



Technical Rider

Performance space: 10 x 12 at least --This show plays best on the auditorium floor closer to the audience as opposed to an elevated stage.

However, I can adapt to most environments and look forward to making whatever playing space work.

Lighting: (if possible) A minimum of a general wash that covers the playing area

Sound: A general sound system (to plug lav microphone into)

Seating: There should be 3-4 feet around the periphery of the audience to allow for space to run around in the show. With larger audiences there should also be an aisle down the middle of the audience.

Please provide:

Two small to mid-size tables

Two identical lightweight chairs preferably with arms

One stool or elevated small table.

Please provide someone (student, custodian, volunteer) who will be available to help with load-in and load-out.

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designed by karlsimmons.com

HURRICANE GERTY



STUDY GUIDE

“HURRICANE GERTY will sweep you off your feet with her outrageous twists of logic and leave you in a fit of giggles. Don’t miss this unstoppable clown-genius. She will knock you over with her feats of magic, crazy stunts and charming good looks.”

In our modern world failure is seen as the worst thing that can happen to a person. Clowning challenges this misplaced idea- clowns show their vulnerability and allow people to laugh at their failure. Laughter is healing. Because, as we all know, mistakes are an essential part of learning and laughing in the face of your own mistakes plays an important role in self development. It enables people to try and experiment in life, to operate from a place of curiosity and adventure. Cultivating humour enriches the lives of many people from many different disciplines or backgrounds.

Biography

Edith Tankus (a.k.a. Hurricane Gerty) describes herself as Comic Poetess and Multi-talented Purveyor of Charm. As a clown and actor, she has been performing for the last decade. In Canada, she studied the Pochinko method of clowning which is steeped in European and Native traditions, then later studied the art of physical theatre at the Jacques Lecoq International School of Theatre in Paris. She has toured theatres and Fringe Festivals in North America with her award- winning theatre show "Not Yet, At All" a physical piece of storytelling which incorporates clown and trapeze work. Her love of clowning has lead her to create her first show for young audiences. "Hurricane Gerty" has charmed audiences across Ontario by blending theatrical skill, endearing humour and physical displays of "greatness".

There is no fourth wall in this show. I invite a controlled chaos into the playing space which encourages children to participate with their hearts and their senses of humour. I like to foster a sense of togetherness in the room where all of us (teachers and students) are in on the game and playing to the fullest. Children are encouraged to engage with all of their senses in a gentle manner so that a sparkling exchange can take place.

Note: The fourth wall is an imaginary wall that exists between the audience and the performer. It allows the audience to accept the imaginary circumstances of the play and observe the action on stage at a distance. They do not participate in the story, nor are they acknowledged. When the fourth wall is removed, there is a direct dialogue between performer and audience and this opens the door for spontaneity and surprise.

Here are some questions to ask your students after viewing the performance:

What is Clown?

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, a clown is "a comic character of pantomime theatre and circus, known by his/her distinctive costume, ludicrous antics, and buffoonery, whose purpose is to induce hearty laughter."

While this is very true, clowning is more importantly about liberating your inner self and your imagination.

What props did Hurricane Gerty use?

She used boxing gloves, a newspaper, a glass of water, karate boards, a rolla bolla,(a wooden board balanced on a metal tube) a music stand, sheet music, an egg, a pot lid, a spoon, breakfast cereal, milk and a bowl. (some props are added or omitted depending on the day)

What instruments did she play?

She played the ukulele and the musical comb.

What great feats was she attempting to do?

She was attempting to pour water into a newspaper, balance an egg on her forehead while balancing on a rolla bolla and playing the musical comb, box and give a karate demonstration. Oh yeah, and get dressed.

Did she accomplish them?

(Depends on the day, but usually yes.)

What did Hurricane Gerty wear?

