


4-2017

Cross(ing) the Line: Leadership in Devised Theatre

Monica Furman
Chapman University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/honors_student_work
 Part of the [Leadership Studies Commons](#), [Other Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#), [Performance Studies Commons](#), and the [Theatre History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Furman, Monica, "Cross(ing) the Line: Leadership in Devised Theatre" (2017). *Honors Papers and Posters*. 4.
http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/honors_student_work/4

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors Program at Chapman University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Papers and Posters by an authorized administrator of Chapman University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact laughtin@chapman.edu.

Cross(ing) the Line: Leadership in Devised Theatre

Comments

Presented at the Western Regional Honors Council conference in Ashland, OR, in April 2017.



Cross(ing) the Line: Leadership in Devised Theatre

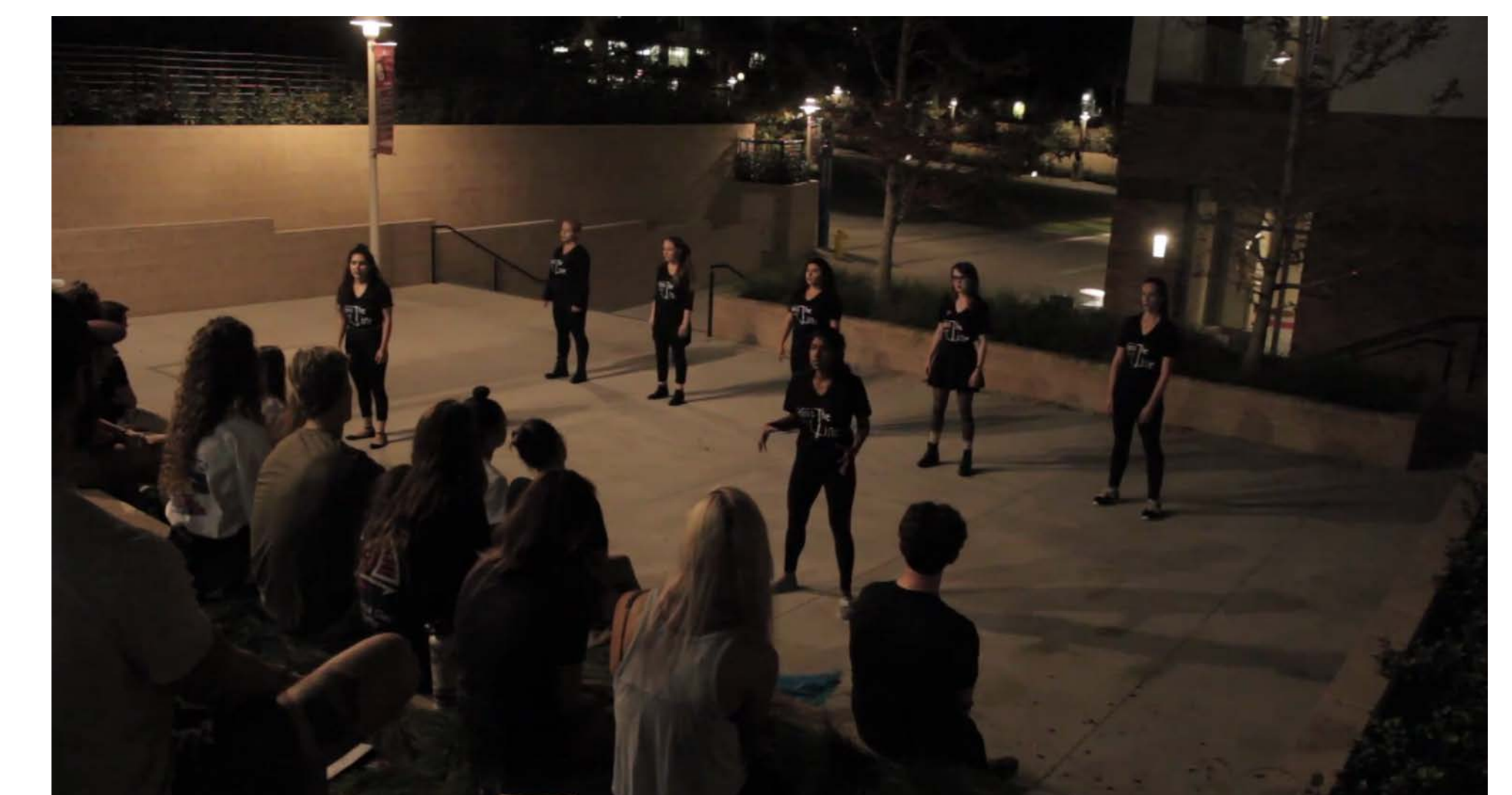
Monica Furman

Chapman University Honors Program



What is “devised theatre?”

“Traditional” (Western) theatre focuses on the relationship between the playwright and the director. Devised theatre is a reaction to the dominant ideology; it is ensemble-created original work. A group of artists collaborate and create a play with no script and, sometimes, no initial theme or message. They use various different art forms as well as interviews and narratives to create a theatrical experience.



So...why does it need a director?

Throughout my own four-year journey from ensemble member to director of Chapman University’s devised theatre group *Cross the Line*, I have found a director is integral for the following:

❖ Perspective

- ❖ Outside analysis of ensemble work
- ❖ Acts as audience
- ❖ Provides alternate visual account

❖ Cohesiveness

- ❖ Keeps group dynamic on track
- ❖ Suggests topics be removed or examined separately

❖ Collaboration

- ❖ Curates outside opportunities to bond and work on ensemble dynamic or research

❖ Organization

- ❖ Planning rehearsal time and space, grant writing, scheduling performance dates, research outings

❖ Definition

- ❖ *But what does it all mean?*

Is this information useful for “real life?”

As a double major in theatre performance and peace studies, I began to make connections between devised theatre and organizational leadership.

❖ Community Organizing

- ❖ Devised theatre values democracy.
- ❖ Devised theatre creates a common language.
- ❖ New relationships are developed (chosen not by pre-determined value to society).
- ❖ Demands holistic workforce.

❖ Grassroots Activism

- ❖ “theatre as metaphor” to “theatre as intervention” (Nissley 819)
- ❖ Theatre is driven by a “super-problem,” creating a transient state during the performance.
- ❖ The audience’s opinion of a certain issue or willingness to act will hopefully change with the characters portrayed onstage.

❖ Mediation

- ❖ “group dynamics, relationships, and interaction between people are a distinguishing feature of devising theatre” (Oddey 7)

❖ Governing

- ❖ “potential freedom or opportunity to move in a number of different directions through a collaborative work process” (Oddey 3)

Sources:

- ❖ Beare, David 1,2. "My "Tribes" Experience: Reflections on a Devised Theatre Process for Vancouver's 2007 Aate Conference." *Stage of the Art*, vol. 18, no. 3, Fall2007, pp. 5-28.
- ❖ Cho, J. & Rogošić, V. "Burning the Rules." *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, vol. 33 no. 2, 2011, pp. 72-79. *Project MUSE*, muse.jhu.edu/article/428105.
- ❖ Nissley, Nick, Steven S. Taylor, and Linda Houden. "The Politics of Performance in Organizational Theatre-Based Training and Interventions." *Organization Studies*25.5 (2004): 817-39. Web.
- ❖ Noice, Helga and Tony Noice. "Extending the Reach of an Evidence-Based Theatrical Intervention." *Experimental Aging Research*, vol. 39, no. 4, Jul-Sep2013, pp. 398-418.
- ❖ Oddey, Alison. *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.