

9

COMEDY: IT'S ALL IN THE ... TIMING

WHY STUDY COMEDY?

Comedy is a unique and distinctive genre with an extensive history. It has evolved into a wide range of forms and styles. By studying comedy, we are able to appreciate the skills and techniques that help create comedy. We can then employ these skills in the creation of performance work.

This chapter explores two styles of comedy—slapstick and parody—and is divided into the following units:

- 9.1 An overview of comedy in performance
- 9.2 Slapstick: physical comedy
- 9.3 Character in slapstick comedy
- 9.4 Parody: imitation and exaggeration
- 9.5 Performance task: don't slip on the soap!

OUTCOMES

In this chapter you will:

- perform physical comedy, including a slip, a trip and a fall
- explore and demonstrate how status relationships between characters create comedy
- utilise the skills of imitation and exaggeration to create parody
- explore and discuss ways in which comedy can contribute to performance work.



Alan Lao and Effie
Nkrumah in Drew Fairley's
Ama & Chan, by Urban
Theatre Projects



Photo Heidrun Lohr.

9780170385381

9.1 An overview of comedy in performance

The joke of life is the fall of dignity.

Mack Sennett – American silent movie producer



HINT

Black comedy is a dramatic form that can include taboo topics and shocking or confronting action such as violence, but for comic effect. Often the intention of black comedies is to make important points about serious issues through laughter.

COMEDY IN PERFORMANCE

Although the intention of comedies is to amuse, they often use serious issues to explore the lighter side of human experience. All great comedy contains an element of tragedy. It is our weaknesses that become the subject of humour. Some famous comic plays have included plots about war, people being unfaithful to their partner, or people not telling the truth.

Comedies are often about trivial and day-to-day matters. In these comedies, characters create problems for themselves and others through their own foolishness. It is also fairly common for comedies to have a happy ending, in which all wrongs are made right. Comedies have been written in a wide variety of performance styles. Some of these include Restoration comedy, commedia dell'arte, black comedy, farce and satire.

The benefits of comedy

Comedies have a positive psychological benefit for the audience. The laughter created by comedy not only releases tension, but also helps us to view awkward and difficult situations less seriously. In a sense, it is almost a relief that someone else is in the predicament, and not us. Television situation comedies (sitcoms) exploit the fact that we gain immense enjoyment from identifying with and observing others in difficult situations.

PRACTITIONER PROFILE

CHRIS LILLEY

Comedy Writer, Actor, Stand-up Comedian and Voice Artist

As a writer, performer, producer, director and composer, Chris Lilley is one of Australia's most prolific artists and the creator of five critically acclaimed television series.

Chris's series *Jonah from Tonga* (2014), *Ja'mie: Private School Girl* (2013), *Angry Boys* (2011), *Summer Heights High* (2008) and *We Can Be Heroes* (2005) have received numerous awards including Most Outstanding Actor and Most Popular Actor at the Logies, AFI Awards for Best Comedy Series and Best Performance in a Television Comedy, and the Byron Kennedy Award for *Summer Heights High*. Chris also won the international Rose d'Or Award for Best Male Comedy Performance.

Chris began his career as a stand-up comedian and voiceover artist. He expanded to television and gained a cult following for his characters 'Extreme Darren' and 'Mr G' in the sketch comedy television series *Big Bite* and *Hamish & Andy*.



Courtesy of Chris Lilley

Chris Lilley



Courtesy of Chris Lilley

Chris Lilley as his character, Mr G

COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

- 1 List some of your favourite comic films and television programs.
- 2 Describe two characters from the films and television programs you have selected. Find one or two reasons why they are comedic that supports the theory that it is the weaknesses and flaws of comic characters that make us laugh.

9.2 Slapstick: physical comedy

AN OVERVIEW OF SLAPSTICK

‘Slapstick’ is a term used to describe a style of comedy that incorporates falling, hitting, tripping, balancing, breaking, chasing and hiding to create humour. It places emphasis on showing comedy rather than creating comedy through dialogue. Television programs or online shared videos of people in situations where accidents occur are a good example of how slapstick humour still appeals to audiences today. As the audience watches someone trip or fall, they are both laughing at and identifying with the individual’s loss of dignity. The audience also responds to the timing, or the surprise and shock of the moment. Where home videos are usually about real mishaps, slapstick is about creating the illusion of mishaps.



