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AN EXPLORATION INTO THE USE OF RHYTHM IN DEVISING MOVEMENT FOR
THEATRE

George Bilenko

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of MA by Research (Drama, Dance and
Performance)

The University of Huddersfield

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Abstract

Within this thesis the use of rhythm in the movement devising process is explored. Specifically investigating how rhythm can be used in the movement devising process in order to harness its various expressive qualities. These qualities include symbolic associations, such as natural and mechanical rhythms, as well as broader tonal effects on energy, tension, and mood. Also addressing more specific effects that can be used in the portrayal of character, intention, and subtext. Technical aspects of rhythm are discussed, such as tempo and metre, sequence and repetition, and polyrhythm. Also considering how understandings of rhythm drawn from key historical practitioners can be applied. These include Konstantin Stanislavsky's tempo-rhythm, Vsevolod Meyerhold's tri-partite rhythmic structure, and Rudolf Laban's effort theory. The study also draws on more contemporary sources, including the work of Eilon Morris. A selection of exercises are presented, with which devisers can practically explore the aspects and understandings of rhythm discussed within the thesis.

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Introduction

During my formative years training as a dancer and musician I remember finding great joy in experimenting with rhythm. Discovering the atmospheric and energetic qualities that could be imparted onto a movement, melody, or passage, simply by altering the rhythm or tempo with which it was performed. It was not until I began my training as an actor that my understanding of the notions of rhythm, and musicality, were developed beyond what Roesner describes as the “normative understanding of rhythm”, one defined by “measure, metre, and unity” (2014, p.41). Since this point I have been fascinated by the relationship between rhythm and movement. The further the idea is interrogated the broader and deeper the notion becomes, and the more opportunities for exploration and play present themselves. As Morris states “Under scrutiny, the subject of rhythm reveals a nature that is both evasive and porous” (2017, p.7).

In her foreword to Winick’s *Rhythm: An Annotated Bibliography* (1974) Monsour writes “aspects of rhythms have undergone definition numerous times and the pedagogy of rhythmic instruction has been quibbled over ad infinitum” (1974, iii). The term “rhythm” can be ambiguous, it lacks a conclusive definition, and is complex by nature. This is perhaps the reason that, until Morris’ recent *Rhythm in Acting and Performance* (2017), no publication within the field of theatre studies has probed deep enough, or with a broad enough lens, to do more than scratch the surface of the topic. Within the chapter “Further Literature” (pp.34-37) I address this lack of practical information found in devising texts.

Within his book Morris details various practical techniques, created by himself and others, that offer an excellent starting point for any performer or ensemble to begin to develop their understandings, and explore rhythm within the studio.

The intended contribution of this thesis to the understandings of rhythm within theatrical discourse, is the specific focus on practical applications in the devising, and development, of movement. My main aim is to investigate how the deviser can utilise rhythm within the movement devising process, in order to harness its various expressive qualities. This

investigation is founded on technical understandings of rhythm, and applies understandings of the way we produce rhythm in movement, developed by theatre and dance practitioners.

While a variety of training approaches have been created with the focus of developing rhythm based performance skills, such as Émile Jaques-Dalcroze's Eurhythmics¹, Reinhardt Flatischler's TaKeTiNa², and more recently Eilon Morris' Orbits³. I am interested in the ways we approach the devising process in order to access and utilise the expressive qualities of rhythm.

I have focused my study on the work of three prominent practitioners. These are Konstantin Stanislavsky, Vsevolod Meyerhold, and Rudolf Laban.

For each of these practitioners rhythm can be seen as a key aspect of their process, and their insights into the use of rhythm in performance are discussed within the literature review. My reason for focusing on these practitioners specifically however, is that they have each developed a crucial understanding of the way we produce rhythm in movement. Stanislavsky's notion of tempo rhythm addresses rhythm in relation to both the actor's physical, and psychological processes. Meyerhold's tri-partite rhythmic system offers a way to break up the process of performing an action, and analyse each specific element of the movement. While Laban's effort theory directly addresses the production of rhythm in movement, by analysing the way we use effort throughout our actions. These understandings can be applied in order to analyse the rhythmic aspects of our movement, and inform choices within the devising process.

At the end of this thesis, I have presented a number of practical exercises which can be used to explore rhythm within the devising process. I have chosen these exercises based on their application to the devising process, as well as how they can be used to explore specific aspects of rhythm. The exercises are presented in an order which could be used within a

¹ "a systemised approach to the relationship between music and gymnastics designed to promote a common mental and musical rhythm between actors" (Callery, 2011, p.119)

² Flatischler's TaKeTiNa Rhythm Process: a rhythmic meditation practice "based on scientific principles found in chaos theory, neurological research, and psychology" (PR Newswire, 2009)

³ "A Collection of polyrhythmic training approaches for actors" (Morris, 2017, p.181)

single devising workshop, but the exercises could also be used at different points in the devising process when they are most suitable.

After each exercise I have discussed how we can apply our understandings of rhythm to the exercise, sometimes technical aspects of rhythm are addressed, such as tempo or metre. In other cases, I discuss how we can apply our understandings of tempo-rhythm, Meyerhold's tri-partite rhythmic system, and Laban's effort theory.

I make a distinction here between exercises used for the purpose of devising and developing movement, and "actor training practices", which I would define as those used for the purpose of developing performance skills. This distinction can be unclear at times because exercises designed for devising will put performance skills into practice, therefore potentially developing them. The same is also true vice versa, an exercise used with the specific attention of developing skills may produce a movement sequence that can then be used within performance. Regardless, my distinction is based on whether an exercise has a direct application into the practice of movement devising.

As the focus of this investigation is how we harness the various expressive qualities of rhythm, I should first define my use of the term 'expressive qualities'. I first look to Roesner and his productive categories of rhythm, focusing not on the influence rhythm might have on the development of skill or cultivation of ensemble awareness, but instead the direct influence on the "directing, designing, and devising process" (Roesner, 2014, p. 41). I am focusing on rhythm's ability to convey "specific qualities of expression and mood" (2017, p.12). In the later chapter, *The Effects of Rhythm* (pp.50-58), I discuss how rhythm can be used to create broader atmospheric effects such as controlling the mood, and levels of energy and tension. Also focusing on more specific effects such as the portrayal of characters, subtext, and intention. I will also be discussing historical symbolic associations of rhythm, including the notion of 'natural' and 'mechanical' rhythms.

In terms of the practitioners I discuss, I acknowledge that my sources are somewhat limited to Euro/ American traditions, in no small part due to my existing training background. I have attempted to cast a broad net in terms of my focus on artists who work within a range of

performance modes, but also acknowledge the scope and depth of rhythmic exploration that occurs beyond the narrow historical and cultural boundaries I have set myself.

The most notable source for this thesis is *Rhythm in Acting and Performance* (2017), written by the musician and performance practitioner Eilon Morris. During this study, I was able to take part in a workshop led by Morris (2018). Morris influences the work with his highly developed rhythmic dramaturgies, and specific insight into polyrhythmic systems. His research covers a number of areas of rhythmic practice which have thus far not been addressed with the same level of specificity and attention to detail.

As well as discussing the work of Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, and Laban. Not only in relation to their key concepts of rhythm, but also their broader influence on the study of rhythm in movement. I will be drawing on a number of sources from the fields of theatre, music, and dance. These are discussed within my literature review under Further Literature (pp.33-36). While Morris' work addressed rhythm most directly, there are a number of texts written by modern practitioners that provide exercises and insights into the use of rhythm in devising. The texts I have found most valuable are often focused around movement and physicality in theatre, be that in a devising or actor training context.

While I address understandings of rhythm which are founded in music theory, I have attempted to limit this discussion to what is directly relevant to the study of devising movement. Chapters which address technical, foundational, understandings of rhythm, Tempo and metre, sequence and repetition, and Polyhythm, are especially reliant on these musical understandings of rhythm.

As well as the discussion of Laban's work, I also draw from a number of texts from the field of dance, specifically choreography. Within these texts I have found useful insights into how musical notions of rhythm are applied to movement, in terms of phrasing and tempo. As well as insights into the expressive qualities of rhythm that can be harnessed within movement. These insights are discussed throughout, but my main sources are presented in Further Literature (pp. 35-36).

The structure of the thesis is intended to allow the reader to address any specific aspect of rhythmic exploration. The theoretical groundwork for many of the exercises in later sections of the thesis can be found within the first chapter and literature review. Within the first

chapter I clarify my own definition of rhythm itself, how we go about devising with rhythm, as well as a short section on my own practical experience in devising. Following this is the literature review, focusing first on my three key historical practitioners, before discussing other sources I have drawn from.

After this I have split the study into three separate focuses:

Tempo & Metre

Sequence & Repetition

Polyrhythm

Although there is a large amount of overlap between these three elements, I have divided them in relation to their practical implications within a devising context. Presenting them in an order that allows an understanding of each to be developed upon in the later chapters. Each section is not to be viewed as an entirely separate aspect of rhythm, rather another element of rhythm to be explored.

After this I discuss the expressive qualities of rhythm, and how they can be used within the devising process. I have chosen to address this here, as the discussion is reliant on the understandings of rhythm which are presented in the literature review, and following chapters.

After this discussion, my presentation of the exercises can be found. This includes my discussion on how aspects of rhythm can be applied and explored. The thesis is then concluded with a summary of the ideas and insights discussed.

Methodology

For this study I have engaged in a number of research methods. With the aim to gaining an understanding of rhythm in movement that takes into account pre-existing knowledge in the field, current discourse, as well as personal practice and experience. Elements of this study included practice as research sections in which “Knowledge is generated through action and reflection” (Barrett and Bolt, 2010, p.5). A large bulk of the information discussed is taken mainly from academic writing. The majority of these sources are drawn from the fields of theatre and dance, as well as foundational understandings of music theory.

Three prominent lines of inquiry here have been the study of Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, and Laban. Within this study I have attempted to draw focus to the areas of their practice which hold most relevance to the study of rhythm in movement, and devising. My investigation focused around the understandings of rhythm in movement developed by these practitioners, and the techniques or methods developed to put these understandings into practice. This research included the academic writing that discussed the work of these practitioners, as well as historical accounts of their work, and their own writing.

When investigating rhythm in movement I thought it necessary to consider sources from a music, and dance background. Much of the technical discussion of aspects of rhythm was especially reliant on an understanding of music theory. I have found many of the insights within the study of dance applicable to the movement devising process, as many of the fundamental uses of rhythm are applicable to either field.

In the next main area of study, I looked to gain a clear understanding of how different aspects of rhythm can be understood in relation to movement devising. In the presentation of these aspects I have split them into three main concepts, tempo & metre, sequence & repetition, and polyrhythm.

The practice as research section of my study followed two main aims. Firstly, to gain experience and insight into a number of the exercises I had found in my earlier research. During this period, I led exercises with two groups TheArte Physical Theatre, and Make, DO Theatre. As well as separate sessions in which I practiced exercises which only required two participants in order to gain a personal perspective of the exercises. My aim here to was experience running exercises with a range of individuals with differing training backgrounds.

I shared a similar training background with those in Make, DO Theatre, and was able to run exercises with those less experienced in movement devising with TheArte Physical Theatre.

Another element of this study was as a research trip to take part in Eilon Morris' workshop "Playing In The Cracks". One large focus of this was to document what Nelson describes as "Practitioner Knowledge" (2006, p.112) which often includes tacit knowledge. One key aim of this area of study was to document the "tacit knowledge", or know-how, (Nelson, 2006, p.107) that is passed on through workshopping and document the knowledge gained.

During this workshop I attempted to gain new insights into the use of rhythm in movement devising. A key part of this process, described in Nelson's Practice as Research model, is capturing "moments of insight" (2013, p.29) as well as critical reflection. During these exercises, and those I took part in during Morris' workshop I attempted to capture any insights through notetaking and prior phenomenological reflection, which includes the documentation of "lived experience" (Kozel, 2015, p.54).

One clear disadvantage to this research method I must acknowledge is that insights are included from prior experience that took place before the research objectives of this study were set. Meaning that my process of capturing insight was reliant entirely upon subsequent reflection rather than detailed notetaking throughout. However, I chose to include insights gained prior to the set start of research as I felt they were relevant to the study, and crucial to my own tacit understandings of rhythm in movement, upon which this study is based.

Another disadvantage to my research methods, is that practical research undertaken during the process was reliant upon my own observations, and phenomenological reflection upon the processes. I acknowledge this research method is constrained by the fact insights are taken only from personal experience, and a multitude of voices might provide broader, and more reliable insights.

Chapter 1: Initial Understandings

What do we mean by rhythm?

The first thing I should clarify is that within this chapter it is not my intention to provide an exhaustive definition of rhythm which covers every facet of its complex nature. For the sake of brevity, I only aim to provide a definition which covers the relevant aspects to the study of movement devising for theatre. Throughout history multiple definitions have been given for this term. As Windsor and Desain state, “any activity (however mundane) which requires us to synchronise with an external (and possibly variable) series of events, is inherently rhythmic” (2000, xii). Its relevance within so many fields means multiple definitions may apply within one context, to attempt to address them all would likely end in failure. One of the key sources within this chapter is Morris’ etymology of rhythm, found in *Rhythm in Acting and Performance* (2017, pp.8-12), in which he addresses many of the historical understandings of rhythm. Morris explains: “The inherent difficulty that emerges in any interrogation of rhythm is the inherent resistance it has to detailed analysis. Under scrutiny, the subject of rhythm reveals a nature that is both evasive and porous” (2017, p.7). While researching this study it has been made apparent to me the specificity of my own, almost exclusively temporal, understanding of rhythm. I would hesitantly propose that this definition is the one most commonly held. Within this chapter however I will also be addressing rhythm in relation to energy and space, two aspects I feel are most relevant to the study of movement in devising.

Addressing its linguistic routes Morris references the Greek origins of *rythmos*, “Derived from the word *rhein*, meaning to ‘flow’” (2017, p.8). The *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology* (2015) provides a translation relating the term to “a measure, or measured motion” (Colman, 2015). These origins relating to flow and measure form the basis of our understanding. Flow relating to the continuing relationships within action and energy, measure covering the more structured and perhaps more easily definable aspects which relate to sequence and metre. Morris goes on to discuss “post-socratic” theories of rhythm, in which it is used as a “structural device” (2017 p.9), also relating to space and qualities of

movement. He also discusses its use as a verb in its application of control and discipline over sound, movement, and emotion (2017, p.9). This understanding of structure in relation to rhythm is one which I consider to be core to its overarching definition, and one which still defines it within modern contexts.

Looking to more modern influences on our understanding of rhythm it is worth noting its relevance in the fields which are most commonly affected by it, and that we are most commonly influenced by. These being the fields of music and dance. A broad definition is provided by *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* (2007), which relates to our temporal understanding of rhythm, stating that rhythm “covers everything pertaining to the *time* aspect of music” (Kennedy and Bourne Kennedy, 2007). Within this definition a useful division is created between the two categories of temporal rhythm.

(1) metrical, with irregular groups of short units, **(2) non-metrical**, where there is no perceptible unit of measurement and no ‘traditional’ tempo (2007)

It is worth noting, this use of the term tempo relates specifically to its use within musical notation, rather than its broader use in our own context which shall be covered within a later chapter. The purely temporal understanding of rhythm used here is of course restrictive in our own context, understandably considering its source. Music theory can however be a useful aid in understanding this aspect of rhythm. Within the following chapters concepts most commonly found within music theory, such as tempo, metre, and polyrhythm, will be discussed. Many rhythmic training approaches, such as Dalcroze’s eurhythmics, and Flatischler’s TaKeTiNa, rely heavily on rhythmic music theory. Similarly, the influence of classical music theory within dance is undeniable, due to its necessary reliance upon it, to study the theory of dance (with musical accompaniment) one must understand the basic rhythmic rules the accompaniment follows.