She wore a Victorian nightgown with a night cap, then changed into a red print dress from the 40s, bright red pumps, then switched to large men's shoes, a blue hat and a little feather in her hair. (all these items are subject to change depending on the weather, the day, or if something rips or tears)

NOTE: A clown usually wears a red nose. A red nose is seen as a very tiny mask. It's the smallest mask a performer can wear. Once on, the nose has the miraculous effect of making the wearer appear foolish, innocent and often times funny, which are the characteristics that embody the clown.

In this show I experiment with wearing a nose and not wearing a nose. Since the performance is highly physical and playful, I like to push

the boundaries of what a traditional clown normally wears, ie: variations of very colourful and loose-fitting clothing, or a distinctive hat and/or a clown nose.

How did you feel watching the performance?

Did she connect and play with you as an audience?

In the world of clown, the audience is the most important part of the show. No matter what the clown is doing on stage, whatever the action or story is, the clown is always in gentle dialogue with his/her audience. This makes for wonderful moments of surprise and improvisation because every audience is different. That means no clown show is exactly the same

Where have you seen clowns before?

The circus- The fair- The theatre- On TV. Traditionally clown was born out of the Italian Commedia Dell'Arte where one of the most famous and durable clowns emerged, the Arlecchino or Harlequin. He was known as the trickster. Over time the clown evolved from a travelling performer who possessed acrobatic and pantomime skills to a comedic character, who usually performed in circuses and theatres. In the last century with the emergence of Vaudeville, skits were performed by men and women which included acrobatics, slapstick, the comedic duo and clowning.

Activities for the class:

The Art of Play in the Classroom:

The following games are designed to encourage students to communicate with their bodies and emotions while developing a heightened awareness of themselves and others in the playing space. An atmosphere of fun and risk-taking is strongly encouraged.

Grandmother's Footsteps

1. (This requires an open space.). If the class size is large, divide the students into two groups.
2. Pick one student to be the leader and to stand at the head of the class with their back facing the wall.
3. The rest of the students must try to advance without getting caught by the leader.
4. The leader at any time can randomly whip around to catch anyone she feels might be moving. At this time the advancing students must freeze in position. But if she detects any movement from individuals she sends them to the back of the class to start again.
5. This continues until someone has made it to the head of the class and taps the leader out before she sees them.
6. The winner becomes the new leader.
7. The purpose of this game is to teach students to listen and react with every part of their body. They must have their eyes on the leader at all times to sense when they might turn around and experiment with different ways of advancing so as not to get caught. They can go slowly, quickly, quietly, stealthily, or lightly. Whatever it takes for them to advance undetected by the leader. They must have the delicate sensitivity of "Grandmother's Footsteps".

Don't tell me, show me!

1. Prior to the game, students break off into pairs and pick an emotion they will use to greet each other as they wave hello and shake hands.
2. They can choose from a list of emotionally descriptive words, ie: happy, sad, proud, mad, excited, nervous, etc.
3. Students sit in a semi-circle and watch as the first pair enters the playing space.
4. They must give each other room so their gestures can read, then wave hello and shake hands. They can use no words, only feeling and gesture.
5. The rest of the class must guess the emotion the pair used when they greeted each other.
6. The purpose of this game to teach how the quality of emotion can be conveyed with a simple wordless action.

Musical Chairs with a Twist

1. Ingredients: Fun, dance music, chairs and students
2. Count how many students there are and space throughout the class the same amount of chairs minus one
3. Play music and ask students to dance around the chairs, bopping, jumping boogeying.
4. Pick a random moment to stop the music and students must scramble to get to the nearest chair.
5. The one student who didn't reach a chair in time has to do something funny for the class. But they can't think about it for too long. The idea is for them to jump in the same way they jump in playing musical chairs. They can do a ridiculous physical actionlike jumping up and down on one leg as if they stubbed their toe, or do a silly dance or run around like a chicken. They can sing a funny song (off key even) make a joke, or pretend they are the clumsiest person ever. Continue this game until there is only one student left.
6. The purpose of this game is encourage the students to take risks while thinking impulsively on their feet.