

## Educational Resource: *One the Bear*

### WORKSHOP 4 - (POST PERFORMANCE)

#### **Overview**

This workshop will introduce students to making their own hip hop theatre pieces through writing rhymes, improvisation and playbuilding.

#### **Creating a piece of hip hop theatre**

Consider the advice from Candy Bowers, the playwright of *One the Bear*:

*HIP HOP THEATRE is real* - be yourself and don't shy away from home truths!

*HIP HOP THEATRE is raw* - emotion is important

*HIP HOP THEATRE is political* - what's happening today? How can you give voice to it?

*HIP HOP THEATRE is physical* - no talking heads! Dance and use your whole body and choreograph your work with your fellow actors

*HIP HOP THEATRE is musical* - rhyme, rhythm and voice are key so warm up and practice.

#### ***Activities***

##### **i) Voice, rhythm and pitch**

Take a classic rhyme like "The Message" by Grand Master Flash (made famous again by the chubby penguin in Happy Feet) and practice together, using call and response.

*Teacher: DON'T PUSH ME*

*Students: DON'T PUSH ME*

Play with pitch.

*Teacher: DON'T PUSH ME*

*Students: DON'T PUSH ME*

Then add more words when everyone has the rhythm.

*Teacher: COS I'M CLOSE TO THE EDGE*

*Students: COS I'M CLOSE TO THE EDGE*

Repeat and play

*I'M TRYING*

*NOT TO LOSE MY HEAD*

*UH HUH HUH HUH*

*IT'S LIKE A JUNGLE SOMETIMES*

*IT MAKES ME WONDER,*

*HOW I KEEP FROM GOING UNDER.*

ii) **Write a rhyme**

Step 1 - write a short character profile for yourself. On paper write the following:

*Name*

*Age*

*Nick names*

*Favourites (food/ colour/ animals/ sports/ music/ TV)*

*Best qualities*

*Worst qualities*

*What gives you joy?*

*What makes you angry?*

Step 2 – use this writing/ answers write a rhyme (4-8 lines) about yourself. Present this to a partner or the class. Discuss the way the rhyme worked. Did the form help you present the information in an interesting and/or engaging way?

Step 3 – repeat steps 1 & 2, this time about a character drawn from your own imagination.

iii) **Improvising rhyming scenes in pairs.** Using the imaginary characters created team up with a partner to now develop a short scene using your two characters. Create a dramatic context for your scene and decide on the nature of the relationship between the characters (eg they could be friends, family members, teachers). Create a short scene in rhyme where one of the characters wants something, keep this simple, such as one wants to borrow the car or jewellery. Make sure the dialogue rhymes – they can rhyme with each other or with their own lines. Perform these scenes for your peers. What decisions did each pair make and what was the impact on the audience?

iv) In small groups **playbuild** a series of scenes that explore your local context as the basis of the work. Using the theme: *There's no place like home* create a three scene play that uses voice, movement, rhyme and other hip hop elements to create a unique piece about what is local to you. Use the advice above from the playwright about making hip hop theatre to help craft your work. You may want to use digital images as visual backdrops to evoke a sense of place for your audience and to enhance the local meaning of your plays.

***Extension Activities***

i) Film the plays created in small groups. You may want to share these and get feedback from additional audiences.

ii) Analyse the choices made by each group. How 'local' was the story performed? What elements of the work ground it in the vernacular and local space? What is the impact on the audience, compared with a piece made elsewhere?