As well as its links to the purely temporal, the study of rhythm in relation to energy and flow is one highly relevant to dance. Reynolds states: “Energy is formed with rhythm through expenditure and economy. Innovative dance rhythms are grounded in changes in energy expenditure through new ‘economies’ of energy, which can manifest the subject’s resistance to constraints and transform the ‘self’” (2007, p.1). Within this understanding we

see the influence of Laban's notions of effort within rhythm. By applying our understanding of effort to musical notions of sequence and repetition, we can see rhythm is created in movement by the alternation of levels of effort applied to each action (Reynolds, 2007, p.6). This understanding of effort in relation to movement cannot be seen as purely dance based; within his writing and tanztheater practice, little delineation is made between dance and theatre practices. As Bradley states "it is the clarity and depth of movement, with which he is concerned" (Bradley, 2009, p.29). On the subject of rhythm's role in theatre Callery states "alternating patterns of stasis and dynamism, relaxation and tension, speeding up and slowing down, constitute a constant play of rhythms" (2011, p.118). Here we see the concern with rhythm is as much tied to levels of energy within movement, as the temporal structure along which it follows.

Within Windsor and Desain's scientific approach to movement analysis found within *Rhythm Perception and Production* rhythm is referred to simply as "structured time" (Windsor and Desain, 2000). Although somewhat limited this definition does address the heart of this aspect of rhythm that can be transferable across fields. Windsor and Desain's focus here is specifically the way we interact with temporal rhythms; however, if this temporal aspect is removed, this focus on structure still remains relevant. Within any subject in which an aspect of rhythm is relevant, be it energy, space, or time, it is the structuring of this element which makes it inherently rhythmical. This somewhat essentialist view of rhythm serves to clarify our understanding as we go forward. However, for the purpose of exploring rhythm within movement it may be more useful to consider the specific aspects of this structuring which dictate the way we move in rhythm. For the purpose of this study I will be addressing rhythm in terms the aspects and relationships within movement that define its structure. These being the tempo and effort of movements, the sequence in which they are performed, and the layering of these aspects within polyrhythm.

Considering the complex nature of rhythm itself it is natural that there be some discourse around the definitions of some terminology used within this study. For the purpose of clarity however I will set some basic definitions now. Some of these definitions may differ in another context, especially as many come from traditionally musical backgrounds, but the definitions here are most suitable for the study of movement devising.

Metre: “The organisation of a regular succession of rhythmic impulses, or beats” (Rutherford-Johnson, Kennedy and Bourne Kennedy, 2015). Commonly used metres include 4|4 which is a duple metre and therefore organised in sets of two, and 3|4 which is a triple metre and therefore organised in sets of 3s.

Sequence: The organisation, or ordering, of any series of elements, actions, or tempos. For example, a predetermined series of movements might be described as a sequence. Similarly, a predetermined series of accents within a metre might be described as a sequence.

Tempo: The speed at which an action, or series of actions, is carried out. For example, the same series of actions can be carried out faster or slower, this would be altering the tempo of the movements.

Polyrhythm: The simultaneous layering of different rhythmic elements, often metrical but not necessarily.

Polymetre: The simultaneous layering of different metres, a more specific term for polyrhythm that refers only to contrasting metres.

Accent: An emphasis on a particular action, or point within an action. For example, if a performer is walking in a regular pace, stamping on the first of every four steps they would be placing an accent on the first beat of the duple metre.

Free Rhythm: Any rhythm which does not make up or follow any set metre.

How do we devise movement with rhythm?

Before discussing the various aspects of rhythm which might be incorporated into the movement devising process, it's useful to first make clear a few definitions and understandings of the process itself. In this section I will clarify what I mean by movement devising processes, and how we go about tackling rhythm within the work.

I should first address what I mean by "devising movement for theatre". Although this seems obvious, my own understanding is based almost entirely on the small number of devising groups and practitioners I've worked with. Only when compiling exercises was I struck by how heavily the processes I've worked with rely on improvisation and then development. Many of the exercises found within the following sections can be used as devising exercises, or simply as structured improvisations for the purpose of actor training. Davis Robinson defines devising simply as "the process of inventing material for performance together" (2015, p.9), and within this study I am focusing on this process of shared creative invention, applied specifically to the creation of movement.

This is to say that the study is not aimed exclusively at those working in a strict ensemble devising process⁴, but at anyone who wishes to use collective devising processes to create movement for theatre. Many of the sources used are drawn from a physical theatre⁵ context, in which movement is often developed separately from story or content. It is this separate development of movement on which the study is focused.

The study of rhythmic movement devising is one so closely tied to that of dance choreography I feel I should explain my reasoning for not using the term choreography, rather than the arguably more clunky 'movement devising'. Even in the context of physical theatre Graham and Hoggett define choreography as "any formalised movements that become set and can be repeated" (2014, p.122), a definition which perfectly articulates my

⁴ Such as those following the practice of "British devised theatre" (1996, p.2). Which developed through the late twentieth century and included companies such as "The People's show, Trestle Theatre, Belgrade Theatre-In-Education Company, Red Ladder, and Welfare State International", as detailed in Oddley's *Devising Theatre* (1996, p.2).

⁵ My broad definition here ranges from the "dance based physical theatres" (2007, p.9) and physicalised narratives detailed in Murray and Keefe's *Physical Theatres: A Critical Introduction* (2007, p.9).

own understanding of devised movement. My main reason for shying away from the term in this study was the connotations of, and origins in dance. In my opinion the terminology of movement devising is a clearer fit in the field of devising as a whole.

Callery's description of devising provides an insight into the workings of the process, she states "devising is rooted in the concept of the creative actor developing ideas from tasks." (2001, p.165). The exercises detailed rely on the deviser working from task based improvisations, taking this movement and developing upon it. In some of these the rhythmic exploration or rhythm based task may be used as stimulus for creative movement, in others the movement will be created and then explored with rhythms applied. Of course, being mindful of rhythm at all times is one goal of the various rhythmic trainings available, and ideally a performer would be aware of the rhythmic qualities of their action. As they would their tension, vocalisation, or any other aspect of their performance. These exercises simply offer a way to work with rhythm as a focal point.

When considering improvisation's role within a movement devising process, it is worth noting that many of the practitioners who founded our understandings of rhythm in theatrical movement can also be accredited in the development of improvisation within this context. Frost and Yarrow name, among others, Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Copeau (Frost and Yarrow, 2016, pp.7-14). Stanislavsky is noted as one of the first to record their use of improvisation in this context, perhaps being "the originator of the modern use of improvisation" (2016, p.8) citing the exercises described in his books. Frost and Yarrow do however recognise this statement is based on his later writing and does not necessarily reflect his earlier work. Meyerhold's use of improvisation is one more heavily "engaged with the actor's physical skills" (2016, p.12), and relies on more explicit physical expression, influenced by the use of mask and mime in Commedia D'ell Arte and the practice of street entertainers. It is Copeau however, who Frost and Yarrow cite as the originator of the style of exploratory improvisation in devising that many of these exercises are based around. They state "Copeau was not the first to use improvisation as a rehearsal and training technique [...] But Copeau, at Le Vieux-Colombier and in his teaching, was the first really to base a system of exploratory work upon it" (2016, p.14).

Having stressed the importance of improvisation within the movement devising process it is important to note that this is not the only way to work, or to apply rhythm to movement.

Although many of the exercises use rhythm as a variable to be explored. It is also reasonable to decide on the rhythm that will be used, for the various qualities it may portray, and then apply it to movement or build the movement around this.

It is my hope that with these suggested starting points for devising movement with attention to rhythm, a devising ensemble or performer would then be able to develop their own practice and continue this focus on rhythm so that it is applied continually, as is the intention of the various rhythm-based actor training practices available.

Practical influences and experiences

Although this study is based primarily on academic research into the scholarship surrounding the field, it is worth making a comment on my own practical experience. Many of the personal insights included are founded upon my own tacit understandings of rhythm.

With regards to my experience before this study began, I have taken part in a number of movement devising processes as part of my undergraduate study. Prior to this I was involved in a youth Playback Theatre group through Playback Theatre Manchester, the influence of which may be noted in my preference for improvisation based devising processes. During my study I have been involved in the development of a production by Make, DO Theatre under the direction of Emily Brown. The creative process for this piece was heavily reliant on improvisatory, and task based, movement devising. During this time, I have also been involved in a youth physical theatre group, in which I was responsible for leading ensemble movement devising sessions. These sessions were especially informative as they gave me experience of exploring rhythm in a group without the shared training background I was used to when working with my peers in university, or Make, DO Theatre.

To all bar one, a trained dancer, the exercises I presented to this group were almost all new to them. This highlighted to me the necessity of clear and explicit instruction when introducing rhythmic elements to the work. It became apparent that the foundational understandings of phrasing, metre, and the tempo of individual actions, that I had taken for

granted when working with my peers at University, or in Make, DO Theatre, were all based on our shared training background of movement improvisation and devising. One of my failings within this group was to presume a baseline embodied understanding of rhythm in movement. This included notions such as duple/ trip metres, beginning and ending points in movement (such as Meyerhold's tri-partite rhythmic system), and levels of effort and intensity within movement (such as Laban's effort actions). I clarify the lack of an embodied understanding here, as the group often understood my instructions on a theoretical level, but would encounter difficulty putting them into practice. This was something I had not encountered when working with my peers, or those in Make, DO Theatre, it highlighted to me the necessity of understanding and taking into account the training background of the group, before deciding which exercises to use. For example, one reason I made more use of exercises such as those found in *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre* (2014) was because these exercises often use sequence and repetition, and can utilise metre. I found the group were more able to easily explore these aspects of rhythm, in contrast with polyrhythmic exercises, and exercises based around tempo. In which the deviser is less able to rely on repeated sequences, or required to perform polyrhythm which often requires coordination and an ability to focus on multiple rhythmic elements at once.

While researching for the project I was able to take part in a three-day workshop with Eilon Morris. The workshop: "Playing In The Cracks" (Morris, 2018), was focused on exploring what can be found between beats, movements, and moments. Over the course of the workshop Morris led the group through preparatory focusing exercises, as well as increasingly complex polymetres in the form of Rienhard Flatischler's TaKeTiNa. The exercises most valuable to this study however were those he introduced later in the process. These exercises began to offer insights into how a devising process could begin with rhythmic exploration at the forefront of the mind of the deviser. These exercises were especially useful as they were more focused around the creation of movement. As opposed to the earlier exercises, which focused more heavily on the cultivation of skill and the introduction of new rhythms. I had encountered similar exercises before, but Morris' offered a new approach which focused around rhythmic exploration. One repetition-based exercise was similar to that which I had been shown in an introduction to Playback Theatre.

Whereas more freeform movement exercises, such as “Journeys” and “Rhythmic Check” in (both discussed in the Practical Exercises chapter, pp.59-79) were similar to those I had experienced working with Emily Brown of Make, DO theatre, and during my undergraduate studies.

One of the greatest challenges I face personally when devising movement is the feeling of a lack of direction or purpose in movement. When leading workshops or classes where improvised movement is required I will often look up to a sea of slowly waving arms and wide eyes darting around the room for some confirmation that what they are doing is in fact ‘correct’.

Morris offers a novel approach to dealing with this issue through focus on rhythm. In my own experience of taking part in improvisation based movement exploration ⁶, one of the most common ways of dealing with this issue is to rely on stimuli based around emotion or imagination. This is in turn something I’ve relied upon in my own practice⁷. During Morris’ work new stimuli are instead introduced through alternative rhythmic options to explore and tasks to follow.

The most common way of dealing with this issue in my own experience is the introduction of stimuli based around emotion or imagination. This approach was not used by Morris, instead stimuli were created by alternative rhythmic options to explore and tasks to follow. While the addition of emotional objectives provides a stimuli for movement improvisation, I have found it can limit options for exploration, as the deviser is focused on following one whatever emotional objective is provided, rather than their own imaginative stimuli. The key advantage I found in Morris’ approach, was that the purely rhythmic stimuli allowed the deviser to follow whatever mental associations occurred. Rather than simply following the emotional stimuli provided. One task, “Journeys” (detailed pp.66-68 of this thesis) a simple partner based movement improvisation exercise, which I have practiced a version of before, was approached with a specific focus on exploring the expressive qualities found within the alternating lengths of sequences. In previous experience of this exercise I have often found

⁶ During workshops with Sandström (2018) and Núñez (2017), rehearsal processes with Make, DO Theatre, and throughout my time at the University of Huddersfield.

⁷ Leading workshops with Make, DO Theatre, TheArte Physical Theatre, and during my Final Year Devising Process at the University of Huddersfield.

myself working without focus, searching for mental associations to follow. When the focus was shifted to exploring rhythm, I was able to focus more clearly on my movements, and mental associations came naturally.

As the deviser's attention is focused primarily on the exploration of rhythm within movement, the imagination is prevented from getting stuck on any specific idea for too long, and new modes of movement are cultivated. In practice I found the influence of rhythmic development served as a constant motivation for the development of movement, resulting in a more natural and productive cycle of creativity in movement.

Literature Review

Stanislavsky

The most logical place to start when considering the use of rhythm within theatre is Stanislavsky. He could be considered the catalyst for much of the discourse and research that has taken place within the field (Frendo, 2014, pp.225-226). Although many of his revelations could be seen as the application of knowledge from the separate fields of music, spirituality, and psychology into theatrical practice, it is often these understandings that we take for granted in practice. Stanislavsky's fascination with rhythm is clear within his writing, and the key to many of his practical methods. As Frendo explains "during the development of the System, rhythm was a nodal element for Stanislavsky and his research on the nature of the actor's craft" (2014, p.227).

In *Building A Character*, through the voice of his fictional "alias" Tortsov, Stanislavsky writes "Listen to it, it's a labyrinth of sounds and yet what order, what harmony there is in this organized chaos!" (2014, p.186). This passage simply refers to the interlocking rhythms created by a series of metronomes set to different tempos creating polymetre, and one can feel the fascination with rhythm that gripped Stanislavsky throughout his life. We can trace this fascination to his early life, training as an opera singer, when he "dreamed of working as Komissarzhevsky's [his vocal tutor] assistant in a rhythm class at the Moscow Conservatoire teaching 'physical rhythm' to opera singers" (Morris, 2017, p.47).

Morris discusses another key influence in Stanislavsky's understanding of rhythm, Eurythmics (2017, p.52). Taken from the field of music, and created by Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. Morris describes it as;

A collection of movement exercises designed to promote greater muscular and nervous coordination, and sensitivity to rhythm and tempo. This work grew into a pedagogical approach to movement and music training, which developed vast popularity throughout Europe, Russia, and the United States and came to be known as eurythmics. (2017, p.52)

In these Eurythmics we begin to see a growing desire within the field to create structured training methods to develop tacit understandings of rhythm and movement. Stanislavsky's own system, that is cited to have developed from his experience in Eurythmics (Morris, 2017, p.53), is tempo-rhythm.

Tempo-rhythm has been written about in great length in various publications. For reference I will give Whyman's definition from *Stanislavski: The Basics*; "In relation to action on stage, we can think of the tempo (or speed or pace) of the external movement and action or speech, and rhythm as the internal state" (2013, p.126). Although these definitions serve as a clarification for the reader, Frenzo and Morris both find fault in the definitions, which can lead to an oversight of the true nature and purpose of tempo-rhythm. Frenzo explains:

Various attempts have been made to define tempo-rhythm. Often these tend to be either circular definitions or definitions based on the internal– external/subjective– objective dualism. Both can be problematic in that, as a neologism, tempo-rhythm combines two elements of a different nature. In a musical work, tempo indicates the speed at which a phrase is to be performed, while rhythm is a dynamic manifested in the relationship between notes that make up a phrase. (2014, p.232)

It is within this dualistic language that problems arise in the definition of tempo-rhythm. Frenzo later goes on to explain "what constitutes one of Stanislavsky's most relevant contributions to the understanding of rhythm and tempo in theatre-making processes is that he actually associated the two to both the inner and the outer conditions" (2014, p.232). This may complicate the matter, especially when considering the subject through the western Cartesian dichotomy. To fully understand tempo-rhythm we must consider Stanislavsky's influence from Eastern yogic practices (Morris, 2017, pp.50-51), and consider it as a psychophysical practice.

