



Intersections of Music and Theatre in Collaboration; Building a Shared Work

During a 12-month period, The Object Group worked in concert with composer/multi-instrumentalist Klimchak to create a new work, 'The Followers'. The ensemble combined object-based devising techniques with Klimchak's exploration of sound in everyday objects and structures to discover, adapt, and create the movement, materials, story and structure of the production. What follows are exercises that the Group used during the creation process.

Exercise #1 – Musical Flocking: Flocking is a mirroring exercise wherein the group follows the movements and gestures of whomever is in front (the 'leader'). If the group turns around and a new person is in front, that individual then becomes the leader. Our version added a live musician improvising to the movement, and we asked that the performers in turn devise their movements based on sound. This exercise is perfect for bringing the group into a focused 'one mind' mentality, and led to the development of our production's ritual entrances and exits.



Exercise #2 - Instruments as character (object theatre/puppetry): This exercise began with a short tutorial from Klimchak on several rhythmic patterns to play on a set of frame drums. Each performer was then given a drum and instructed to treat the drum itself as a character in an improvised scenario. Emphasis was placed on not anthropomorphizing the drums – i.e. not making their sound a human ‘voice’, but instead using the organic rhythms, patterns, and cadences of the objects to express feeling. As well, performers were instructed to use movement of the drums to create and express conflict. In the example shown below, the drums initiated a battle with Klimchak, including the wounding and healing of a child (the smallest drum), a strategy debate, and finally a synchronized attack. This exercise can be performed with any instrument and helps to create understanding of object manipulation and sound as a vessel of information.



Exercise #3 – Instruments as voice and sound effect: This exercise began with Klimchak teaching a short musical pattern using tuned bottles. Each performer was then given a bottle, and placed in one of two groups: sound effect or character. They were given a setting – in this example, airplane – and instructed to improvise a scenario. Sound effect performers were to create the environment, while character performers were to use the instruments as their human ‘voices’. Midway through the exercise the roles were switched. Characters began as traveller and flight attendant, with the sound effect group providing take off and flight noises, announcements, and malfunctioning engine effects. When swapped, the characters became hijackers and the effects became the cockpit instrument panel. Klimchak assisted by providing sonic choices to move the story along. This exercise develops the performers ability to use atypical sound tools to express character and setting.



Use in Production: Ultimately these exercises were essential in the devising of story, movement, and emotional content from Klimchak's compositions. With Klimchak onstage to lead this effort, The Object Group ensemble benefitted from the extensive development process, enhancing their ability to work with live music as we continued to devise the production in rehearsal. Performers were synchronized with the emotions and patterns that the music's rhythms and melodies provided. As such, the ritual nature of the story was heightened, as was the thematic element of a group manipulated by divine power.

