

Lesson Plan Workshop #1 – Introduction to Audio Theater Residency

WNYC Audio Theater Residency – The Sound

Blueprint Strands Addressed:

- Theater Making: Acting, Playwriting/Play Making, Designing and Technical Theater, and Directing
- Developing Theater Literacy
- Making Connections

NY State Educational Standards for Theatre Arts Addressed:

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

- 1.1 Use improvisation and guided play writing to communicate ideas and feelings
- 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 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
- 3.10 Explain how drama/theatre experiences relate to other literary and artistic events

Objectives/Outcomes

Participants will:

- Have an introduction to audio theater and its history
- Analyze character definitions and environmental sounds through listening to the selected audio theater performance
- Work as a creative ensemble to re-create scenes from the selected audio theater performance

Materials Needed:

- Boom Box
- Copies of *Invisible Man* scene
- Microphone/Recorder

Lesson Plan:

▪ (Warm-Up Activity) A Diagnostic Activity

A diagnostic activity to engage participants by getting them on their feet and inquiring about (respecting) their prior knowledge. An example is below.

Cross the Room

A diagnostic to find out students' prior knowledge and awareness of aural performance and audio theater

- Create 2 lines with students facing each other.
- Present the following statements and ask students to cross the room if the statement applies to them:

Cross the room if...

You've ever heard/performed in a sportscast on the radio [1]

You've ever heard/performed in a podcast [2]

You've ever heard/performed on an audio book [3]

You've ever heard/performed in a radio play/audio theater[4]

Interjection Questions:

Stop action and interject questions where indicated:

1. What was the sport? Describe how the sportscaster sounded.
2. What was the podcast about? What about it kept your attention?
3. Title of the audio book? Were there different character voices?
4. What was the key activity for your role as listener/actor?

- After final “Cross the Room” question have participants sit in circle on floor to discuss/discover:
 - The definition of audio theater
 - Are there other examples of various uses of audio theater in our daily lives?
 - How is audio theater similar/different from other performing arts/disciplines?
- To finish this discussion, Teaching Artists concludes with assisting the participants in building a collaborated group definition of audio theater and gives a brief history of audio theater. (*Resource Book – Radio Drama*)

- **The Main Activity**
 - Have participants stay in circle on floor or sit in desks to listen to the selected scene from *The Invisible Man*.
 - Afterwards ask participants: “What do they think the story was about and why?”, “What were some of the emotions they heard?”, “What were some of the sounds they heard?” and/or “What kept the story going?”.
 - Ask participants to raise their hands if they can vividly recall the emotions they heard. Group these participants on one side of the room.
 - Ask remaining participants to raise their hands if they can vividly recall the environmental sounds they heard. Group these participants on the other side of the room.
 - Any ungrouped participants will be the audience. Ask the 2 groups to discuss among themselves the emotions/sounds they recall. Each group should decide on 2-3 emotions/sounds.
 - “The audience” will close their eyes and listen as the Teaching Artist facilitates interweaving the (paraphrased lines) emotions from Group 1 with the different environmental sounds from Group 2. Afterwards ask “the audience” what emotions did they hear? What situations can we hear/see those emotions in our daily lives? What sounds did they hear? Where can you hear those sounds in our daily lives?
 - Conclude this exercise with perception: How perception is organized by grouping parts into patterns. (This could be a good place to inquire if any have heard of the Gestalt Theory [the whole is greater than the parts and that the parts of artistic structure make sense only in relation to the whole].) (*Resource Book – Radio Drama*)

- **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 introduction to audio theater and that over the next 10 weeks they will learn more about this art form by studying the work of Tom Stoppard. Ask them if they’ve heard of/know of Tom Stoppard. Give 2-3 sentences about Tom Stoppard and his legacy of Radio Drama.
 - Introduce and showcase the microphone/recorder and how it will be an integral instrument in our work
 - Share our objective for this residency: Through the analysis of the Stoppard work and other radio dramas, we will create a new audio drama of our own for WNYC.
 - **Closing exercise** - to seal in the ensemble energy we’ve created. An example is below.

Quiet Acknowledgement and Appreciation

- Group stands in a circle
- Teaching Artist looks to the participant on their right
- Teaching Artist and participant both look in each other eyes with appreciation and nod your heads with acknowledgement.
- Participant then repeats action with participant on their right until the circle is complete.

Vocabulary:

Audio Theater, Ensemble, Audience, Perception