Newspix/Bob Barker

The Umbilical Brothers (Shane Dundas and David Collins) use plenty of slapstick in their performances.



HINT

A 'slapstick' is literally a prop bat made of two hinged sticks that slap sharply together when the bat is used to hit someone. This gives the illusion of hitting someone with a stick, without actually hurting the actor. The slapstick is a staple gag of the Italian masked comedy form, *commedia dell'arte*.

The term 'timing' refers to the ability of the performer to incorporate an underlying rhythm that governs when particular events best occur in a comic routine. If you have ever had the experience of telling a joke well, you have used timing effectively. If you pause unnecessarily long before the punchline, you lose the momentum of the joke and consequently the humour 'falls flat'.



COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

- 1 List any television comedy programs you have seen that include the use of slapstick humour.
- 2 Describe three slapstick moments from one of these programs that you particularly enjoyed.
- 3 Explain why you enjoyed these moments.



HINT

Complete an extensive physical warm-up (chapter 1, p. 12) before you undertake slapstick exercises.

EXERCISE

SLAPSTICK COMEDY

Timing is 'sensed' during the improvising of situations, and is developed and rehearsed once a successful comic moment is discovered. During these exercises, be aware of the timing of the comic moments and how this can influence your work. After you have completed all the slapstick exercises, select and show examples of slapstick work to the class.

1 Trip

Walk through the room. At a given signal from your teacher, quickly push off the ball of either foot into the floor, and use this point as the imaginary object you are tripping over. As you push the ball of your foot into the floor, you need to stumble forward and then regain your composure. The size of the stumble will indicate to the audience the size of the object. After you have tripped, continue walking and look behind you with a confused expression, as if trying to see what it was you tripped over.



CHALLENGE

Try tripping over several objects of different sizes one after the other. Leave variations in the distance between each trip. For example, you may start with one trip, walk a few metres, and then complete three trips in quick succession. This challenge will test your use of timing.



2 Slip

Walk through the room. At a given signal from your teacher, allow either the right or the left leg to suddenly rise up, almost like a soft kick. You should wobble slightly, and lean backward to give a sense of losing your balance. Continue walking and look behind you to see the imaginary item you slipped on.



3 Side fall

Stand upright in a space free of furniture. If you have mats, use these as you practise this exercise. A fall to the side involves several steps:

- Bend your knees together while leaning slightly to the side you want to fall to.
- Allow your body to completely relax, as if you are about to faint.
- As you begin the fall, continue to deepen the bend of your knees and increase the lean to one side.
- As you fall, begin to bring both arms up above your head so that they will lie along the floor above your head when you complete the fall.
- The first body parts to make contact with the fall should be the upper thigh and the side of the buttock. Your head should rest against the arm that is outstretched along the floor.



CHALLENGE

As in the Challenge for the previous exercise, complete a series of slips, varying the distances between them.



HINT

Do not try 'dead falls', which are falls directly face down or backward. These are highly skilled falls and require special training. They can be dangerous without proper supervision.





HINT

The reaction of the character immediately after the moment of collision is highly important to the potential humour of the moment.



4 Collide

Working with a partner, try the following collisions between two people. To create the illusion of a full-force collision, determine with your partner beforehand the precise moment of collision. In rehearsal, walk towards your partner at normal speed; at the point of contact, 'pull back' so the physical contact with your partner is not delivered with full force. The illusion of a real collision is dependent on your sense of timing and the way in which you both react to the collision.

- **Surprise back and front collision** – Creep backward towards your partner, pretending you are sneaking through a house at night. First, count the number of steps it would take to reach each other. When you practise, count each step out loud until you are confident. The characters need to react in fright and shock at the moment of collision. You could also try a surprise front collision by having two characters absorbed in reading a newspaper as they walk towards each other. Use your peripheral vision to judge the distance from each other and the right moment for the point of collision.
- **Collide and drop** – Use two trays with plastic cups and bowls. Pretend to be two busy waiters serving customers. Find a moment where the two waiters have a front collision while holding their trays. As the collision occurs, you can add the catching of cups or an exaggerated letting go of the tray and its contents to make the moment more powerful.

