

Stardust: Developing Choreography KS4 & 5 and Youth Companies working with 15yrs+

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With the passing of such an iconic innovative pop star last year, David Bowie is the inspiration for this resource. An excellent subject for young people to look at their role models, allowing creativity in expressing influential popular, celebrity culture of today.

Age group

This resource is aimed at youth companies working with 15 year olds or above but can be adapted for Key Stage 4/5 students, in particular BTEC Level 3 Unit 50: Movement in Performance and Unit 31: Dance Improvisation, as well as exploring 'Portent' themes for BTEC Level 2 Unit 1: Individual Showcase.

Warm up

Get ready to dance by warming up the dancers, using whole body actions, different levels and spatial patterns. Use ideas of circling, rotating, orbiting.

Possible movement tasks

1. Improvisation tasks

Learning outcomes

- Work creatively and confidently with improvisational structures.
- Select and develop the most creative and interesting ideas for choreography.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of using improvisation as a composition tool.

Possible curriculum links: Physics

Possible pre-practical task

Taking inspiration from Bowie's fascination with space travel and science fiction discuss our solar system and the objects that orbit the sun. Discussion outcome could be moons that orbit planets, asteroid fields, the mass of different planets and other objects that might pass through our solar system.

Task A

- Set up a simple structured improvisation focusing on orbiting pathways. Students are to imagine they are objects within a solar system. Dancers can only walk or run at different speeds. Once students become confident with this idea you could ask dancers to sit out and draw the pathways of dancers or video record the improvisations.
- Students watch video footage and share their observations/drawings with the group.

Possible discussion points

- Is the improvisation interesting to watch and why? How did the difference of speed affect this?
- What difficulties arise when working with the idea of 'orbiting' such as spatial awareness and relationships with other dancers?
- How could we use and develop this structured improvisation to compose choreography?



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Task B

- Repeat the improvisation, this time dancers can use dance actions such as turning and jumping as well as different levels. If you haven't already, introduce other objects in space such as shooting stars, comets, black holes and see how they will embody these. If your dancers are coming together to suggest an object with a huge mass could they introduce contact work?
- Record each improvisation and watch back. Ask dancers to identify interesting parts of the improvisation, recreate, develop and set the material.

Independent tasks

Learning Outcomes

- Being able to communicate emotions and intention through performance.
- Interpretive skills development, for example, the ability to show contrasting dynamics and use facial expression and focus to convey meaning.
- Select and develop appropriate movements in response to a stimulus.
- Interpret meaning of choreography. Identify and communicate befitting improvements to make choreography more effective.

Possible curriculum links: English

Using the concept of David Bowie's alter ego Ziggy Stardust, these tasks are designed for individual creativity, developing unique choreography that focuses on dancer's own movement vocabulary.

Task A

- Without showing other dancers write 5 words that best describe their personality and mind map possible action and dynamic responses. Create a short solo, possibly 2 counts of 8 in response to the 5 words. The solo should be a short but true representation of themselves. There is an opportunity for dancers to use different dance genres here.
- Share solos with the rest of the group. Can the

audience members guess the different personality traits in each dancer's performance? Peer and tutor feedback should be shared, with dancers given time to refine their work.

Task B

- Discuss with the dancers the expression 'alter ego' and other famous people who have alternative personalities such as Dr Jekyll's Mr Hyde and Beyoncé's Sasha Fierce. Usually these personalities are unmistakably different from the original persona. For the next task, dancers must develop their solo to show a contrasting personality. They could use the direct opposite of their own personality traits or create a completely new personality. Encourage them to be as experimental as possible. A dictionary/thesaurus may be useful here.
- Repeat sharing.

Possible experimenting and developing strategies

- Using the tasks above and ideas below you can develop and lengthen your piece for performance.
- Select and rehearse solos in duets or groups. Experiment with different start times, contrasting solos, change the facings of solos to create different relationships. Add contact between dancers to show a personality 'clash'.
- Repeat improvisation Task A. If the dancers are in orbit, they can perform either of their 2 solos. This could be a reaction to another dancer passing them or personal impulse. Record and watch improvisation recreate, develop and set the material. Add on set material developed from improvisation Task B.
- Find 'Helping Hands' clip on YouTube from the film Labyrinth. Use this as a starting point for contact work or using hands and bodies to create surreal beings or entities.

Suggested music

Of course, David Bowie's music would be an obvious choice here, however his influence can be found in music from Lady Gaga to Arctic Monkeys. Other artists you can experiment with are Tame Impala and Radiohead.