While some of Stanislavski's descriptions of inner and outer tempo-rhythm seem to suggest a mechanical or deterministic relationship between rhythm and emotion, with one aspect triggering the other, in practice this relationship appears to be more complex. The actor had the task of bringing this relationship 'to life from within'. In this sense the correlation was not seen to be entirely deterministic. The actor's inner

experience was not simply the result of a mechanical process triggered by external rhythms. (Morris, 2017, p.52)

To explore the practice in this light we must consider the use of breath which Merlin describes as “a fundamental tool for Stanislavsky in terms of acting processes” (2014, p.57). In *The Complete Stanislavsky Toolkit* Merlin goes on to offer insights into the necessity of attention to breath when working with tempo-rhythm. As she states “At the centre of the rhythmic law of all living creatures is the continual inhalation and exhalation of breath, and as we’ve already seen, through breathing we access emotion. There’s no doubt that tempo-rhythm is at the very heart of acting.” (2014, p.190). For Merlin breath is linked to “your arousal of emotion” (2014, p.195), and is one of its key uses for the actor.

In terms of practical exercises offered for the exploration of tempo-rhythm Whyman offers a simple exercise (2014, pp.126-127), which is developed and discussed by Gillett in *Acting on Impulse* (2007, pp.242-243). Toporkov also recalls exercises led by Stanislavsky, and in *Building A Character* (2013) Stanislavsky himself delineates a number of explorative exercises. These are however more actor training based, the focus is clearly set on the development of performance skills and offer less applications within a devising context- specifically the creation of new performable material.

Another aspect of Stanislavsky’s method that relates to this study is his method of physical actions. Rhythm is fundamental to this method, as stated “You cannot master the method of physical actions if you do not master rhythm. Each physical action is inseparably linked with the rhythm which categorises it” (Toporkov, 2008, p.170). The aspect of this method most relevant to this study however is the ‘physical score’, an idea that informs my practice and research overall. The advantage of setting a physical score is “the idea that you can work from *simple physical actions to complex emotional and psychological experiences*, as long as you fuel those simple physical actions with an objective.” (2014, p.193). We can see that for Stanislavsky it was rhythmic exploration that brought life to action on stage. We see this in Toporkov’s *Stanislavski in Rehearsal*, as he describes “how a slow, plodding scene was magically transformed into a full-blooded, action- packed event in which the conflict was intense because of the masterly way he put his very precise ideas of dramatic rhythm into practice.” (2008, p.29)

Meyerhold

The practitioner I consider to be perhaps the most influential to my own understandings of rhythm and musicality in theatrical performance is Vsevolod Meyerhold. During my undergraduate studies I was fortunate to study under Chloe Whitehead of Proper Job Theatre, a practitioner of Meyerhold's Biomechanics training. During this time I was introduced to Meyerhold's tri-partite rhythmic structure, which follows an action from its original impulse, through to its completion. This concept offers a novel lens through which to consider movements in relation to their rhythmic properties, and is a tool I personally find very useful when analysing rhythm in movement.

His physical training system, Biomechanics, is underpinned by an understanding of rhythm developed through a classical music training (Pitches, 2003, p.55), and a focus on rhythm can be seen in every aspect of his practice.

His concept of rhythmic improvisation in performance is crucial to the way exercises I will present throughout can be explored. His introduction of notions from a traditionally musical background into theatrical practices develop the potential *productive* uses of rhythm beyond those uncovered by Stanislavsky and those that came before. Regarding the key difference in their approaches Morris states "where Stanislavski used rhythm as a way to access and 'lure' emotions, Meyerhold saw rhythm as primarily a means of coordinating performers' actions and disciplining their temperaments" (2017, p.97). Here Morris is referring specifically to "the ways each of these directors drew on external rhythmic forms in relationship to the actor's internal experiences" (2017, p.97). When discussing these relationships he makes a clarification on the marked difference between the two approaches:

Rather than using tempo and rhythm as means of tapping into personal emotions, for Meyerhold these were seen as ways of preventing actors from being distracted by their individual feelings or habits. (Morris, 2017, p.97)

As Whitehead notes, although "the historical importance of Meyerhold's work has been acknowledged by a number of academic authors including Braun (1969, 1998 cited in

Whitehead 2017), Law and Gordon (1996 cited in Whitehead 2017), Leach (1989 cited in Whitehead 2017, 2003) and Pitches (2003). these works have tended to focus on Meyerhold's overall approach to theatre rather than the specific system of Biomechanics" (2017, p.89). For the purpose of this study a focus must be made on the practical applications that can be learned from this system. Fortunately, the system is still taught and documented, and offers some practical options for exploration. It is first worth addressing the theoretical understandings of rhythm that Meyerhold's work provides.

Perhaps the most commonly recognised aspect of Biomechanics is the tripartite rhythmic system. Whitehead explains; "The three principles most commonly used as the basic building blocks of all action are *otkaz*, *posil* and *stoika*" (2017 p.90). Each action a performer might take will go through each state, and it is this detailed focus on rhythm that characterises the practice. Pitches describes the three states as follows:

- Otkaz is the Russian for 'refusal' and describes the preparation an actor makes before any actual action – crouching down before jumping or reaching back before throwing. It's a kind of gestural prologue, if you like.
- Posil (the verb 'to send' in Russian) is the action itself. Sometimes known as the 'realisation', the posil is the actual expression of what was suggested in the prologue, the jump or throw itself.
- Tochka⁸ marks the end point of a cycle of action. It is the rest at the end of any movement. You might think of it as a kind of frozen epilogue, but an epilogue which always suggests a new start. (2003, p.55)

Leach offers a comparison given by Meyerhold that helps to visualise and clarify these meanings, which is "shooting an arrow from a bow; one, the intention (the bow string is drawn and held taut); two, the realization (the arrow is fired); three, the reaction (a moment of stillness, the bowstring quivers, the archer is ready to draw the bow again)" (2003, p.151). He goes on to provide clear instructions of Meyerhold's dactyl, an exercise that makes for an effective physical warmup which introduces a performer

⁸ An alternative term for *Stoika*. Whitehead explains "The term *stoika* is interchangeable with *tochka*, the first meaning 'stance' and the second 'point'." (2017, p.90)

to “the tripartite rhythm and its relationship to strict metre” (2003, p.154). Leach refers to a statement Meyerhold makes in *Meyerhold Speaks/ Meyerhold Rehearses* (2004), that gives insight into Meyerhold’s intentions behind the effects of this system

You can play: one, two-three, or also another way: one-two, three. The time segment is the same, but the structure is different: it gives a different rhythm to the meter. Rhythm is what overcomes the meter, what disputes meter. Rhythm is knowing how to leap off the meter and back again. (Gladkov, Meyerhold, and Law, 2004, p.135)

Here we see how the simple structure of the system allows the performer to focus on emphasis and tiny alterations to phrasing.

This is a system I often consider when practicing movement-based work. It’s applications within the broader study of rhythmic exploration in devising are clear, and Pitches offers exercises with which this can be developed. Leach goes on to offer further reasons why Meyerhold had actors follow this system.

1. It gives form and structure to everything you do on the stage.
2. It makes explicit any rhythmic choices you might make on stage.
3. It gives freedom within a defined set of boundaries.
4. It establishes a language to be used between actors and with the director.
5. It makes you think in musical terms from the outset. (2003, p.55)

Two of these reasons relate to aspects of theory that stand out from Meyerhold’s work. Number 3 is indicative of the improvisatory nature of a Biomechanical performer’s style. Number 4 relates to Meyerhold’s strong focus on the methods of communication and language used during all aspects of devising and performance.

It may seem somewhat contradictory that a system following such specific rules, with a clearly defined physical score, be focused around improvisation. This is because Meyerhold’s understanding of improvisation is one that relates more closely to that

which might be found in jazz music, a form Meyerhold was familiar with, in which performers improvise “over an established harmonic scheme of a jazz standard” (Roesner, 2014, p.70). Roesner explains “Meyerhold’s notion of improvisation was highly influenced by two main sources: the theatre tradition of the *commedia dell’arte* and a *musical* notion of improvisation, which follows certain rules and is still highly structured” (2014, p.70). It is this heavily structured improvisation that facilitates the exploration in many of the task based exercises that will be presented further on. While Roesner describes the influences that might have resulted in Meyerhold’s understanding of improvisation, Morris goes some way to suggest the motivations for his focus on rhythmic improvisation. Specifically:

Part of Meyerhold’s interest in improvisation also came from a desire to break away from a direct correspondence between the actor and the music, Meyerhold observed that in the work of Jaques-Dalcroze and Isadora Duncan, as well as in Chinese and Japanese theatre, there was a dominant sense of unity between music and action. Actions occurred for the same duration as a musical phrase, and stillness often coincided with Silence [...] As his career progressed, he looked to find more complex relationships between these elements, rejecting what he saw to be a simplistic unification of music and movement (2017, p.99)

Here we see exemplified Meyerhold’s differing uses of rhythm and metre. Although defined metres were often used as he worked with external sources of rhythm, he “ultimately wanted to grant the actor freedom from a rigid adherence to a metronomic metre- an agogic creativity” (Roesner, 2014, p.821). It is the clearly set score that allows performers this creativity. As Morris states “for Meyerhold, it was through rhythm that the actor was seen to grasp this spontaneous and improvised quality in their performance.” (2017, p.98).

One aspect of Meyerhold’s practice that relates to this study is the use of language taken from his training as a violinist. Pitches states he was “conversant in musical terminology” (2003, p.55), and he carried this language into his work as a director. When considering the necessity of using music-specific language to describe rhythm

and developments in tempo I decided against it, with the reasoning that translations into my own language could carry the same meaning without requiring and understanding of unnecessary terminology, and more importantly without slowing communication within rehearsals.

Roesner suggests that Meyerhold's use of terminology "form(s) part of his pursuit of a more exact and more effective language for the training and rehearsal process", and that his use of traditional Italian instructions "provide a narrower margin for misunderstanding" (2014, pp.77-78). Meyerhold is well documented in expressing his frustrations with performers who lack a theoretical understanding of rhythm and musicality (Tietze, 1974, p.171). For my own purposes I cannot expect actors to take part in the rigorous multidisciplinary training that Meyerhold required.

When considering the necessity of using music-specific language to describe rhythm and developments in tempo I decided against it. I believe the requirement for devisers to learn even basic Italian musical terminology to be an unnecessary barrier to those wishing to devise with attention to rhythm. Even if this requirement were met, I do not believe it would fulfil Meyerhold's original aim of providing a "narrower margin for misunderstanding" (Roesner, 2014, pp.77-78), compared to clear and explicit instruction in one's own language.

I would argue that the main advantage of using Italian terms when portraying very specific changes in tempo and mood, is that those versed in music theory knowledge will have an understanding that comes from experience. Without a background in these fields actors would have little frame of reference for the terminology, rendering it no more useful or clear than its translation in any other language. An alternative option might be to communicate through the simple theoretical terminology often used by percussionists such as para-diddles⁹ and para-diddle-diddles. I would argue this contemporary terminology is more effective than that of classical theory. As it has been developed to work as a phonetic aid to memory, with the structure of the terminology offering clues to the rhythm it is used to describe.

⁹ Defined in *The Oxford Companion To Music* as "A rudimentary side-drum technique involving the alternation of the leading hand" (2011).

Laban

One valuable source resource for this study is the work of Rudolf Laban. My main focus when discussing his work is his concept of effort theory, which offers an alternative lens through which to consider the production of rhythm in movement.

The work of Laban, “a Hungarian-born dancer, choreographer and movement theoretician” (Crespi, 2014, p.33), has influenced the work of dancers, actors, and movement practitioners alike. His movement analysis can be seen as a systematization of the movement of the human body and therefore an extremely useful tool for anyone looking to approach movement dramaturgically (Cash, 2013, p.30).

Key to this movement analysis is Laban’s effort theory. In *Rhythmic Subjects* Reynolds’s explains Laban’s understanding of the relationship between rhythm and effort.

Laban analysed attitudes towards effort according to the degree of active resistance or passive yielding on the part of the mover to the ‘motion factors’ of weight, space, time and flow, on a spectrum ranging from ‘indulging in’ to ‘fighting against’. It was these attitudes that produced rhythm [...] Modulation in effort intensity, which brought different motion factors into play, were the core of movement rhythm, and rhythm was explained as an alternation of stresses or more intensive effort-qualities with less intensive ones (Reynolds, 2007, p.6)

This effort theory focuses specifically on the production of rhythm within the moving body, rather than the broader temporal based understandings, focused on tempo and metre, that came before. Laban explains the need for such a specific lens when discussing movement “In order to discern the mechanics of motion within living movement in which purposeful control of the physical happening is at work, it is useful to give a name to the inner function originating such movement. The word used here for this purpose is *effort*” (1980, pp.20-21).

Laban's effort theory prevents the practitioner from relying on a purely temporal understanding of rhythm. Laban's understanding accounts not only for the amount of time actions take in relation to one another, but also the physical efforts taken by the actor to produce and control the rhythmic qualities of movements.

Another benefit of viewing rhythm in this way is that it removes the potential disconnect between theory and practice. A conversion of temporal rhythms to physical movements will always be subject to the necessary alterations that account for the ability of the human body to meet objectives in a set time. If a practitioner is devising movement without a set metre it may be more useful to consider the flow of effort in movement, rather than the time it takes. By removing temporal limitations, and instead addressing the flow of effort within movements, the productive qualities and flow of rhythm can be achieved while maintaining genuine intention that is not clouded by secondary temporal objectives. Unless the character onstage is also incentivized by a specific temporal limitation, e.g. Late for a train, adding a limitation to the movement in an attempt to 'add rhythm' may lead to the movements appearing overly performative and without genuine incentive. Instead the performer may consider how their modulation of effort produces rhythmic qualities rather than the ability to meet a set deadline with each step or flick of the wrist. Laban's effort theory and movement analysis go on to explore and clarify different qualities of movement and the expressive qualities these might bring about. In Laban's movement analysis great emphasis is put on defining the effects of specific movements, demystifying and systemising the qualities of effort in movement (Reynolds, p.10). Here we see the methodical lens Laban applies to movement:

In order to bring about a change in our bodily position we use muscular energy. The deployment of strength and its degrees is in proportion to the weight carried or to the resistance given to it. The weight can be either:

- (a) That of the body part moved
- (b) That of an object being moved.

The resistance can be produced by either:

- (a) From within one's own body by antagonistic muscles; or
- (b) From without by objects or persons (Hodgson, 2001, pp.41-42)

In a further attempt to systematise the study of movement Laban introduces the idea of “efforts”, which can be used to describe specific qualities of movement. These qualities are defined in relation to “*space, weight, and time*” (Gillett, 2007, p.245). Gillett describes the way these elements dictate our quality of movement: “We move through space in direct or flexible, indirect way. Our weight is strong, heavy, and forceful, or light, delicate and buoyant. Our timing is quick, sudden, broken, or sustained and steady” (2007, p.245).

One advantage of these effort qualities is that they provide a language with which we can more accurately discuss movement. It also offers insight into the way that we translate musical theories into the study of movement. Elements of rhythm are inherently linked to the use of accents. In a movement context however, it can be difficult to define the “emphasis” used to dictate a musical accent (Kennedy and Bourne Kennedy, 2007). Laban’s efforts provide a language with which one can better identify accents in movement. The most obvious of these might be the use of direct, heavy, and sudden movements. By moving in this manner an easily definable metre can be created. This is not necessarily a reliable indication, as metrical or measured rhythms exist within light, indirect, and sustained action. However, the use of direct, heavy and sudden movement qualities can be an effective indicator of accents and therefore metre. Another element to consider is alteration in effort qualities. Even if one’s movement is consistently sustained and heavy, an accent may be created by an alternation between direct and indirect movement.

