

Record of Work - Extract 1: *Moth* from 'Two' by Jim Cartwright

Social Cultural and Historical research

For my first extract I have chosen the character of Moth, a young womaniser who is trying to sweet talk a lady at the bar, from the play 'Two' by Jim Cartwright.

The play was written in 1989 and won a Theatre Award. Cartwright is described as a northern realist.

The play is set in a pub in the 1980s and revolves around the customers who come and go through the duration of a 'typical' night. Central to the plot is the Landlord and Landlady's bickering relationship. There is a high level of tension between them and it is not until the final part of the play that the fact it is the anniversary of their son's tragic death in a car accident is revealed to the audience.

Pubs have always been a social focal point for many communities, with the steady flow of alcohol, inhibitions are reduced, true personalities are revealed and truths spill out. In this setting Moth is quite a stereotypical character, a lad on the pull. The play is naturalistic and many of the audience will be able to identify with this character. The social setting of the pub also lets the playwright introduce a wide range of characters, themes and issues from death and loss - an Old Man who is there for company because he misses his wife, domestic violence and mental abuse, a suspicious wife, and a domineering wife.

The play was originally written as a two hander with all the roles played by the actors playing the Landlord and Landlady, so the themes and issues of the play are revealed through a variety of monologues and duologues. However, different productions have cast all the characters in the play rather than just having the two. The characters are all working class and the monologues/duologues are sometime funny and others are quite sad and disturbing. My monologue is funny, and I want to make the audience laugh at my character.

The play is set in Northern England, so ideally I would need a Yorkshire accent, but I have decided to change it to Northern Ireland so my audience can relate to the character more. Also as pubs are a central feature of Northern Irish culture I thought this would make the extract more relevant.

I watched some clips of the monologue on You Tube, in one from Birmingham Theatre School, the actor acts as if he is 'chatting' up a member of the audience. The costume is very 1980s and there is 1980s song playing in the background. I think I could use similar devices in my performance to give an authentic feel to it, and let the audience know it's from the 1980s.

Baseline Assessment

From my baseline assessment of my first reading of my monologue I felt I was speaking much too fast and there was little variety in my pace. As a result my clarity suffered and at times my words were inaudible. From watching it back I think my emotional expression was bad, as I was sight reading I looked at the page and never showed any of the emotions of the monologue with my body language, which is something I now need to develop during the coming weeks. My peers reinforced this commenting on the need for variety and the fact that I used the same pace and that I didn't finish words. However, I did keep good focus throughout and had a sense of emergency which was relevant to the character as his girlfriend is about to enter at any minute, but there was no real sense of the character's age, background, status or anything. I need to focus on developing the following skills, which were also highlighted as needing development in my skills audit : Characterisation, Voice - pace, projection and clarity, Emotional expression.

ACTION PLAN

Extract No: 1	Title of piece: Two - Jim Cartwright	Character: Moth	
Desired Outcome	To create a believable interpretation of the character of Moth, by developing my characterisation skills and use of voice and body language. To make the audience laugh and cringe at his behaviour.		
FOCUS	ACTION STEPS	Start date	Deadline
Characterisation - needed to create a convincing representation of the character	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research different characterisation methods 2. Apply methods in rehearsal 3. Write a character study/biography 3. Review progress 		
Vocal skills - Pace, clarity and projection Needed to express the character's	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research different ways to improve clarity 2. Annotate script to make punctuation marks and changes in pace clear 		

feelings, unique style of speaking and the intention behind their words	3. Apply methods in rehearsal 4. Review progress		
Emotional expression - to show the character's feelings through voice and movement /body language	1. Annotate script with different emotions of character in different line		

EVIDENCE OF PRACTICE

WEEK 1: Focus: Vocal skills - pace

I began by researching different techniques to improve the pace of my voice. One method was to annotate the text using two different colours, one representing slow pace and the other representing a fast pace. I used a // to show a pause. Once I annotated the script I read it aloud paying attention to the annotation. I found i was much more aware of what I was saying and how I was saying the lines. This really helped me focus and a knock on effect was I began to learn lines and get a greater sense of the character just from reading over it.

Focus: Expressing Emotions

I decided to annotate the text with the different emotions and think about how I would say these lines to show the emotion.

Focus: Vocal Skills - Projection

I started by trying out some exercises in the book '100 Exercises to get you into Drama School. I repeated each of the exercises several times

The first exercise was to make an MMMMM sound making sure there is a buzzing sensation in the front of your face , in between I shouted the number 1,2,3. This taught me that to 'check ' my projection is good then I should feel this buzzing sensation when I'm delivering my lines. The second exercise was to hold my nose and say' Many mighty men making much money on the moon shine' then to let go of my nose and say it again with as much force as possible. Although I thought this was a bit strange at first it actually showed me that how you need to throw the words out forcibly to get good projection. The final exercise I tried was sitting in a chair with good posture and grab the bottom of the chair and exhale as forcefully as i could, count to three and then breathe in deeply. I didn't really feel the benefits of this last

exercise, but it did make me think about ways I could develop my breathing and strengthen my diaphragm , as this is essential for good projection.

Self Evaluation and Targets:

- The vocal exercises on projection have made me appreciate the importance of a proper warm up, so next week I will build these into my warm up before I work on the text. I will also include some tongue twisters to help develop my clarity.
- The annotation was really helpful and has made me really think about how fast I am saying the lines . I now need to elarn the lines and hopefully the colour coding will create a visual memory for me to keep the pace in my mind.

WEEK 2:

Focus: Characterisation

I decided to spend last week working on my vocal skills and getting familiar with the lines. This week I am going to focus on developing my character. in GCSE we used to create a basic outline of the character's MARS:

I completed this for Moth:

MOTIVATION: to get a woman, impress

ATTITUDE: confident but really quite insecure

RELATIONSHIP: strangers

STATUS: thinks it's high, but low as the woman not interested

This helped me think about the physical ways I will show the character.

I decided to experiment with states of tension and leading body parts to create the stance, posture and walk for the character.

Review of last week's targets:

I have created a personal warm up and have completed it prior to rehearsing my monologue - First I warm up my body by doing 3 Salutations to the Sun, as this stretches every part of the body and gets me focused on my breathing. Then I inhale and exhale deeply 3 times. I then inhale and exhale using different sounds : hay, hey, ho. To help with my clarity I pretend I'm chewing toffee and then make initial letter sounds e.g. B, C - forcing them out sharply and loudly. Finally I say a few tongue twisters: She sells sea shells, and a Proper cup of coffee in a cooper coffee cup. I found doing this has really helped my clarity and focus when rehearsing.

Self Evaluation and targets:

Doing the character study has really helped me understand the character better. I want to put everything I have tried out together to create my final version of the character for performance. I am going to use costume and music to help deepen my characterisation further.

Week 3:

Focus: Expressing emotions

I decided to rehearse in front of the mirrors in the drama studio. I had this idea that Moth actually might practice his chat up lines in the bathroom before hand, so i really exaggerated them This really helped me find the comedy in the role and make him quite cheesy - raising his eyebrows and nodding his head with a kind of a swagger.

I then tried playing Tom Jones Kiss and just saying random lines from the monologue while dancing around. This really helped me relax my body and get into the sleazy side of the character.

Another method I tried was saying the lines as if I was really angry, but this actually didn't really help me.