5 Stuck

Pretend to get your hand or foot stuck in a bucket, biscuit jar, or some other container. You may be painting a room and accidentally step into the bucket, or be stealing lollies from a jar. Try to remove the container, showing enormous effort and strain but no success.

6 Double take

A double take involves looking at an object or other characters twice—the first time quickly and with less notice taken, and the second time for longer and with more notice taken. Pretend you are walking down a street and see a very surprising sight. Maybe it is a large spider or a magnificent pair of shoes that you have always wanted. Walk past the imaginary object or character and look once quickly, but don't pay much attention to what you see. In the split second following the first look, it dawns on you that what you have seen is worth looking at a second time. Look at the object again, but for longer and with an appropriate reaction.



HINT

The double take is performed very quickly. Practise slowly at first and then increase the speed of the reactions.



The Silent Years of Slapstick Comedy

COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

- 1 Which exercises did you feel worked most effectively for you? Why?
- 2 Describe one good example of the use of timing.
- 3 Make suggestions for how you could improve your work in each of the exercises.

EXERCISE

LAZZI

'Lazzi', or 'comic accidents', originated in the improvised performances of commedia dell'arte. Lazzi (plural of 'lazzo') are comic moments that use physical, visual humour, and utilise the improvisation skill of extending (see chapter 2, p. 39). Practise the following lazzi. Present your favourite lazzo to the class once you have tried them all.

- Accidentally sit on a basket of eggs.
- Squirt water in your eye at the drinking fountain.
- Carry a pie and fall into it.
- Drop ice-cream on your lap.
- Spill hot coffee on your lap.
- Sit on a cactus.
- Accidentally rinse your mouth with shaving lotion.
- Get your tie caught in an electric beater.
- Hold sour milk in your cheeks while you look for a place to spit.
- Kick yourself in the shin while dancing.
- Miss the nail while hammering and hit your thumb.
- Step on a drawing pin.
- Have soap in your eyes while you search for a towel.
- Pour fuel on a smouldering barbecue and deal with the explosion of flames.
- Kick a soccer ball that turns out to be a bowling ball.
- Walk into a pole as you turn your head to flirt with someone attractive.



CHALLENGE

Have individuals devise and present their own lazzo to the class.



HINT

If you have juggling or acrobatic skills, you can include these in your development of comic scenes to add both excitement and humour.

COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

- 1 Give two examples of how you incorporated the skills you learnt in the set of slapstick exercises into the practice of lazzi.
- 2 Describe how you felt you used timing well in one lazzo.
- 3 Use examples of the lazzi you saw and comment on what you felt contributed to a successful lazzo; for example, clear mime, facial expression and timing.



Shutterstock.com/David Franklin

9.3 Character in slapstick comedy



Newspix/Brett Faulkner

Lano & Woodley are a modern-day version of the classic slapstick duo—'straight man' and 'funny man'.

COMIC CHARACTERS

Characters in comedy can be represented in a variety of ways, from highly stylised to naturalistic. The circus clown often uses slapstick comedy and is an excellent example of a highly stylised character. In this unit we will look at creating stylised characters by using exaggerated movement, voice and costume.

In the following two sets of exercises you are required to adopt a character and improvise scenes as high-status and low-status characters. The first set of exercises explores how you may develop a comic character. The second set of exercises then looks at how humour can be created by establishing clear status relationships between characters. Your skills of improvisation will be required in these exercises (see chapter 2, p. 34).

EXERCISE

CREATING COMIC CHARACTERS

1 Personality traits

Comic characters often have a dominant personality trait that is generally seen as a failing. Choose one of the following personality traits that you find appealing: greediness, silliness, laziness, clumsiness, cheekiness, bossiness, selfishness, vanity or enviousness. There may be other traits you can think of.

Walk through the room and find a way of communicating your trait through the way your character walks. As you walk, pause occasionally and find a pose that incorporates use of the arms, hands and facial expressions to communicate the character's personality trait.

Find a word or sound that expresses your character's personality and repeat this as you walk. Occasionally hold a pose.



HINT

It is best to practise the exercises before performing some for the class.