It is worth noting Laban’s understanding of how rhythm relates to metre. His concept of ‘time-rhythm’ (not to be confused with tempo-rhythm) clarifies how the speed of a movement correlates within the broader structure of tempo. Laban defines it thus:

The time-rhythm of a series of movements consists of a combination of equal or different lengths of time units. These can be represented by the musical signs of time values

Time-rhythms are independent of the tempo of the whole movement sequence. The same rhythm can be performed in a different tempi without changing the proportional length of each time unit. (Laban, 1980, pp 39-40)

One useful concept to consider when addressing the flow of effort actions is phrasing. In Blom and Chaplin's *The Intimate Act of Choreography* (1982), a clarification of the basic logic of phrasing in dance choreography is made. This statement is specifically discussing the idea of high points in choreography, and how they can be used to control phrasing:

Conceptually for use in dance we can say it is the most important part of the phrase: the high point may be stronger or faster; it may be marked by an extreme change or by a gradual dynamic build; it may be the sudden cessation of movement; but in any case, it is in some way more arresting to the perceiver. (Blom and Chaplin, 1982, p.24)

If we consider this in relation to Laban's effort theory, we might view these high points as contrasts in effort. The choreographer, or in our case deviser, is able to control the phrasing and structure of a section of movement, by paying attention to the points at which contrasting effort actions are made.

The necessity of providing an engaging logical flow of action for the viewer is clear, and something that should be considered when devising movement for any performance. If we take Laban's definition of rhythm as 'an alternation of stresses or more intensive effort-qualities with less intensive ones' (Reynolds, 2007, P.6), we see how this theory can be used to inform decisions in phrasing of movement and action. Conversely if a pre-existing movement score is used, or the movement need fill a specific structure, timing, or objective, the effort intensity can be used to apply rhythm to pre-existing movement.

Further Literature

While a number of texts discuss the use of rhythm throughout the history of devised performance, direct discussion of rhythm is often limited and provides little in the way of practicable advice or instruction. The work of Milling & Heddon (2006) and Mermikides & Smart (2010) address how rhythm has at times been a focal point for devising in British theatre companies such as Tara Arts and DV8 (2006, pp.183-186), People Show (2010, p.40),

and Theatre O (2010, p.143). These texts address how, for example, improvisation around rhythm and music, founded in Indian dance techniques, was a central part of the devising process for Jatinder Verma of Tara Arts (2006, p.184), but do not offer clear instruction on how a contemporary deviser might use this in practice. Similarly, in Govan, Nicholson, and Normington's *Making a Performance* (2007) the influence of various practices and elements of physical devised work is discussed in great length, charting the progression towards a more "somatically based theatre" (2007, p.159), and discussing the influence of psychophysical training approaches, and use of athleticism, mime, and dance (2007, pp.158-163). Despite this detailed account, the discussion of rhythm is limited to commenting on its use in Chaikin's Open Theatre (2007, pp.37-38), and its importance in the ensemble building process in Littlewood and MacColl's Theatre Workshop (2007, p.49).

In texts with a more practical focus such as Robinson's Practical Guide to Devising, and Oddley's *Devising Theatre: A practical and theoretical handbook* (1994), the use of rhythm is discussed, and practical exercises for exploration are offered. Oddley discusses how Hilary Westlake would teach a "rhythm to performers so that they can move off or on the beat" (1994, p.58). Also offering a useful practical exercise, "Making a Machine", which is discussed pp. 76-78 of this thesis. While Davis discusses the value of utilising rhythm within devised performance, there is limited discussion on how rhythm can be used to access specific expressive qualities. He does offer a number of exercises through which to explore rhythm. The focus in many of these exercises however is the development of an actor's rhythmic awareness, and therefore more directly relevant to the study of actor training, rather than devising.

Some of the texts I have found more useful for this study, are those which focus around actor movement and physicality. Some of these key texts are Callery's *Through the Body* (2001), Graham and Hoggett's *The Frantic Assembly book of Devising Theatre* (2014), and Marshall's *The Body Speaks* (2008). Callery and Marshall's writing deserves mention not only for their practical devising exercises, but also the material provided for anyone wishing to develop their actor training practices in the study of rhythm. Graham and Hoggett's work offers a huge number of exercises for working in a broader physical theatre style. Much of the work bridges the gap between actor training work, general performance games, and devising exercises.

Callery's approach begins with a focus on preparatory training, and the book serves perhaps more accurately as an actor training guide, towards what Rand describes as "a progression-beginning with awareness and moving to articulation, energy, and neutrality" (Rand, 2004). In the later sections of the book however, especially the chapter *The Sentient Body*, a number of practical devising exercises, and training exercises which could work as a springboard for devising, are presented. I find that Callery's writing successfully addresses the experiences, difficulties, and setbacks of using these exercises with a group, often referencing the common reception from actors when an exercise is introduced.

The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre, is a crucial source for anyone looking for activities or exercises to work on when devising, or preparing to devise, movement. One thing to note when using exercises from this text is that many exercises are designed to fill a specific scene or plot requirement, and many are reliant on space and set. For this reason it's necessary to pick and choose which exercises will be useful.

Similarly to Callery's approach to training, Marshall takes influence from a number of prominent practitioners. Her background as a teacher provides experience in leading the exercises found within. It is the third section of the book I have focused on in this study. Its focus on practical application fits perfectly, as she considers how we "apply the body to the delicate task of working together on specific performances." (Marshall, 2008, viii).

Perhaps the most important aspects of these texts is that they are specifically grounded and created through practice, through either teaching or devising. It is for this reason that the exercises can be applied so well directly to the devising context.

Another important resource for the study of movement devising is the scholarship surrounding the world of contemporary dance. In many cases the line between contemporary dance and theatre is unclear and the bleed of influence from one to another is significant. Not only because the practices share extremely similar core principles, but because many theatre practitioners come from dance backgrounds and vice versa.

Texts such as Burrow's *A Choreographer's Handbook* (2010), Green's *Choreographing from within* (2010), and Blom and Chaplin's *The Intimate Act of Choreography* (1982) all offer insights into the practical application of rhythm in movement. *The Intimate Act of Choreography* is perhaps one of the most valuable sources I have found. It discusses how

more technical aspects of rhythm founded in music theory, are applied to movement (1982, pp.59-68). A number of these texts also present practical exercises. I have decided against using these, while these exercises offer ways to explore rhythm in movement, the exercises I have found from the study of theatre feel more easily applied to the movement devising process.

Chapter 2: Tempo & Metre

The tempo of any action (or sequence of actions) is naturally one of the most influential rhythmic characteristics. Alongside sequence it can be seen as one of the main pillars of rhythm itself. For obvious reasons this means tempo is not only one of the most well documented aspects of rhythm, but also the one that most easily comes to the mind of the performer or spectator when considering rhythm. Perhaps due to the simplicity of the core concept, tempo is the first aspect of rhythm that we understand. Even in infancy, before there is rhythm, there is fast and slow. The study of tempo in relation to performance is linked to sequence and metre, and it makes sense when addressing these aspects to consider both internal and external stimuli separately. In practice setting restrictions through external stimuli has a number of effects on the performer, and the efficacy of its use is disputed. Attention to tempo without external stimuli is one aspect of rhythmic training that can be developed through practice. In cases such as those described in writings on Meyerhold's practice, performers are expected to fit very specific time limitations. For the deviser without the option to spend hours pacing from one side of a room to another, there are a variety of techniques devised to explore tempo in movement.

Before we begin to explore tempo it is useful to clarify the definition we intend to work with, and dispel any possible misconceptions about how the term might be used. To do this it is also crucial to discuss metre.

Various sources provide a definition of tempo in relation to its origins in the studies of music and speech. *A Dictionary of Psychology* covers both, "The speed at which a piece or passage of music is played or an utterance or fragment of speech is delivered. [From Italian *tempo* speed, from Latin *tempus* time]" (Colman, 2015). In its linguistic origin tempo could cover many aspects of rhythm, however in the context of actor training the term is used in reference to a more specific aspect of time. If we take this definition in its linguistic and musical usage however, we can see the two ways tempo can be used within our own context of devising. In its musical use tempo can be used to describe the underlying speed of the metre over which the rhythm is laid. A director might use the term to describe the broader speed of a movement sequence, within which the relationship between each

individual movement might differ. In its linguistic use we see tempo used to describe the speed of each specific utterance. We might translate this to describing the speed of the swing of an arm, or movement along the stage. This usage is mirrored by Merlin's admittedly simplified definition which describes tempo as "the speed at which we carry out an action" (Merlin, 2014, p.192). To clarify, the tempo relates to speed in a broad overarching sense, or the specific sense of one action, but not the relationship between actions: this is covered by rhythm and metre.

Metre itself is more prevalent in music, defined as "the organization of a regular succession of rhythmical impulses, or beats, e.g. 3/4 and 6/8 being described as different kinds of metres. Metre is distinct from rhythm in that it provides the underlying framework of pulses and accents against which a particular rhythm is defined." (Rutherford-Johnson, Kennedy and Bourne Kennedy, 2015). Unless a deviser uses an external music source as a stimulus for movement, or wishes to create metre through movement, it may not be relevant at all. Similarly, the term must not be confused with clock-time, a self-explanatory term that relates only to the "real world" duration that any section or single movement takes up, and not to the speed or relationships of actions within it.

Crucial to the discussion of rhythm in movement is the distinction between metrical rhythm and measured rhythm. Although movement sequences might be laid over the framework of a metre, the movement itself may not create a metrical rhythm. For the rhythm of a movement to be considered metrical it must include a succession of accents which helps the audience to perceive the metre. A basic example of this might be a performer walking across the stage with their steps following a regular metre while stamping, using a sudden and heavy movement on the first of every four steps. A measured rhythm on the other hand, is one in which the movements follow the same specific time values of a metre, but no regular accents occur (Cooper, 1973, p.30). To relate this to movement you might consider the initial example of the performer walking across the stage in a metrical rhythm.

Another performer also walks across the stage, pausing for varied lengths of time between each step, but making sure that every step they take is simultaneous to a step made by the first performer. Here we can describe the second performer as moving in a measured rhythm. Although their movement follows the time lengths of a specific metre, it would be

difficult for an audience to perceive this metre without seeing it performed alongside the metrical rhythm, as there are no regular accents to signify it.

When discussing his own concept of tempo-rhythm Stanislavsky provides a useful clarification of the difference between tempo and rhythm. “Tempo is the rate at which equal, agreed, single length values follow each other in any given time-signature. Rhythm is the quantitative relationship of active, agreed, length-values in any given tempo or time signature.” (2008, p.233)

Although Stanislavsky’s definition helps to differentiate tempo and rhythm, his use of “equal, agreed, single length values” (2008, p.233), appears to disqualify Merlin’s definition of tempo which relates to the speed of the values (or actions) themselves. By addressing the rate at which values follow each other, Stanislavsky shifts the focus onto the space between values. From this we can see that Stanislavsky understands tempo as the continuation of equal temporal relationships between values. This makes sense if we consider Stanislavsky’s background as a musician, whose understanding of tempo is directly linked to the way in which it relates to metre. For the purpose of this study however it can be useful to consider the speed of actions themselves as many exercises, including those on Stanislavsky’s tempo-rhythm, are reliant on the variation in speed of movements.

It may seem counterintuitive to state that tempo should be defined by the temporal space between set actions, while using tempo as a term to describe the speed of actions themselves. However, in the context of exploring rhythm in movement, we may see the tempo of movements as the space between the beginning and end of movements. In Meyerhold’s tripartite rhythm system for example, each set movement consists of preparation, fulfilment, and conclusion. If discussing the tempo of one movement we are focusing very specifically on the temporal space from the initial impulse of that preparation (*otkas*), to the point where the conclusion (*stoika*) ends. By doing this we are not using a different definition of tempo to that used by Stanislavsky, but instead magnifying our lens to a point where the ‘agreed, single length values’ are not the action itself but the temporal start and finish of the action. If we wish to focus on the movement itself then it is more useful to consider it in terms of Laban’s effort theory, which addresses the way we physically carry out the action, and not simply the time it takes.

When devising with specific attention to tempo there are a number of routes to take, the most applicable route obviously depending on what you wish to achieve. For the purpose of organising and understanding practical exercises it is simplest to categorise exercises based on whether they work from external or internal stimuli, i.e. Whether the tempo is provided by a musician or recording, or by the performer carrying out the movement. There are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches, and the line between the two practices can also be blurry at times. For example, if an ensemble creates a set metre and rhythm through sound and movement while one performer moves separately, the rhythm set may evolve naturally, leading the performer to follow.

One of the advantages to working with externally set tempos is that it allows the deviser to focus on their quality of movement. They can consider form, and other aspects, without having to worry about the speed of actions, as they can easily follow the tempo or metre (if applicable) of the music. As Bogart and Landau note however, the aim is for performers and devisers to “adjust to it and incorporate it” (Bogart and Landau, 2014, p.95) rather than follow it blindly. Here we see echoes of Meyerhold’s attitude to performers working with external music sources. Another advantage, and the one I have found most immediately apparent in my own practice, is the injection of energy and removal of mental boundaries that music can provide. Especially for a group less willing to immerse themselves quickly into the devising process due to anxieties and confidence issues. Working to a common tempo and metre can provide a common ground, helping to abate fears of ‘not doing the right thing’.

When presenting the exercise “Flight Paths” later in this thesis (pp.71-73), I discuss my experience of adding set metre to an exercise. One of the main findings of my experience was that while it made the exercise feel more productive, as we were able to work more confidently and meet the demands of the task, it did prevent us from engaging in any intentional rhythmic exploration. When considering using a set metric tempo, it is worth considering your specific aims for whichever exercise you are using. By using set metric tempos, or external music sources, the creative freedom of the deviser is limited in the sense of temporal freedom, which could allow devisers to fall into patterns of movement dictated solely by the music.

Roesner describes the practical benefits and downfalls in Meyerhold’s practice;

While Meyerhold acknowledged that a steady beat can help with developing precision in the 'rhythmic organisation of the actor' Meyerhold ultimately wanted to grant the actor freedom from a rigid adherence to a metronomic metre. (2014, p.83)

One way to combat this "rigid adherence" (2014, p.83) that Roesner describes would be to use internally produced rhythms as opposed to external, in which the performer can slip in and out of metre and tempo unrestricted. Rather than being required to work in conjunction with a set rhythm.

Devising with a specific focus on tempo in movement, produced without an external source, also opens a number of possibilities for exploration. One advantage is that tempo can be viewed and explored to the minutest detail or stretched over long periods of time. This allows energy levels to be built and suspended or drastically altered at the whim of the deviser. This is perhaps easiest working solo, or in a well-established ensemble, as it relies on awareness, and unspoken communication, within the ensemble.

Bogart and Landau also warn that "music can deaden [...] the reliability of the music put the performers to sleep" (2014, p.102). This is one of the main downsides to working with an external music source, but there are ways to counter this issue without removing external music entirely. In the situation referenced, Bogart and Landau describe a Viewpoints session in which the instructor plays a piece of music for three or four minutes, a contemporary song with set tempo and metre. In *The Viewpoints Book* (2014), music to work with is suggested, composers such as Beethoven, Schoenberg and Stravinsky (pp.103-104). The obvious advantage to working with classical music is that it may be unrestricted by the structured, unchanging nature of the majority of popular contemporary music. Bogart and Landau are working on the assumption here that the external music source is pre-recorded. Working with live musicians, anything from a jazz trio to a mashup deejay, gives the advantage that as soon as movement becomes stifled by predictability it can be altered. The tone can be developed or quickly changed to suit the requirements of the piece. In my own practice, working on a simplified long-form playback improvisation structure I have worked with live guitarists and beatboxers, and found that the success of the exercise was often heavily dependent on the ability of the musician to 'feel' the tone of the movement and perform accordingly. This is an obvious practical limitation to working with live musicians as some control is relinquished by the devisers themselves. However once an ensemble is

created that includes the musician, another opportunity for rhythmic exploration is opened, as Bogart and Landau state “music leads to an expansion of possibility” (2014, p.95).

