

## **Lesson Plan Workshop #3 – Soundscape: The Aural Environment WNYC Audio Theater Residency – The Sound**

### **Blueprint Strands Addressed:**

- Theater Making: Acting, Playwriting/Play Making, Designing and Technical Theater, and Directing
- Developing Theater Literacy
- Exploring Career and Lifelong Learning

### **NY State Educational Standards for Theatre Arts Addressed:**

#### Art Standard 1 - Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts

- 1.2 Imitate various experiences through pantomime, play making, dramatic play, story dramatization, storytelling, role-playing, improvisations and guided play writing
- 1.3 Use language, voice, gesture, movement and observation to create character and interact with others in improvisation, rehearsal and performance
- 1.5 Identify and use, in individual and group experiences, some of the roles, processes, and actions for performing and creating theatre pieces and improvisational drama within the school/community, and discuss ways to improve them

#### Art Standard 2 - Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

- 2.7 Discuss vocations/avocations with theatre professionals and identify the skills and preparation necessary for theatre vocations/avocations

#### Art Standard 3 - Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

- 3.8 Use the techniques and vocabulary of theatre criticism, both written and oral, to discuss theatre experiences and improve individual and group performances

#### Art Standard 4 – Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts

- 4.11 Improvise scenes based on information about various cultures
- 4.12 Explain how drama/theatre experiences relate to themselves and others

### **Objectives/Outcomes**

Participants will:

- Listen to and analyze the imagery that is created via aural sounds and mechanisms
- Examine what soundscape brings to various audio theater performances
- Perform scenes from selected audio theater script to create and design soundscapes
- Critique the difference in quality of a “live” performance vs. a recorded performance

### **Materials Needed:**

- CD of Aural Samples (Various, *Fall of the City*, *Sorry*, *Wrong Number* and *Christmas Carol*)
- CD Player
- Selected scenes from *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot* (paper copies)
- Large Poster Board and Markers
- Microphone and Recording Device

### **Lesson Plan:**

#### ▪ **A Starter Activity**

An energizing and focusing exercise to highlight imagery and inspiration derived from aural experiences. Sample activity is below.

What can you “See” from what you “Hear”

- Play various aural samples (music, choral speaking, various sounds, character reactions) and have participants list the images and description that come to mind as they listen to each example. Have large poster board for each example so participants can list imagery.
  - Examine each list to discover and probe what specifically about the aural examples brought these images, descriptions or words to mind as they were heard
  - Have the participants listen to sample of *Sorry, Wrong Number* and let the participants examine how the soundscape progresses or embellishes the scene. Repeat this exercise with samples from *Christmas Carol* and discuss/compare the theatrical styles of each.
  - Have participants share what aural sounds they can create themselves or with ordinary objects (animal sounds, books, doors).
- **The Main Activity**  
A devising activity to explore how creating soundscapes affects the action of a scene and enhances character choices and their vocal quality. Also incorporating recording activities to contrast live vs. recorded performances and the effect microphones have on performances. An example is below.

#### Improvisational Scene Discovery with Soundscape Creation

- Have participants divide into the 4 groups from the previous week's workshop with their copy of a selected scene from *The Dissolution of Dominic Boot*.
  - Groups should design and create a soundscape that establishes the time period, theatrical style and environment for their scene (i.e. daytime/nighttime, choral speaking, environmental sounds, etc.).
  - Give groups time to create and rehearse.
  - Each group will record their scene with its designed soundscape. As each group is recording, other groups will listen with eyes closed paying specific attention to everything they hear. They can list what they specifically hear on papers between each group's recording.
  - After each group has been recorded, playback each group scene with participants contrasting what they heard "live" as opposed to what they hear on the recording.
  - Teaching Artist should point out the successes of each group's recording, but also note the developmental areas for each group i.e. paying attention to proximity to microphone depending on participant's contribution to scene, different vocal levels and clarity of emotional choices.
- **Closing Discussion/Activity**
    - Have participants sit in circle on floor and inquire about: "What did we do today?" and/or "What's something you discovered today?"
    - Share with participants that this workshop was an exploration of how to create and design a soundscape, and also to demonstrate to them how to recognize and examine the specific soundscapes of our daily lives.
    - Explain that in our next workshop we will start creating our own radio drama using *The Invisible Man* for thematic inspiration.
    - **Closing exercise** - to seal in the ensemble energy we've created. An example is below.

*Pass the Pulse*

- Group stands in a circle, holding hands with eyes closed
- Teaching Artist squeezes the hand of the person to their right or left, who then squeezes the hand of the next person, and so on until the squeeze has come around full circle. Two squeezes can be passed around simultaneously in the same or different directions.

**Vocabulary:**

Vocal Warm-Up, Soundscape, Imagery, Character, Microphone, Amplification, Proximity,