2 Costume

The ability of a comic character to amuse can be enhanced through the choice of costume. Find items of costume to dress your character. Take into consideration their dominant personality trait. Mismatched items and ill-fitting clothes often add to a character's potential to amuse. For example, your character may wear a pair of pants that are too big, a very tight-fitting waistcoat and an enormous hat. You do not need to find a complete costume; sometimes just a hat or scarf will give enough indication.



CHALLENGE

Continue exploring your character by including a slip, trip, fall or combination of these, and explore the character's response.

COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

- 1 Think of one or two of your favourite comic characters from film or television. Your comic characters may be real or animated. Write a short list of their main personality traits. Can you suggest why these traits make each character amusing?
- 2 Using the characters you have chosen, describe the costume they wear most often. Suggest how it adds to their comic potential.

Newspix/Adam Taylor



Episodes of Australian comedies such as *Kath & Kim* are excellent examples of how the use of costume and status relationships between characters create comedy.

EXERCISE

PLAYING WITH STATUS



HINT

Status is the relative amount of power a character has or believes they have in relation to other characters. A character's status may be established through wealth or lack of wealth, or through occupation, level of knowledge, experience or strength.



HINT

The term 'master' can apply to either a male or female character.



HINT

In exercise 3 it is important to balance the deliberate or accidental mistakes of the low-status character with moments where the master's wishes are met successfully. The low-status character tends to show their 'naughty' side when the master is not around or is unaware of the servant's actions.

1 Status

The entire class moves through the room as though they are high status. It helps to imagine that you are the most important person in the room. You may look at other class members to convey your status, but you are not to speak or physically interact with them.

On the signal from your teacher, everyone becomes low status. It helps to pretend you are the least important person in the room. Once again, only eye contact is allowed as a form of communication.

Your teacher now divides the class into two: half will be high status and half will be low status. Both groups move through the room and use only eye contact to communicate their status. On a given signal, the groups swap their status positions and continue moving through the room.

2 Master and servant 1: establishing status

Divide into pairs. One person is high status (the master) and the other is low status (the servant); for example, coach and athlete, builder and apprentice, employer and employee, or shop assistant and customer. In this exercise, it is important that the low-status character always yields to the high-status character.

Improvise a situation in which the high-status character wants the low-status character to complete a task. Both characters should display a dominant personality trait. The high-status character may be a pompous explorer who wants to use a teaspoon to dig a tunnel through a mountain range, or a wealthy socialite who wants a huge banquet prepared to impress important guests. The low-status character is always willing to fulfill the high-status character's wishes. The high-status character does not necessarily have to be nasty or bossy; they may display other personality traits such as being benevolent or patronising.

Once you have completed the exercise, swap over so that each person has a turn at being either high status or low status.

3 Master and servant 2: undermining status

In this improvisation, the master instructs the servant to undertake an activity, which the master will supervise. The servant makes mistakes (either deliberately or accidentally) and this complicates the situation; for example, the servant may deliberately drop things, break the only spade available, mis-hear information, or creep away and fall asleep on the job only to be discovered by the master. When these accidents happen, the master's status is lowered momentarily because the servant is hindering progress. The master may then re-establish their status by reprimanding the servant or giving the servant a ridiculous punishment.

4 Masters and servants meet

In this improvisation, two masters and two servants meet for a reason of your choosing; for example, they may meet to discuss a merger of companies or to watch a football game. The two masters speak to each other, but instruct their servants to complete the range of activities required. The humour in this situation is the inevitable status competition that develops between the two masters. Their competition to be 'top' master is usually played out through their servants. The comedy arises, for example, from the servants' failure to complete tasks properly and their attempts to be the 'best' servant.





5 Status line

In this improvisation, divide into groups of five and number the members of the group 1 to 5. Number 1 is highest status, number 2 is next in line, and so on. Numbers 2 to 5 can only speak to the character either immediately above them or below them. Number 1 is the foreperson (leader) and can speak directly to any of the other participants. The participants all respect the status of number 1 and the number immediately above them, but can be less courteous to the number below them.