Chapter 3: Sequence & Repetition

Sequence and repetition are two elements that are highly relevant to the study of rhythm as a devising tool. If we follow the understanding that rhythm in movement is related to the relationship between accents in movement, one of the defining aspects of any rhythm is the sequence in which accents follow each other. I have chosen to discuss repetition alongside sequence as the two aspects are so closely linked. To repeat a set of motions it must first be identifiable as a sequence. Similarly, if a single signifier (e.g. a single motion) is to be repeated on its own, that repetition then becomes a sequence. In practical applications exercises which focus on sequence, such as those found in *The Frantic Assembly book of Devising Theatre* (2014), and those presented in Morris' workshop "Playing In The Cracks" (2018), repetition is often used as a tool to develop the work initially created. Sequence itself is crucial to our understanding of rhythm as the relationships between movements are what make up the rhythm itself. Repetition can be more accurately described as an aspect of sequence, and a possible tool for the deviser to utilise, in a similar way to how metre relates to tempo. A rhythm cannot be defined solely by the use of repetition or metre, but can be defined by sequence and tempo, in which repetition and metre may occur. Metre itself can be viewed as an aspect of repetition in that it refers to the succession of regular impulses (Rutherford-Johnson, Kennedy and Bourne Kennedy, 2015.)

In relation to practical applications in movement, sequence and repetition are two of the most immediately accessible tools for the deviser. Exercises which utilise them are often easily introduced to a group. In my own experience of working with groups with little experience of movement based devising, exercises that focus on sequence and repetition have often created devised work that can be learned and practiced easily. It stands to reason that a repeated sequence is more easily memorised than a long sequence without repeated sections. Sequence is also listed in Garner's *Getting to "Got It!" : Helping Struggling Students Learn How to Learn* as a useful memorisation aid (2007, p.7). When devising movement, and learning devised movement, the performer might find themselves splitting movement into separate sequences without conscious effort as we would in our everyday lives when organising tasks. The practical implications of a conscious attention to

sequence and repetition may be useful in a group where memorization can be a limiting factor to the ability to devise and learn material efficiently.

Sequence and repetition are useful tools in devising for ensemble as predictable patterns may be easier to develop upon, rather than relying entirely on unspoken communication and awareness between performers. In *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre*, a number of practical exercises such as “round by through”, and “chair duets”, rely entirely on sequence, repetition, and then development to create work (2014, pp.125-157). Playback Theatre’s short-form relies on sequence and repetition to great effect, allowing ensemble movement to be improvised live. In this case the use of repetition creates metre incidentally which then creates a frame for performers to develop upon.

If a sequence is created, and understood, as a series of relationships between accents, then it can exist without any overarching tempo. For example, if we understand that the time between the 2nd and 3rd accent is twice that of the measure of time between the 1st and 2nd, then we can apply any overarching tempo and alter those time lengths accordingly in relation to one another. This is the same concept as Laban’s previously discussed “time rhythms”, in which the same rhythm can be performed in a different tempo without changing the proportional length of each time unit (Laban, 1980, p.40). This means that exercises focused around the exploration of tempo might bleed into sequence and vice versa in their application. Similarly, in exercises such as Frost and Yarrow’s “Making a Machine” (2016, pp.164-165), polyrhythm is also an integral part of the development of devised work (detailed p.66 of this thesis).

If we consider sequence independent of tempo, and focus only on the proportional relationships between accents/ signifiers, we see that sequences can easily be translated and performed in differing tempi. The relationships between accents are maintained in relation to the broader overarching tempo. This opens the option for devisers to explore the various effects created by tempo, and apply these to sequences without altering the sequence itself.

It is worth addressing the pitfalls that may occur when focusing specifically upon sequence and repetition, in order to counteract them. One of the main benefits of sequence and repetition is that a deviser can rely on the predetermined and predictable nature of an

existing sequence to develop upon it. This reliability can however become a detriment to some devisers. In my own experience of Playback Theatre, I often found myself compelled to act without first forming a clear idea of my own addition to the work. In order for the performance to develop, each performer is required to improvise a movement pattern in a timely manner. In these instances, I would often rely on the option to create a repeated movement sequence, with little relevance to the subject being explored within the work. In these instances, I would not find myself able to move with intention, as I was unsure of what I was trying to portray. This highlights both a negative and positive aspects of sequence. This form of improvisation, where layers of movement are created over and around one another, is made possible by the use of repeated sequences, as performers are able to layer sequences over one another. This becomes a detriment however when performers are so compelled to fulfil the objective of creating a repeated sequence, that they neglect the other requirements of the work, such as moving with intention or addressing the subject matter of the piece. One possible way of addressing this issue might be to instruct performers to only perform their sequence once a clear idea of what they were adding to the piece was formed in their mind, and to avoid moving without intention. There are of course exercises that this issue does not apply to, as the sequence is created to exist simply as a sequence first, with no intention or subject to portray.

In some exercises such as Frantic Assembly's "Fluff" (detailed pp.69-71 of this thesis), a sequence is created specifically without intention and then used as a tool for exploration of character. Graham and Hoggett explain "the beauty of this exercise is that a theatrical context and subtext can emerge almost instantly, allowing you to explore character and potential development. Conversely, both context and subtext can be ignored (or delayed) and it can develop as much more technically complex process with layers being added" (2014, p.144). In this instance the reliance on sequence is used to explore and uncover intention and meaning found in movement. Similarly, in Playback Theatre relationships and meanings between movements may occur unintentionally. In these instances, a lack of intention in movement can yield great results, in other instances however, it may not be desired.

If a deviser wishes to use sequence and repetition without becoming reliant upon it, there are steps they can take. By shifting the focus from the sequence itself, to the potential

development of the sequence, they can then place focus on any number of other aspects of movement. One example might be to focus on creating a sense of cohesion or tension through the intentional use of polyrhythm or alterations in tempo. Another might be to focus on relationships with the sequence performed by another ensemble member. These added objectives draw the focus away from simply developing the sequence, instead engaging the imagination, and kinaesthetic imagination, of the deviser.

Due to the broad nature of sequence, many of the exercises detailed can easily be explored without specific attention to the sequential relationships between movements. In fact, many might not have been created with attention to rhythm in mind, rhythm is created inherently through their structure and implementation. When working with exercises based on sequence, attention must be paid to these relationships in order for the effects produced in improvisation to then be reproduced.

As our understandings of sequence are heavily influenced by our experiences, one of the most constant influences of rhythmic sequence is music. This is often exclusively metre based, and explains why our understanding of sequence is so heavily linked to metre. It is therefore always worth remembering that sequence does not need to be limited by metre, especially devised performance where metre can so easily become a limit to rhythmic exploration.

Chapter 4: Polyrhythm

When discussing polyrhythm, it is first necessary to clarify my understanding of the term, and the definition I will be using. One potential issue here is the difficulty in translating an understanding based in musical scholarship into the context of devising theatre. If we follow the musical definition; “several different rhythms performed simultaneously” (Kennedy and Bourne Kennedy, 2007), and understand that rhythms can be metrical, measured, or free (Cooper, 1973, p.30). This opens up polyrhythm to be considered as the interplay between any simultaneous movement on stage. This inclusion of free rhythm can make polyrhythm hard to assess if no preference is given to metrical, or measured rhythms. Even in solo performance we can analyse movement and find polyrhythm within somatic actions on a minute scale.

The term polymetre can be used to describe the interplay between simultaneously performed metres, in which “Disparities among metric units occur not infrequently at simultaneous and overlapping points (Berry, 1976, p.363). This disparity is perhaps one of the first things we notice about polymetric rhythms. Although disparity might exist between the free rhythms created by two performers moving in a non-metrical fashion, there would be no predetermined metre to contrast against. It is perhaps worth clarifying that all polymetres are polyrhythmic, but not all polyrhythms are polymetric.

One necessary notion to consider when discussing polyrhythm is the concept of vertical time. Morris discusses the notion, and its routes, in *Rhythm in Acting and Performance*. A useful example he discusses, which helps to visualise the concept of vertical time, is Stanislavsky’s notes on his “through line” of performance (Morris, 2017, p.183). Morris challenges the concept of a singular through line, drawing on Carnicke’s translations of Stanislavsky’s own notes. He states “far from existing along a single trajectory, the actor here is seen to inhabit a multiplicity of through-lines, which are simultaneously realized and woven together to form their performance” (2017, p.183). In this instance Stanislavsky is referring to a number of aspects of an actor’s performance. Morris details a list which includes “the line of events”, “tasks and desires”, and “the line of inner and outer actions” to name a few (2017, p.183). In our own context, discussing only the rhythmic aspects of

movement, this concept of multiple lines of action working simultaneously can aid our understanding of polyrhythm. Along a single temporal line, various layers of action, which may include various sequences and metres, may exist.

When participating in Morris' *Playing in the cracks* workshop I experienced first-hand the difficulties people might face when attempting to work with polyrhythm without prior training. While working on exercises derived from Flatischler's TaKeTiNa, participants often became flustered and one distressed. An important note on this exercise is that polyrhythms were created within the ensemble, as portions of the group were instructed to take action on certain beats, as well as solo polyrhythms performed individually. Polyrythms within the ensemble were created as participants added accents to an ensemble chant at differing intervals. A hemiola effect¹⁰ was created as half the group were instructed to introduce an alternate chant, "GaMaLa" which follows a 3|4 metre was layered on top of the pre-existing 4|4 metre chant "TaKeTiNa". This is an example of polyrhythms created by differing metres, performed solo and within an ensemble at the same time. This exercise was challenging to many members of the group. Personally, I found if the attention was focused on any specific rhythm at any time, it was easy to lose count of the other rhythms. In fact, any time the mind was focused on counting beats I quickly fell out of time with the group. TaKeTiNa is described as a meditation practice (PR Newswire, 2009), and similarly to other meditative states, I was only able to fully entrain myself within the polyrhythm once the focus was shifted from counting beats separately, and placing confidence in the body to follow the demands of the task.

This apparent difficulty faced when working with polyrhythm is something that devisers should be aware of. The multitude of training approaches which attempt to tackle polyrhythm, developed by "Dalcroze, Stanislavski, and Meyerhold" (Morris, 2017, p.185), as well as Morris' own training, is evidence of the necessity for training when working with polyrhythm. The objective of this study however is to investigate how rhythm can be used in the devising process, with the understanding that devisers may not be able to commit to full training regimes for any variety of reasons. This does not mean polyrhythm should not be

¹⁰ Defined in *The Oxford Companion to Music*, as a "A term denoting the ratio 3:2. In modern notation, a hemiola occurs when two bars in triple metre (e.g. 3/2) are performed as if they were notated as three bars in duple metre (6/4), or vice versa" (Latham, 2011)

attempted in this context, and exercises such as “Making a Machine” (detailed pp.76-78 of this thesis) allow devisers to explore polyrhythm in a way that relies less on the ability to entrain to a number of rhythms within a singular body. The advantages of using ensemble in polyrhythm, rather than solo performance, regardless of the obvious semiotic effects of working with various bodies rather than one, is that it splits the responsibility between performers. For example, when working with “Making a Machine”, a devisor may become involved in an infinite number of alternating metres and tempi. However, they might only have to consider their movements in relation to that of a single other performer. A solo performer however, even working with only two ongoing rhythms, would be responsible for more aspects of the rhythm, even if the resultant polyrhythm was far simpler. Discussing the subject of introducing performers to more complex polyrhythm’s Morris describes his own experience:

Many performers are initially anxious about and stressed about getting a rhythm ‘right’ or not being seen to get things ‘wrong’. As such, they tend to focus mostly on what they *think* they *should* be doing, rather than on what they are *actually* doing and observing. Instead of aiming for perfection, at this stage it is more important to discover an open and responsive relationship to rhythm. (2017, p.185)

This shift in attitude may be crucial for those working with polyrhythm. As with many creative processes, the best results are often achieved within a supportive environment, and this is something to bear in mind considering the potentially stressful nature of devising using polyrhythm.

Chapter 5: The effects of rhythm

When devising movement with a conscious attention to rhythm, it is important to understand what exactly it is that we hope to achieve. It is easy enough to say we want rhythm to make our piece look more interesting, or feel more exciting for the audience, but to utilise rhythm effectively we must consider why we are utilising it in the first place. This is not to say that rhythm cannot be utilised without specific focus or intention, in devised work rhythms will be created and applied naturally and instinctively. Knowing the effects produced by various rhythms allows us to better understand what we are presenting to an audience, and harness these effects deliberately.

Within this chapter I will be addressing most directly, the expressive qualities created when a deviser alters aspects of rhythm such as tempo and metre. While discussing these expressive qualities, I will be addressing the understandings of rhythm developed by Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, and Laban. I consider these to be key to this discussion, as the analytical lenses offered, such as Laban's consideration of effort in movement, address the specific ways we impart rhythm onto movement.

Attempts have been made to categorise the effects that different rhythms might have, not only on a performance itself but also on the positive effects yielded by an individual or ensemble simply by practicing rhythmic exercises. In many writings however, the effects of rhythm are taken for granted or presumed to be common knowledge. One reason might be as Morris states "often these qualities can and do occur unintentionally, without the performers necessarily being conscious of their use of rhythm on stage" (2017, p.14).

If a deviser wishes to utilise rhythm to enhance various qualities of their work, it is worth categorising these qualities so they might be used deliberately. Morris provides a useful list that addresses the productive roles of rhythm.

- Accessing specific qualities of expression and mood
- Communicating with an audience
- Building an ensemble
- Developing an individual and shared performance language
- Establishing expressive territories

(Morris, 2017, pp.12-13)

As Morris states, the list is not exhaustive but provides a useful starting point for considering the practical uses of rhythm. Within this study my focus relates most closely to Morris' first two productive roles, those addressing expression and mood, as well as communication with an audience. I have found that as well as considering the symbolic effects of rhythm, it is also worth addressing the effects that can be imparted on the levels of energy, tension and general mood of a passage. As well as more specific effects relating to characters, their subtext, intentions, and relationships. Looking back to Morris' productive roles we see that these qualities relate both to expression and mood, as well as communication with an audience, as one might argue the two are closely linked.

One issue to address when attempting to discuss the effects of rhythm is the role that semiotics plays in an audience's understanding and perception of rhythm. As well as the complex effects that different cultural understandings might bring about.

Examples of these specific cultural understandings of rhythm, and coded rhythmic languages of rhythm can be seen throughout history. Perhaps the most easily relatable example is Shakespeare's metre systems, influenced by similarly coded Greek metre systems. In these specific rhythmic sequences, alternating long and short notes were used to portray specific tonal effects, such as masculine or feminine, and grave or solemn energies (Morris, 2017, p.13).

In modern contemporary practices the use of rhythm is less restricted by the coded languages such as those Greek metre systems. The focus is aimed more at manipulating the audience's emotion and immersion, rather than what can be shown directly through rhythm. The effects of regular/irregular rhythms, and more specific effects of rhythm such as the control of energy and tension are discussed by a number of writers from the field of contemporary dance, including Blom and Chaplin (1982, pp.59-68), Burrows (2010, pp.124-

126), and Green (2010, pp.97-105). While Morris addresses the potential symbolic styles of rhythm (2017, pp.27-30). These sources focus on how rhythm can be used to affect energy and tension, aesthetic, and character, rather than how to address specific emotions such as joy or sadness.

When considering the historic development of understandings of rhythm in theatrical performance, one thing to address is the division between natural and mechanical rhythms (Morris, 2017, p.30).

Morris describes how these two rhythmic styles were popularised and developed historically. Organic rhythm, inspired by “the vitalist philosophies of the mid nineteenth century and classical models of aesthetic beauty” (Morris, 2017, p.27), was pioneered by practitioners such as Laban, Copeau, and Stanislavsky. In these practices rhythm was viewed as “a means of facilitating the unity of the performer, bringing together their mind, body and spirit” (Morris, 2017, p.27). Mechanical rhythm on the other hand was inspired by Taylorist theories, and followed the twentieth century trend of harnessing the positive effects of controlled rhythm within mechanical production and physical labour (2017, p.31). It’s worth noting here that Meyerhold was influenced by Taylorism, from which he “took the idea of smoothly executed, rhythmically economical actions.” (Pitches, 2003, p.33). We might consider Meyerhold an especially valuable source if our aim is to produce mechanical rhythms, his tri-partite system can be used to systematise movement, allowing us to find the most efficient and direct way of executing a movement.

Drawing on a number of sources Morris lists some of the characteristics of each style, associating organic rhythms with “spontaneity responsiveness and vitality” (2017, p.30). He goes on to state that “mechanical rhythms have been described as deterministic, repetitious, ordered and segmented, being associated with musical concepts of metre and tempo, along with rational thinking and mass production.” (2017, p.30).

