | | |
| Self and peer assessment | 30% | 50 hours |
| For this assessment, students will be placed in reflective learning groups. Throughout the devising process they should meet to discuss how they feel the project is progressing and their own participation and contribution to the piece, as well as that of others in their allocated groups. The intention here is to create a supportive community of practice, and students are assessed on their ability to listen to and support one another through reflections. | | |

Feedback on assessment

Oral feedback throughout the module (formative)

Written (summative)

[Past exam papers for TH257](#)

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UTHA-QW34 Undergraduate English and Theatre Studies