The group completes a task; for example, packing highly sensitive scientific equipment or canisters of smelly gas. As the work is passed down the line, number 1 supervises proceedings and attempts to keep the others in line. Of course, accidents and problems occur and blame is passed down the line, with number 5 always being blamed for everything. If the leader wishes, he or she can sack participants and move them down the line. Participants can plead for mercy or bribe the leader to stay in their current position.



COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

- 1 What body language was used to communicate high status in the 'status' exercise? What body language was used to communicate low status? Among other things, consider posture, mannerisms, eye contact, personal space and walk.
- 2 What improvisation skills do you need to employ in the 'status line' exercise?
- 3 In what ways can the focus be maintained during an improvisation that has many participants? Did this occur in the scenes you improvised for exercises 4 and 5? What could be done to improve focus?

EXERCISE

PREPARE AND PERFORM A COMIC SKIT

Divide into pairs or into groups of four. Prepare a short skit that shows characters of different status in a situation of your choosing. You must include examples of some of the slapstick exercises covered in this chapter, and use costumes to help make each character comic.



HINT

A 'skit' is a short, comic performance.



COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

- 1 In your skit, how was the status relationship between characters established through the use of body language?
- 2 What slapstick skills were included in your presentation? What impact did these skills have on the success of the performance?
- 3 Imagine you are the director of one other group's skit. Make suggestions for how you could heighten the humour of their presentation. In your discussion, consider character, costume, timing and slapstick skills.
- 4 Choose one character from any of the skits you observed, or from your own. Comment on how their use of costume helped to add to their character's comic qualities.



The Cheeky Monkey – *How to Create Comedy Characters* by Tim Ferguson (Article)

9.4 Parody: imitation and exaggeration



HINT

In 'parody', the characteristics of a chosen person or group of people, or a written work or form of entertainment, is imitated for amusement.



HINT

It is helpful to work with a mirror when you practise imitating your chosen personality. By observing your use of body language, you can make your imitation more accurate.



CHALLENGE

Prepare a solo presentation in which your chosen personality is exaggerated in ways you choose. Examples of presentations include a short speech, a news announcement, an advertisement for a product, or an interview.

AN OVERVIEW OF PARODY

Parody is a form of comedy that uses imitation to create humour. The intention of parody is to make fun of identifiable situations and people we may normally take seriously. For example, a parody of an advertisement for a beauty product and its potential benefits may highlight the false claims being made and the amusing aspects of vanity. You will have seen many other examples of the use of parody in television comedy programs. People often use parody when they tell personal stories. They may act out people by imitating voices and gestures to increase the humour for the listener. It is important to use parody selectively in performance so that it does not judge or ridicule people unfairly.

EXERCISE

PARODY

1 Imitating character through observation

Choose a famous personality to imitate. They may be a movie star, politician, pop star or television personality. Before you begin to practise, use the table below to make precise notes about how your chosen personality uses voice, stance, mannerisms and body language.

Practise being your personality exactly as the media presents them. Do not try to exaggerate their movements or voice.

NAME OF PERSONALITY:	DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION OF HOW TO IMITATE
Use of voice	Deep tone, speaks slowly, a bit posh, sounds educated. I would need to deepen my voice and speak more slowly. I would also have to get used to adding long pauses and the occasional 'little' cough.
Facial expressions	
Standing posture	
Seated posture	
Mannerisms	
Walk	
Hair and clothing	
Other important features	

2 Using imitation and exaggeration

Use the same personality that you prepared in the previous exercise. Now exaggerate some or all aspects of the use of voice and body language. For example, you may:

- emphasise some words they say in a certain way
- exaggerate a particular mannerism
- use repetition to heighten the effect of a physical movement or facial expression.

EXERCISE

NEWSFLASH

Divide into groups and prepare a parody of a newscast by imitating and exaggerating the characters and features of a news program. When preparing characters, you may use more general representations. For example, to parody a newsreader you may use a style of delivery that is common to news presenters and include stereotypical movements such as the shuffling of papers or answering calls from the producer. The same could apply to the representations of the reporters (such as weather, sports, consumer watchdog) and the characters they interview (such as angry consumers, politicians and pop stars).

Include the use of exaggerated character traits and body language to heighten the humour. In your news presentation, include one news story where you cross 'live to air'. In this scene, you are to parody a type of news story; for example, a human-interest story, sports report or the launch of a political campaign.