Although set metre and tempo are closely related to mechanical rhythms this is not an exclusive division. The “alternation of tension and relaxation” (Hodgson, 2001, p.186), may be described as metre, if performed in a continuous regular fashion. Similarly, mechanical qualities of movement may be achieved without using the set metre and tempo prescribed within mechanical rhythms.

On the subject of natural rhythms Blom and Chaplin make a valuable comment on the use of external music sources, stating “when the dance is composed before the music, the natural rhythms (with their qualifying tempi) can be especially exploited” (1982, pp.67-68). It’s worth noting that in this instance they are referring to specifically to those natural rhythms “intrinsic to man’s functioning and perception” (p.68), such as breath and heartbeat, as well as those previously mentioned.

It is therefore not necessarily useful to suggest pre-set metres and tempos are always detrimental to the pursuit of a broader natural rhythm aesthetic. Meyerhold, for example would utilise pre-recorded movement when working with performers, “as a way of bringing about a quality of freedom and flow to the action” (Morris, 2017, p.29).

I would argue that the division between mechanical and natural rhythms is not clear cut. As properties of mechanical rhythms such as metre and repetition, may be found in natural rhythms. I would however suggest that an awareness of the properties associated with mechanical or natural can inform the deviser, as it may influence the quality of movement produced, and the symbolic associations of rhythms used.

One of the simplest uses of rhythm within movement is its ability to control levels of energy and tension, and to influence the general mood of a scene or passage. I should address my use of the term energy, described by Murray as “perhaps the most ubiquitous and over-, vaguely and ill-used term in the vernacular of actor training” (2015, p.50). My focus here is on how rhythm can be used to bring about atmospheric qualities, rather than more specific elements such as portraying character subtext or relationships. Granted these elements may be heavily linked, but this following discussion is focused on broader tonal and atmospheric effects. Including how we can raise and lower the perceived levels of energy and tension on stage.

One of the most relevant aspects of rhythm used here is tempo and metre. As Morris describes “There are times when a metric pattern or repetitious sequence can produce a sense of motion development or expression.” (2017, p.103). My belief is that this effect is in no small part due to the common associations one might have with the experience of regular repeated action. If we consider the notion of mechanical rhythms, one common aspect is the use of repetitive metre. Associations may include industrial machinery,

engines, locomotive and automotive vehicles. In any of these cases notions of movement and production are brought to mind. Although the use of a slow repeated metre may not be relied upon to create these effects, it may be used alongside developing action to reinforce the intended levels of energy. This use of tempo and metre can be further exploited, and manipulated with greater control, if tempo is altered dynamically throughout the work.

When the tempo constantly increases (*accelerando*) or decreases (*ritardando*), it produces intriguing phenomena which can be used effectively in choreography. Increasing speed has its uses (a chase, the building of intensity of a fight, or the simple speeding up of a movement or phrase repeated many times [...]) Slowing, winding down, or dying out can also provide endings, weakening or contrasting preludes to high points. Momentum has an implicit affinity of energy, coupling acceleration with a raising of energy and deceleration with a lowering of it. (Blom and Chaplin, 1982, p.59)

In this way tempo can be utilised to control energy to great effect. In this case the source refers specifically to dance choreography, yet no mention is given of metre. To me it seems this use of metre is implied by the reference to momentum. This idea of rising and diminishing momentum seems intrinsically linked to a use of metre, as the continued relationship between action is what creates the feeling of momentum. This is not to say that a use of predetermined metre is completely necessary, and that controlling energy is reliant upon it, as tempo can exist without metre. To create an *accelerando* or *ritardando* effect within movement however, there must be some continued relation between actions upon which this development can be perceived. If we understand that accents, or emphasised movements, are key to our phrasing and metre, and that these can be portrayed by alternations in effort or energy (Blom and Chaplin, 1982, p.24). Then we see the value of considering Laban's effort analysis when discussing the control of energy and tension in movement. Not only because of the relationship between tempo and direct or sustained actions, but also because of its use when creating accents within sequences of movement. Inversely if a deviser does not wish to use a regular metre they may use irregular metres, or discard metre entirely. Without a unifying metre the deviser is allowed more control over the temporal aspect of movement. They are able to create very specific accents, or freely utilise inaction and stasis without the limits of a metre to follow.

Similarly, an irregular metre may be used, to specifically counteract the feeling of unified progression found within regular metres. Blom and Chaplin explain that when working with irregular rhythms “the choreographer can utilize its jarring, disjointed, surprising, annoying, or comic effects in a variety of ways.” (1982, p.63). These various expressive qualities are derived from the inherent subversion of expectation which exists within an offset or irregular rhythm. Metre is associated with regularity, and when this is not followed the attention is immediately piqued. On the use of metre specifically Blom and Chaplin go further stating “some meters, in and of themselves, are uneven and can be used to produce a sense of tension or comedy. The physicality of moving unevenly is inherently different from moving evenly, oftentimes resulting in a one-sided or limping effect.” (1982, p.66). With an intentional focus on the use of tempo and metre in movement, the deviser is able to more effectively control the flow of energy and tension perceived by the audience. Gradual changes in tempo can be used to give a feeling of rising and diminishing momentum, while offset and irregular rhythms, or sharp changes in rhythm can be used to highlight specific moments and produce various atmospheres and effects on mood and tone.

Another way of exploring how we create the accents which are used to offset the metre in irregular rhythms, is to consider Meyerhold’s tri-partite rhythmic structure. If we consider that an action is not simply one single point of movement, then we can be more specific in the choice of which points of movement we wish to emphasise and place an accent on. For example, rather than simply choosing to place a more direct movement, within a sequence of light sustained movement to create an accent, a deviser might perform a sequence of movements, in which the *otkas* and *posil* elements of the movement are performed in a sustained manner, but the *stoika* is performed in a heavy and direct manner. By viewing the movement as a series of different elements the deviser is given more control over which points within the phrase they wish to place or offset or irregular accents.

When considering the energy, tension and general mood of a piece it is worth considering the various tempo-rhythms of performers on stage, and the polyrhythm created by these contrasting tempo-rhythms. When discussing the relationship between character’s on stage Gillett states “All the actor’s tempo-rhythms combined will create a particular integrated tempo-rhythm and atmosphere, whether anxious or carefree, formal or anarchic” (2007,

p.244), suggesting that the combined tempo-rhythms present on stage are key to developing the overall energy and tone of any section of movement. It seems therefore that while metres, regular or irregular, can be used effectively to convey energy and tone. If a deviser does not wish to use metre for whatever reason, a useful thing to consider might be the combined tempo-rhythm of performers on stage, and how this affects the tone and energy of any section of movement.

One of the perhaps subtler uses of rhythm within movement, is the use of rhythm to develop and portray character and subtext. At its simplest, it is the notion that specific qualities of rhythm in movement may portray a character's internal process, in a similar way to facial expression. When discussing the physicality present within the work of Michael Chekhov, Gillet discusses the ways in which sensation of feeling is closely linked to the rhythmic qualities applied to actions. Within this passage he refers to an exercise in which he asked actors to perform actions under the influence of specific emotions, he observes:

Under the influence of generosity [...] they move in a direct. Light and sustained, easy manner.

Under the influence of suspicion [...] they are indirect heavier and sustained in movement, with the occasional light and quick movement.

Under the influence of aggression [...] they are strong, sustained, or quick

(Gillett, 2007, pp.142-143)

Although the focus of this exercise may not have been rhythm specifically, it shows the ways in which the rhythmic qualities of our movements (note Gillett uses Laban's effort terminology here to accurately describe these qualities of movement) are naturally influenced by mood and intention. In *Building a Character* (2013) Stanislavsky describes an exercise (pp.172-173), which echoes Gillett's finding that "emotion and physical action do feed of each other" (Gillet, 2007, p.143). In Stanislavsky's exercise rather than asking performers to portray specific emotions, he instead controls the outward tempo, and tempo rhythm at which they are asked to carry out tasks. He observes that the emotions and mental associations of the performers are affected. Describing, for example, the process of

following a slow tempo which “induced a smooth, flowing, serious mood, with inner repercussions which in turn evoked corresponding actions” (2013, p.172). It’s worth noting here that Stanislavsky’s writing is not necessarily an exact account of his own experience, although we may presume this retelling to be based upon experience. Regardless, the message is clear that a performer’s emotions and mental associations are influenced by the rhythm of their actions. This can, in Gillett’s words “heighten the actor’s experience of the part and the dramatic content of the action” (2007, p.244). In Stanislavsky’s exercise he describes various circumstances, imagined by the character Kostya and brought about by following the tempo of the metronome.

This creation of mental stimuli through rhythmic exploration is something perhaps especially pertinent to the study of devising, and is something I encountered when working with Eilon Morris during improvisations based around exploring tempo and sequence (discussed further pp.20-21 of this thesis). In specific relation to tempo-rhythm Gillett provides a clear understanding of how these associations are created and can be used, “the imagined circumstances create the tempo-rhythm and the tempo-rhythm can then stimulate the thoughts, images and emotions. This is the psycho-physical interrelationship.” (2007, p.243). It seems clear that rhythmic exploration, which may focus on use of effort or tempo-rhythm, can be used to create mental associations for the performer.

In relation to the portrayal of character through movement, it is clear that tempo-rhythm is key to Stanislavsky’s Method of Physical Actions. On the subject he asks “If you always act in one and the same rhythm, then how with you be able to embody a variety of characters convincingly?” (Toporkov, 2008, p.170). This concept of using rhythm to portray character is one which can help the movement deviser create a physical vocabulary which can then be used to portray character. This may be especially effective when considering the use of multirole or the challenge of portraying clearly identifiable characters without text. This is not to say that one might rely entirely on one tempo-rhythm to portray each character, as each character’s tempo-rhythm should be dependent on circumstance and change throughout (Gillett, 2007, p.240). Gillett also states that while an actor may be able to intuitively find the appropriate tempo-rhythm within action, another option is to explore practically until the correct tempo-rhythm is found (2007, p.243).

When discussing the application of rhythm in this context Morris places particular emphasis on the use of pause, and space between action, a focal point of his workshop "Playing In The Cracks". On this subject he states "Viewing sub-text through a rhythmic (rather than psychological) lens opens up the notion that rhythm and meaning emerge from the intervals between one action/ word and another-literally reading between the lines" (2017, p.103). The use of inaction to portray internal objectives or emotions is something that Gillet discusses in relation to tempo-rhythm. He gives examples of characters whose physical actions and outer tempo-rhythm, might not suggest an inward tension, but who's inner tempo-rhythm can be controlled in order to portray an internal struggle or energy (2007, p.244). When trying to portray subtext through pause, or inaction, it seems worth considering which inner tempo-rhythm you are trying to portray.

When considering character, Laban describes how we can use "certain shapes and rhythms of movement" (p.47) in order to portray character who might be more prone to this way of moving. Much in the same way that Gillett describes certain types of characters, such as a "slow witted person" (2007, p.244) being more prone to certain inner and outer tempo rhythms. Here we see that by frequently using certain rhythms, efforts, and tempo-rhythms, we can portray character through physicality.

We can see that by focusing on more specific aspects of rhythm within individual performers actions, and the relationships between their performed rhythms, we are able to utilise specific expressive qualities of rhythm. As well as producing broader tonal effects such as energy and rhythmic styles, we can also see rhythm as a way of communicating subtle elements of subtext and character to an audience.

Chapter 6: Practical Exercises

I have chosen to present a number of exercises here that can be used to explore rhythm in movement devising. I have selected exercises, based not only on their application to the devising process, but also the different ways that rhythm can be explored and used within the exercises. The exercises are drawn from a range of sources, some are taken from the literature examined within this study, and some are drawn from my own practical experience.

While each exercise can be used as a starting point for devising movement, some may be better suited to different stages of the devising process. Marshall's "Rhythm in Inner Reality" for example, can be altered to fit the requirements of a set movement score, while Morris' "Journeys" exercise might be better suited to exploring the dynamics between characters.

If devisers wish to use the exercises in a single workshop, I have presented them in an order which allows devisers to explore aspects of rhythm such as tempo and sequence first. Before attempting to address more complex ideas such as tempo-rhythm in "Rhythm in Inner Reality", and polyrhythm in "Making a Machine".

I have also included a number of exercises that can be used within a warm up, which is similarly ordered to fit a single workshop. Marshall addresses the necessity and value of a well-planned warm up which includes task specific work, and which should "focus on enhancing the particular qualities needed in the forth-coming work." (2008, p.154). I consider this to be pertinent to any work on rhythm as it makes such specific demands upon the performer. These demands include a specific attention to time, coordination and multitasking, and the exercises described are suggested with the intention of addressing and cultivating these necessary qualities.

Rhythmic check in

I encountered this first exercise during Morris' "Playing In The Cracks" workshop (2018). I've chosen to mention it first as it can be added into a commonly used warm up technique. The

practice of ‘mentally checking in’ is one I’ve encountered in many environments and commonly begins with participants being instructed to walk around the performance space, exploring their surroundings and becoming mentally present. The practice is one which I’ve taken part in with a number of practitioners, teachers, and workshop leaders.

On the second day of the workshops we had been exploring polyrhythm, been introduced to TaKeTiNa, and energy levels had begun to drop somewhat. Morris invited us to explore the space and freely explore some of the rhythms we had been introduced to within our steps.

Start by walking around the space at a neutral and even pace. Begin to experiment with walking in different tempos, speeding up or slowing down, paying attention to how this affects your gait. Allow yourself to be influenced by the pace of those around you, either speeding up or slowing down to match or contrast with those around you.

Begin to experiment by applying accents to different steps, placing your feet with more or less emphasis and force.

Now attempt to create metres by applying accents to different steps in repeated patterns. For example, a simple duple metre can be created by placing an accent on the first of every four steps:

Right – left – right – left – right – left – right - left

Triple metres can also be created by alternating the feet which accents are placed on, for example:

Right – left – right – left – right – left

Once you are comfortable with these metres, begin to improvise more freely, perhaps alternating metres while maintaining the same tempo, or exploring how metres are affected by the addition or removal of different accents.

Continue to improvise these metres, drawing your attention to how these metres are affected by those around you. Explore how it sounds and feels to match or contrast with the metres of those around you, improvise over another’s metre by adding accents either on or off beat. Or avoid metre entirely, by adding accents on steps without any specific repeated pattern or tempo.

All options of exploration were posed as suggestions rather than directions and we were given free reign over our actions. These options might have been following metre systems with our steps, exploring tempo, or imitating and inviting others to join a communal rhythm.

I believe the addition of these simple options for exploration can add to the mental check-in process as it places the deviser's attention on the rhythmic qualities of movement from the offset. It also provides a more specific focus to the often used instruction of connecting with those around you. The deviser is required to not only analyse the rhythmic qualities of their own movement, but also those around them in order to replicate, contrast, or coordinate with them. One productive role of rhythm, building an ensemble (Morris, 2017, pp.12-13), is harnessed as the devisers are encouraged to influence and be influenced by those around them. As devisers are now not only encouraged to observe those around them, but also make active rhythmic interactions by sharing and improvising around each other's rhythms. The option to work rhythmically in relation to others demands attention and coordination, and the level of physicality and involvement is entirely down to those taking part, allowing them to warm up at their own pace.

In my own practice I had led this exercise a number of times, running warm ups with Make, DO Theatre and TheArte Physical Theatre. I find it benefits not only the development of rhythmic awareness, but also serves as a pulse raiser as soon as quicker rhythms are introduced.

I have experimented with running the exercise with music playing, generally contemporary dance music which features a regular duple metre. This creates a unified rhythm for the ensemble to follow. I have found music within the 110-130 bpm range (such as house or techno) suit this work well, as quicker tempos can be hard to keep up with when stepping in double time.

One advantage of this I have found is that when leading the exercise alongside music, participants have almost instantly fallen into the duple metre of the music. This has allowed me to introduce concepts of accents and stepping in double time over the metre much quicker. Also allowing me to introduce more complex rhythms, which address polyrhythm and polymetre.

