

Street Theater Workshop

“I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.” - Peter Brooks, *The Empty Space*

Street theater is a form of theatrical performance, which captures the bare essence of theater as Peter Brook so eloquently states in his book - *The Empty Space*. They are generally performed in outdoor public spaces and not in the conventional auditorium setup. They usually do not have any paying audience, with the street theater actor either working for free or collecting donations voluntarily after the performance from the audience. The themes of the play are mainly motivated by social, political and / or artistic topics, which are likely to capture the imagination of the public audience. In our country, street theatre was effectively used during the freedom struggle, the emergency time and is currently used a lot for social awareness on topics like girl education, primary health, etc.

Preparing a Street Play

What to Say: This form of theater involves the choice of a relevant burning issue as a topic of the play. The topic needs to be then converted into a lively script that is likely to attract and engage a passing audience.

Who to say: The team of actors who need to deliver the street play should feel for the topic. Only if the passion for the subject exists in the actors, will they be able to perform it on the street.

How to say: When it comes to the presentation, actors use simple costumes and props since it is performed outdoors like in street corners, bazaars, railway stations etc. Actors need to develop good vocal skills and body movement to put across the topic effectively. Vocal training is a must as there is no voice amplification instruments used and so is body movement and awareness as these plays tend to be physically active.

Many ways to say: Performing flexibility is also a must as the space is not defined and the actors need to adjust their performance without damaging the intensity of the play. Learning to say the line or simple compositions in multiple ways to adjust to the space and audience requires rigorous practice.

Use of Music: Drums and group singing are very important part of street theater. Actors begin their play with a short drumming or singing to draw the attention of the public and introduce the topic. Drums and group singing requires training and practice to ensure it adds to the flow and rhythm of the play.