Perhaps the simpler of these, or the one I have observed participants pick up quicker, is the use of accents to create polymetre over the set tempo of the music. This is done when participants are instructed to step on the same beat as the music, but to create a triple metre by alternating the feet with which they emphasise the step, as described above. This

creates an interesting effect as the participants appear to go 'out of sync' mid phrase as the accents don't line up. This creates a resolution every 3 bars of music (duple metre), as the participants will have performed 4 bars (triple metre), and the emphasis is placed back onto the leading foot.

Another rhythmic effect, which I have found participants may have more difficulty grasping, is hemiola. This effect is created by the contrast between a duple metre, and triple metre being performed simultaneously. In this instance the tempos of each step and beat are not matched, as they are in polymetres, and feet will therefore land in spaces between beats of the music. In this instance the bars of the triple and duple metre have the same time length, so and the first beat of each bar is the same. However, the devisers 3 steps, are stretched to fill the time length of the 4 beats of music. If these exercises are used in a single workshop, it's worth noting that the next exercise breaks down polymetre, and provides a step by step introduction. In a single workshop, it may be worth using the "Rhythmic Check In" to open awareness to tempo and metre, and save any specific exploration of polyrhythm for the next exercise.

When considering whether to use music, devisers must consider which aspects of the exercise would be most valuable for their devising goals. One positive effect brought about by music is that it provides a shared rhythm for the whole group to follow easily, it also allows for the easier application of more complex rhythms. The downside of this is that it may potentially work against one of the key goals of the check in process. Which is to allow devisers to freely experiment using different tempos and accents, and to communicate through rhythms with other members of the ensemble without being distracted by one unified metre or tempo. It seems then, that if the exercise is being used to raise energy and warm up devisers ability to work practically with polyrhythms and polymetres that require physical coordination, then the exercise might work best when practiced alongside music. However, if devisers wish to develop a more general awareness to rhythm, and develop the ability to improvise and play with accents and metres, then the exercise might be better practiced without music.

Clap-clap

Callery discusses some of the issues actors may have with easily accessing rhythm in movement and polyrhythm, referring to “rhythmic amnesia” (2001, p.122). She proposes an answer and demystification to the common notion of ‘having’ or ‘not having’ rhythm inherently.

The problem in the West is that by the age of three or four, rhythm is blocked by constant sitting, often in front of a TV, so that many of us are even unfamiliar with our own rhythms of walking. It isn't that we do not have an inherent sense of rhythm in our culture, but little in our culture encourages us to use it (2001, p.122)

It is partly this issue that these introductory exercises are aimed to address. Regardless of the level of traditional actor training, participants may benefit from warming up the sense of rhythmic coordination and attention. Callery suggests using simple exercises such “Clap-clap” to activate the rhythmic sensibility. (2001, p.122)

Callery breaks the exercise into four steps, here are simplified instructions:

Within an ensemble, individually create repeated clapped rhythms. These should be layered over one another.

Improvise and alter the original patterns, so that the soundscape continuously evolves, maintaining awareness to the patterns being performed around you.

In the third step the group split in half. One half is instructed to create a 4|4 metre by clapping on beats 1 and 3 of the bar. The second half of the group is instructed to create a 3|4 metre, clapping only on the first beat of the bar. This may take some time to achieve success depending on the group

In this final stage of the exercise the jobs which were first split to each half of the group, are now delegated to the upper and lower body of each participant. This time the 4|4 metre is created by stamping the feet, and the 3|4 metre is layered on top by clapping the hands until the polyrhythm is achieved. Callery doesn't specify which beats should be stamped, and participants may find it easier to create the 4|4 beat simply by stepping each beat with a slight emphasis on either foot (In Laban's terminology a heavy, sudden, and direct action).

(2001, p.124)

The main value of the exercise is that it breaks down the process of polymetre. First introducing it in an ensemble, before becoming more complex. This allows devisers to gain an embodied understanding of how it feels to perform polyrhythms within an ensemble, as well as individually.

This exercise is somewhat reminiscent of Reinhardt Flatishchler's TaKeTiNa which I was introduced to during Eilon Morris' workshop, I have chosen to include Callery's exercise as it provides a potentially simpler way of introducing polyrhythm to a group. One value of TaKeTiNa is that vocalised chants serve as aids to memory for devisers to follow and emphasise certain beats. TaKeTiNA boasts a variety of positive effects including "deep relaxation of the nervous system" and "resynchronisation of internal rhythms" (Power of Rhythm, 2019), which may be highly valuable to devisers and ensembles. In practice with Eilon Morris it took some time for the group to become comfortable with these rhythms, and at times participants became visibly frustrated. In her description of the exercise Callery does warn of potential difficulty, and her exercise follows a similar structure to the introduction of TaKeTiNa provided by Eilon Morris. I feel Callery's exercise may be more practicable in many devising groups, as the instructions are simpler, training and prior experience is not necessary for it to be taught, and it does not require any equipment such as percussive instruments.

Another value of this exercise is that it teaches devisers a musical understanding of metre and phrasing, providing an understanding of how emphasis might affect phrasing, and how polymetre can be created at a set tempo by simply having different devisers place accents on different beats.

Outer Tempo rhythm

The next exercise is taken from Stanislavsky's work on outer tempo rhythm.

One of the key values to this exercise is its potential application to pre-existing movement. While I suggest it is especially valuable as part of a warm up, it could also be used to explore the rhythmic potential of a pre-existing movement sequence, and be used as a tool for the

development of work. As with many exercises based around using set tempi it can also be developed to become as complex as one might want it, making it an extremely versatile exercise.

Within Stanislavsky's description of the exercises, it is recounted that participants would first be guided in performing simple musical tasks such as clapping or walking on set beats of a metre. I have ordered this after Callery's "Clap-clap" (2001, p.122), as that exercise is similar to those used by Stanislavsky.

The second part of this outer tempo-rhythm work is where the application to pre-existing work can be fitted in.

As a group improvise performing a task "such as passing an object, serving drinks or putting on make-up".

Now attempt this task "working to a single shared rhythm" within the ensemble, performing at a sustained tempo.

Now attempt the same task, all working in contrasting tempos with the rest of the group.

The majority of the group should now perform at the same tempo. While individual devisers within the group break from this set tempo and explore new tempos, "while continuing to work in relationship to a shared tempo".

(Stanislavsky, 2008, pp.274-281)

The end point of each performer working to their own distinct rhythm in relation to the shared tempo can be seen as a goal of the exercise. Within an experienced group we might hope that this be the natural way of working. This exercise merely provides a structure in which layers of rhythmic exploration are added on gradually, rather than drastic changes to the common tempo which may throw off less experienced devisers.

Breaking down the process in this way may slow down the devising process somewhat, but if time is to be devoted to working with rhythm in this way then it will be beneficial to clearly lay out the way in which rhythm can be explored as an ensemble, before devisers are expected to go through this process individually.

Another value of this exercise is that it provides the opportunity for devisers to explore the different mental associations that different rhythms might bring about, as discussed earlier in this thesis (pp20-21). This may be useful within the warm up process, especially if the instruction is given to allow oneself to be influenced, and to follow these mental associations. In *Building a Character* (2013) Stanislavsky describes this exercise, the task in this instance is serving glasses at an event, and the rhythms conjure to the character Kostya many different circumstances (2013, p.173). We might consider this exercise to be perhaps more applicable during the earlier stages of the devising process, when creative decisions such as the circumstances or characteristics of each character are still to be decided.

Morris suggests using this exercise in *Rhythm in Acting and Performance* (2017, p.61). His reason being that performing actions over a set tempo allows actors to “explore ways of varying their rhythms while still keeping an awareness of and relationship to an underlying pulse” (2017, p.61). I feel this more structured exploration of rhythm is a valuable addition to a warm up, as the simple alterations to tempo used are not overly complex, making it a useful exercise when first introducing rhythm to a section of movement.

Journeys

I was introduced to this next exercise during Eilon Morris’ “Playing In The Cracks” workshop (2018). I suggest it as the first devising exercise, as it follows a simple non-restrictive structure, allowing devisers to follow their impulses and imaginations. The exercise was introduced to us as being primarily aimed at exploring the moments between action and the interplay between differing time sequences.

In a pair, begin by taking it in turns to perform short sequences of improvised movement.

Allow your actions to be influenced by the actions performed by your partner, or the rhythms they embody.

As we worked we were encouraged to consider a few concepts, and incorporate them into the work. The first was the amount of time taken within our sections of movement. Within

the exercise only one performer can move at any given time. It is up to that performer how long they wish to control the action, and the other performer is in a position of powerlessness for the duration. Once power is relinquished the other performer takes control of action, and can lead the story or movement in whatever direction they desire. This idea of sequence and time controlling movement is one that could be used to present various power relationships between performers on stage. One suggestion made by Morris was to attempt to create a seamless flow of action between both performers (without any verbal indication that one person's sequence had finished).

I found this considerably easier when my partner was using dynamic, fast paced, or direct movement as the contrast between stillness and movement was clearer. It was harder to convey the end point, or *Stoika*, of movements if I was performing them in a slow and sustained manner, as there was little contrast in effort between a very slow sustained movement, and sustained stillness. This was also made harder by the fact that phrases naturally developed to become longer and incorporate more rhythmic elements such as pause and interchanging tempo. This meant we could no longer rely on waiting for one movement to end, instead having to rely on unspoken communication and understanding, following the phrasing and flow of action and energy, rather than obvious physical cues.

I found that naturally the apparent flow of action was controlled more by the participant who performed longer sequences. This led to the mental association of portraying a more dominant character during longer movement sequences, and a more submissive character during shorter movement sequences. This is not to say we would be switching every few actions, but that long periods of movement would continue with these characteristics. The apparent dominance of characters, and the play of power within the movement, was also affected by the effort actions used throughout. Laban states, "the expression of movement depends therefore on several factors – space location, including shape, and dynamic content, including effort" (1975, p.44). When considering these efforts I found that more dominant or submissive characteristics were not affected by whether actions were performed in a sudden or sustained fashion. But that they were affected by what Reynolds refers to as "the degree of active resistance or passive yielding" (p.6), a key factor in Laban's effort analysis. Actions performed in a firm and direct manner seemed to portray a more

dominant position within the dialogue, whereas light and flexible actions would appear to relinquish control and submit to the other character.

In *Rhythm in Acting and Performance*, Morris discusses this exercise. Suggesting alternative ways to practice the movement sequence. He suggests:

- A and B both start at the same time
- A and B both end at the same time
- B begins at the moment that A ends (and vice versa)
- B begins at a point halfway through A (and vice versa)
- A and B alter the tempo of their journeys so that they both fit into the same duration
- A and B alter their tempo so that A can take place two or three times within a single duration of B (vice versa) (2017, p.188)

This variation of the exercise works once a number of the short sequences have been determined. The emphasis is taken away from improvisation, and now works on exploring the various expressive qualities that may come about by performing the same sequence in what Morris describes as “a number of compositional relationships and forms of simultaneity” (2017, p.188). It’s worth noting that these alterations could be applied at other points when two or more devisers are performing movement sequences. This idea experimenting with simultaneity when working with sequence is explored further in the following exercises.

In his written presentation of the exercise Morris places focus “observing points of departure, journeys and arrivals” (2017, p.187), and presents Langer’s notion of complete gestures, which contain “beginning, intent and consummation” (Langer, cited in Morris, 2017, p,187). Here we can draw similarities between the way Morris approaches sequences of actions, and the way Meyerhold approaches individual actions. By considering Morris’ notion of sequences of actions being journeys, with departures and arrivals, the idea of a tripartite rhythmic system can be applied not only to individual actions, but also in a broader compositional sense to the way we create sequences of actions.

Fluff

The next two exercises presented are found in *the Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre* (2014). A common structure runs through the exercises. Physical duets are built through sequences of simple movements and interactions with particular requirements, and the final devised movement is developed from this. The resultant movement can vary greatly and for this reason the exercises can be useful in portraying any range of relationships between characters.

The first, “Fluff”, is a partnered exercise that can be used to portray relationships between characters, and explores how altering the sequence of movements can affect what is communicated to an audience (Graham and Hoggett, 2014, pp.144-146).

Sit, facing each other, knees touching.

Both create a sequence of five moves, Graham and Hoggett suggest “they might be removing fluff or adjusting glasses on their partner.”

Perform each sequence in order, one performer after the other.

Perform each sequence, this time taking it in turns to perform one action, “so person A does their first move and then person B does their first move”.

(Graham and Hoggett, 2014, pp.146)

Once these routines are created, the devisers can then use them to explore sequence. Graham and Hoggett suggest that the devisers start by taking it in turns to perform one movement, but then begin to create more complex sequences and “look to avoid predictable rhythms” (2014, p.146). By predictable rhythms we might assume Graham and Hoggett are referring to metrical rhythms, which are predictable by their nature, or more broadly, those which do not feature much contrast in tempo. As the sequence is explored new expressive qualities may present themselves within the otherwise neutral movement, for example appearing “a little antagonistic or tactically provocative” (2014, p.146). This works perfectly as an example of how simple alterations to sequence may drastically affect subtext or intention.

At this point Graham and Hoggett state

This emerging context or subtext is not helpful if you want to take this process further but it can be useful or entertaining in itself. Note that this process follows that familiar pattern of many of our tasks and starts simply before building up to new complexities. Each building block is a perfectly good stopping off point however. (2014, p.147)

Once you are satisfied that this most basic manipulation of sequence has run its course it can be developed further in a number of ways. The first suggested is that actions are performed simultaneously, meaning that there is no longer a completely passive performer on the receiving end of these actions, thus changing the dynamic.

Graham and Hoggett go on to describe a number of ways to explore the expressive qualities of movement within the work, there are also a number of ways to explore the rhythmic qualities. As repetition is used any combination of natural accelerations or decelerations can be used to control levels of energy and tension.

The exercise can be applied to a metre if needed, although we could read Graham and Hoggett's suggestion to "avoid predictable rhythms" (2014, p.146), as advising against this. If it were to be used alongside music, the 10-part structure does make this a less simple process, but there are a number of ways to work around it. As the majority of Western popular contemporary music follows a duple structure (working in sets of two or four), it's often easiest to work an eight or sixteen beat structure. The easiest option might simply be to alter the sequence lengths to fit this. If you wish to follow Graham and Hoggett's structure, the actions can be performed in any number of sequences which incorporate simultaneous movement, allowing the actions of both performers to fill only one beat and fit the duple structure. The easiest way to do this first might be to have each deviser perform their five movements in one continuous string, instead of starting after the other has finished, performer B would begin their first movement while performer A does their last, turning ten beats into eight, and 20 into 16. Once this notion of fitting metre by performing actions simultaneously is understood and embodied in practice, you can play with more complex sequences, replacing beats with repetitions of actions, or performing actions at double or half tempo. Alternately you can perform the original sequence as is. As the 5|4 metre of the

sequence layers over the 4|4 metre of the music, actions will coincide with different beats within the music, placing emphasis on different actions every time the sequence is repeated.

One value of its exercise is the ability to portray relationships, and subtext, between characters. Graham and Hoggett specifically discuss the ability to communicate any number of dynamics in a relationship, by focusing an individual action, also focusing on how the other performers reacts to that action (2014, pp.144-145). As intention and subtext is a focus we might focus on tempo-rhythm when analysing the rhythmic properties of the action. If we pick a few actions within the phrase, in which we want to convey a specific dynamic between the characters. We might explore how these actions feel, or appear, when performed with unified or contrasting tempo-rhythms between performers, or unified or contrasting inner and outer tempo-rhythms.

Flight Paths

The next exercise is “Flight Paths”, much like “Fluff” a physical sequence is created and all the rhythmic qualities described above can then be applied and explored. The main difference is that the physical demands of the movements created in “Flight Paths”, will create a number of challenges for performers. The reason it is used is that the movement resulting from overcoming these challenges would not be created unless the specific challenges were in place. As Graham and Hoggett state the resultant movement “would not be primary physical instinct or response of the two duettists” (2014, p.142).

Devisers begin standing facing each other. Again each performer takes it in turns to create their own sequence.

Using the idea of B’s body as that of a map of the world, A traces a flight with thumb and forefinger that takes off from one singular and specific body part and lands somewhere new. (2014, p.142)

Sequences of 3-5 movements are then created using this notion of flight paths. Once sequences are created they are then performed simultaneously. At this point challenges may begin to appear and devisers will need to work slowly “to accommodate the new information regarding the surface of their partner” (2014, p.143). The unique challenge of “Flight Paths” is the task of landing each flight simultaneously with the other deviser. The tempo of each action might contrast heavily in order to match the time length of the opposing action, before resolving as the movements land simultaneously.

When practicing this exercise, with co-deviser in TheArte Physical Theatre, Ben Rafila, I found the exercise particularly challenging at first. Our initial attempts at the exercise would end quickly, one of us would find ourselves unable to complete a certain action, due to the position of the other’s body. Soon after beginning each attempt at the exercise our movements would slow, and become less direct, as we became uncertain, ultimately leading to a dead stop. I found that by adding a set metre to the exercise, not through music but by ‘counting in’ and then attempting to follow that metre, the exercise felt more successful. We were able to continue for longer, as we were able to focus more on how to land our gestures, rather than waiting, or rushing to land at the same time. I also felt we were able to focus more on the efforts of our actions, being able to estimate how much time we had to complete a certain gesture meant we were able to decide whether to perform a more direct or flexible action. Whereas when running the exercise without a set metre, we might begin a direct action, and quickly have to slow the tempo or take a less direct route, to give more time for the other to complete their action.

Although this addition of metre made the exercise feel easier, it could be said to work against one of the key values of the exercise. This is to challenge the performer, hopefully resulting in novel movement patterns, that would not be the performers “primary physical instinct or response” (Graham and Hoggett, 2014, p.142). By adding a predictable element to the exercise we found ourselves challenged less frequently. We were better able to plan our actions, potentially taking away some of the unpredictability of the exercise and movement patterns created.

Burrows states “squeezing a movement into the wrong time frame can be quite gripping”, and explains how an audience can be engaged by watching the performer “negotiate the conundrum” (2010, p.124). It could be that by eliminating some of this challenge, we may be

preventing ourselves from accessing this unique engaging quality harnessed in the exercise. If this is something we want to focus on, it may be best to work without set metre. It's worth noting that when practicing the exercise we used a 4|4 metre (duple), and created sequences of 4 movements, naturally creating a more predictable pattern of movement. One potential option might be to work over a set 4|4 metre, but create a sequence of 3 or 5 movements, if an attempt is made to emphasise accents to strengthen the sense of metre, the accent would be placed on a different movement every bar. This would naturally make the sequence less predictable, as the same movements aren't accented every time the sequence repeats. Similarly, in the exercise "Rhythmic check in", the addition of set metre in the initial stages can be useful to getting the exercise off its feet, and quickly creating and developing sequences. It may however, remove some of the key value of the exercise, and this should be considered when deciding how you wish to run the exercise.

Rhythm and Inner Reality

One exercise taken from Marshall's *The Body Speaks* works directly on the idea of exploring the tempi of individual movements. "Rhythm and Inner Reality" is extremely malleable and can be fit to explore any scene. The exercise, as described by Marshall, follows a set movement script, on top of which rhythm is applied. That movement script can however be altered to fit the demands of any section of movement. This idea of following a movement score, which is then developed and explored rhythmically is reminiscent of Stanislavsky's Method of Physical Actions. In which rhythm is applied to a predetermined sequence of actions in order to portray and embody objectives and subtext (Merlin, 2014, p.263).

The structure of the exercise is simple and can be worked on individually at first:

Get a chair, put it in the centre of the space, and place a folded sheet of blank paper on the seat. Your script is as follows. See the paper from a distance, approach the chair, stop beside the chair, pick up the paper, sit in the chair, unfold the paper, read it, fold it again, stand up, put the paper back on the seat of the chair, leave. (Marshall, 2008, p.214)

Once the performer is comfortable with this movement score, they are then directed to explore the rhythmic possibilities within that score, specifically by focusing on the individual tempi of actions. Marshall notes “be aware that each ‘phrase’ in the script is a separate unit. Don’t run the sitting, unfolding, reading, standing into each other at the same pace, unless that is what you have specifically chosen to do” (2008, p.214). This can be explored personally, but audience feedback may be necessary to fully understand the range of understandings the audience might glean from certain rhythms. The intention of the exercise is to allow performers to explore and consider the variety of subtexts or objectives being presented to the audience through the use of rhythm, rather than explicit gesture. Marshall comments that audience members may even begin to imagine the text written on the page (2008, p.215).

The obvious application to the devising process is that the original set script featuring the paper and chair can be tweaked, altered to fit purpose, or completely replaced with a similar script. If the bare bones of a scene have been blocked, or something needs to be presented to the audience, a simple script can be created and performers are free to explore.

One of the advantages of Marshall’s script is that having something like the piece of paper allows for a huge amount of creative possibilities, although the exercise could also be effective with a simpler movement score. If a piece of paper isn’t available, then one possible modification to Marshall’s script might be:

Two performers (A & B) enter the stage from either side. See each other from a distance, approach and meet in the middle of the space.
Performer A presents an open palm to performer B. Performer B places a small object in performer A’s Hand. Performer A views object, then leaves.

In this instance the audience is left to imagine what the object is, and what importance it carries to each character (using a paperclip, or scrunched up piece of paper will suffice as the audience should not be able to identify the object within each performer's hand).

Marshall's intention for the exercise is that it be used primarily in an explorative way without any intention or subtext in mind (2008, p.215). For this reason it may seem inapplicable to devising work in which subtext and intention are already present in the mind of the deviser. Regardless of this, the process of exploration may open avenues for less obvious rhythmic ways of portraying these intentions. It may also present alternative subtexts or intentions, to those that the deviser began the scene with the intention of portraying.

Considering one focus of this exercise being the experimentation of what can be communicated to an audience non-verbally, it may be especially useful to consider the tempo-rhythm of movements. In this we can consider the either contrasting or unified tempo-rhythms between performers.

Using either the scripts provided, or one suited to the specific action of the scene, devisers can explore the tempo-rhythm of their movements during different points within the script. In the same way that Laban suggests that sequences of differing moods of movement develop like a sentence or melody (1975, p.46), consider the flow of action and potential turning points for tempo-rhythm and mood. One advantage of Marshall's script is that it provides clear points in which the deviser can alter their tempo-rhythm, such as seeing the paper, and reading the contents of the paper. It may be valuable to consider different points in which to alter the mood of movement, for example the deviser may wish to increase or decrease their tempo rhythm before taking a seat. Perhaps portraying an attempt to calm the nerves before reading the contents of the paper, or an internal panic as the character imagines the possible contents of the paper.

If the exercise is carried out with any movement score requiring more than one performer, it may be valuable to consider the relationship presented when differing or unified rhythmic qualities of movement are used. On this subject Laban states "any discussion between two persons mainly using two different basic efforts will give the opportunity of discerning new shades of the moods of movement" (1975, p.48), and goes on to discuss how the effort

qualities of actions can portray different associations. We can explore this use of differing effort qualities in relation to tempo-rhythm as well. In the case of my second movement score example, performer A might rely on light and sustained movements in their gait, with a slow inner tempo rhythm, performer B might rely on heavy and sustained movements, with a quick inner tempo rhythm. At the point in which the object is passed, or viewed by person B, either performer might alter their tempo-rhythm to portray a change in mood. When considering the interplay between inner and outer tempo-rhythms the deviser may naturally be drawn to focus on the tempo of individual actions, and the space between actions. The movement scores provided are perhaps a little short for a regular metre to be created, although this could be produced during sections of walking, or in more complex movements scores. These simpler scores certainly provide opportunities for devisers to explore tempo-rhythm in pauses and moments of inaction as is discussed on p.58 of this thesis.

The value of this exercise is that the simple movement score provides devisers with a way of exploring tempo-rhythm, which can be applied to existing work in order to find new moments of expression and ways of presenting inner objectives and subtext. Alternatively, devisers might wish to use the exercise for exploration. For example, trying a number of differing inner and outer tempo rhythms, and reflecting on what associations, subtexts, or character relationships present themselves.

Making a machine

The next exercise I have chosen to include is "Making a Machine". The exercise detailed in Frost and Yarrow's *Improvisation in Drama, Theatre and Performance* (2016), as well as Alison Oddley's *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook* (1996), although she refers to it as "Machine of Rhythms" (1996, p.177). I was first introduced to it assisting Luke Pearson of Brickwall ensemble, as he led an introduction to devising to a group at The University of Huddersfield. The exercise was presented as a potential tool for devising ensemble movement, and was not being used to create a specific section of any work at the time. Pearson instructed us to use mechanical rhythms, and although he did not specify any

specific level of effort, the examples of repeated patterns he gave, all featured direct movements.

One member of the group is asked to make a mechanical and repetitive movement; others join in, fitting in with the original movement one by one, adding their own until the whole group is physically involved; then they each add an appropriate sound, one by one, to build up a sound-and-movement-scape. (Frost and Yarrow, 2016, p.164)

In its simplest form the exercise can be used to create any number of machine-like group ensemble movement pieces. Frost and Yarrow suggest using “mechanical” movements, but the exercise can be tweaked to achieve any number of desired effects. Considering natural and mechanical rhythms we might apply understandings of Meyerhold’s tri-partite system and Laban’s effort actions. In the instance of mechanical rhythms, it might be worth encouraging devisers to have a clearly separate *Otkas*, *Posil*, and *Stoika*. In order to achieve the “segmented” quality associated with mechanical rhythms (Morris, 2017, p.30). Similarly, if we wish to explore more natural rhythms, we might want to emphasise the notion of relaxation and tension, perhaps using more flexible and sustained movements rather than direct and sudden.

In Oddley’s version of the exercise, the ensemble is instructed to create a machine, responding to different stimuli, such as “love”, “hate”, and “England today” (1996, p.177). This might be a useful way to incorporate the exercise into the devising process to address specific goals or themes within the work.

Pearson added specific requirements to the exercise as it developed. Such as performers leaving and then re-joining the ensemble with a new movement. After some time, he also stipulated that performers must make a physical connection to one, or two, other members of the group. This first development was useful in exploring the exercise as it gave it longevity, and allowed devisers to try a number of different movements, and interact with the movements of different ensemble members. The second development, provided another challenge for performers, requiring them to consider and incorporate the rhythmic

patterns of another ensemble members, in order to stay in contact while performing their own rhythmic movement.

Once the exercise is underway polyrhythm may begin to appear naturally as one performer chooses not to follow the original metre set by the sequence of the first performer. In practice I found this happened rarely, and alternate metres were generally only added in small sections of the 'machine', generally on the outskirts of the main body of the ensemble. If polyrhythm is something you want to explore with the exercise, it can be stipulated that every third or fourth performer to join the group must create and follow their own metre, which can then be followed by subsequent performers. As people leave and then re-join the group the original dominant metre may dwindle in followers, and other metres become more or less dominant.

In Alison Oddley's description of the exercise she suggests that once a 'machine' is established, the tempo should be increased, and then decreased until the ensemble finds a natural stopping point (1996, p.177). As the exercise relies heavily on metre, this might be a good opportunity to explore the relationship between the tempo at which metre is performed, and the tone and energy of a movement section. This could be done by following Oddley's instruction. Alternatively, the ensemble might experiment with raising and lowering the tempo, while continuing the other tasks such as joining or leaving the 'machine', and observing the effect this has. If different metres are being performed within the machine then different sections could also explore contrasting tempos.

Conclusion

Throughout this study I have attempted to investigate the ways in which rhythm can be used in the movement devising process, in order to harness its expressive qualities. Also, to provide an understanding of rhythm that can be applied to the devising process. As well as providing exercises in which this understanding can be applied and explored, without requiring devisers to first follow intensive rhythm based actor training processes.

This is not to say that these actor training practices do not work, and that I would not recommend them. Instead it has been my focus to open up the world of rhythmic devising to those who are simply unable to follow strict training regimes for any number of reasons. As the study of rhythm in relation to movement devising has developed alongside complex psychophysical and theoretical performance practices, it can be daunting to those wanting to first work with rhythm.

Within this thesis I have discussed how the understandings of rhythm first developed by key practitioners lays the groundwork for rhythmic exploration in devising. And suggest that these understanding can be used to apply different analytical lenses to rhythm in movement. By understanding Stanislavsky's tempo-rhythm, we can better understand and explore the physical and psychological processes within our production of rhythm. His through-line of performance, can serve as an aid to our broader understandings of rhythm. Concepts like Meyerhold's tri-partite rhythm provide structure to our movement exploration, and allow us to focus on specific elements of actions. Laban provides a novel way of understanding rhythm, that contrasts with purely temporal understandings of rhythm. By considering the effort used in actions, we can also address and analyse the physical ways we produce rhythm, aside from simply considering the tempo or metre at which we perform actions.

By exploring the various effects of rhythm, we can consider it as a key devising tool to be used. By devising with attention to rhythm we are able to harness the various productive, and expressive qualities of rhythm. By working with various rhythmic elements, we are able to control mood and levels of energy and tension, explore subtext and character, and apply symbolic effects to movement.

In an attempt to demystify some of these theoretical understandings I have split the study of rhythm into three categories. Rhythm is an incredibly complex subject, in which all contributing factors affect and tie into each other, for this reason my splitting of the subject was based on the practical implications of the factors within a devising context.

I chose to address Tempo & Metre first as this relies upon our pre-existing notions of temporal rhythms found in music. These understandings have been drawn upon frequently throughout the study, as they are such integral aspects of rhythm.

The next layer which can be applied to the understanding of rhythm is how this relationship between individual actions relate to one another as a whole.

Finally, on top of this all we consider how the layering of tempos, metres, and sequences might affect how they are perceived. One of the more demanding aspects of rhythm to address in devising is polyrhythm. As it often relies heavily on movement coordination, and the ability to maintain rhythm without being put off by contrasting rhythms being performed simultaneously, or even performing multiple contrasting rhythms at once.

The final chapter, Practical Exercises, can hopefully serve as a starting point for devisers. These can be run in a workshop, to explore notions of rhythm and create new devised movement. Alternatively, exercises such as "Rhythm and Inner Reality", could be tailored to fit specific scenes. Throughout these exercises I have attempted to provide an explanation of how an understanding of different aspects of rhythm can inform our practice. By focusing on those understandings developed by key practitioners, or by experimenting with technical aspects of rhythm such as tempo and metre.

Although "Making a Machine" can be used to explore polyrhythm and polymetre, I feel it is perhaps less immediately applicable to the devising context as the resultant material isn't as easily tweaked to fit the demands of a plot. It was my initial intention to find exercises designed specifically to address this. Although a number of polyrhythm based exercises exist such as Morris' Orbits and Flatischler's TaKeTiNa, and many others these are aimed primarily at developing embodied understandings of polyrhythm and fit more closely within an actor training context. Similarly, exercises exist, such as Callery's "Rhythm-scape" (2001, p.100) address polyrhythm within a devising context, but without a focus on movement

devising. Perhaps one area for further study would be to look further into practical applications of polyrhythm within devising.

Although rhythm has been crucial to the work of many influential performance practitioners I have argued it has been somewhat overlooked in theatrical study. With the recent release of Morris' *Rhythm in Acting and Performance* I would not be surprised to see an emergence of more rhythm focused approaches to both devising and actor training. Practitioners such as Morris and many others continue to develop this practice and uncover new notions and understandings of rhythm in performance.

Ultimately I argue that an embodied understanding of rhythm, and ability to utilise it within the devising process is a skill and necessary tool that should be used along with all other tools in the deviser's arsenal. The goal of studying and practicing rhythm in movement for devising is to be able work with constant attention to rhythm, as you would any other aspects of your performance, be that vocalisation, posture, or position on stage.

It is my belief that it's productive and expressive qualities can greatly improve the theatrical work it is applied to, and that devisers can use their understanding of rhythm to inform choices within the devising process. It is my hope that the exercises and understandings compiled within this study might work as an aid to those wishing to use it.

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