Shutterstock.com/lakobchuk Viachesla

How might this actor use the skills of parody to create comedy when playing a newsreader?



COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

- 1 Describe the process you used to create your character. Include in your discussion any research and techniques you employed, including reference to any actual personalities you observed.
- 2 Evaluate the achievement of one other group member. Highlight two examples of how body language was used well. Consider their use of imitation and exaggeration.



PERFORMANCE TASK

9.5 Performance task: don't slip on the soap!

The task

'Soap opera' is a term that was once used to describe a very popular form of television drama that uses predictable character types and plots to engage audiences. The name soap opera was given to these programs because they became popular during the 1950s, when they were daytime dramas watched mainly by women. Washing powder companies would advertise during the television drama. The word 'opera' was given to these programs because of the association of extreme emotion, drama and events that are often part of operas.

The popularity of television soap operas relies on the inclusion of highly dramatic and emotionally charged situations, with some shows deliberately stretching the boundaries of reality to create extreme and sometimes ridiculous scenarios, often with the traditional good-versus-evil plotline (see chapter 3, p. 58). Dramatic tension is the key to soap opera episodes, and characters lurch from one emotional trauma to another to keep us on the edge of our seats. Although soap operas are written to create tension and excitement, they stretch the realms of possibility to achieve this goal.

In this task, you will parody soap operas by imitating the stock characters, situations and conventions of this form of television entertainment. By creating a parody of a soap opera episode, you will highlight how the situations and characters in soap operas are often stereotypical and exaggerated.

In groups, you are to devise a parody of a soap opera episode. Your episode will include:

- a range of stock soap opera characters
- two or three story-lines that are emotionally charged
- three locations
- the convention of close-ups at the ends of scenes
- the convention of a cliffhanger ending
- exaggeration to add humour to character portrayal
- slapstick, including trips, slips, falls and collisions.

Creating and making a soap opera episode

Outline two or three exaggerated story-lines you would like to include in your episode.

In your preparation, consider the following:

- typical soap opera characters, locations and situations
- how slapstick and lazzi can be included to highlight and enhance comic moments
- how you may encourage the audience to focus on the character close-ups at the ends of your scenes, in the same way a camera draws our attention to close-ups at the ends of scenes on television
- how you can use recorded music to help add atmosphere to your performance.

Use the playbuilding steps in chapter 4, pp. 76–77 as a guide for your rehearsal process.



HINT

The close-up at the end of scenes in soap operas helps the audience read the reactions of the character. Although you will not be using a camera, you can create the effect of a close-up by making the reactions of the characters more powerful and exaggerating facial expression.



HINT

You can create the impression of a television close-up at the end of your soap opera parody scenes by incorporating the technique of the tableau. On the last line, or in the last moment of the scene, all performers freeze and simultaneously turn their faces to the audience. Facial expressions and body language should be exaggerated to show the characters' reactions in the final moment of the scene.

Creating and making a soap opera character

Create characters that are imitations of soap opera character types by using discussion and improvisation. Through improvisation, determine the status of each character and their status relationship to other characters.

Consider the use of costume to help highlight the humour of your character, and the use of exaggeration, body language and voice to portray your character in a comic way.



This magazine cover highlights how soap opera story-lines appeal to audiences through shock and sensation.

Performance checklist

You and your teacher will evaluate your work individually using a list of criteria. These criteria relate to your achievement in this task. Some criteria will relate to the achievement of the group. The criteria are listed on the evaluation sheet at the end of this chapter and will be used to evaluate your ability to:

- include imitation, status and exaggeration in the representation of your soap opera character
- include an appropriate and effective character voice for your character
- select and incorporate body language and movement to portray character
- sustain and develop character in performance
- research and prepare for your comedy performance
- effectively select and incorporate slapstick and lazzi to heighten comic moments
- select and link elements of your parody to create a coherent and polished performance
- include close-ups at the ends of scenes and a cliffhanger ending.



COLLABORATE AND THINK CRITICALLY

- 1 Was your performance coherent? Give reasons for your success or lack of success. Offer suggestions for how you could improve in this area.
- 2 What was the climactic moment of your performance? How did you make this moment humorous for the audience?
- 3 Describe how well you felt you used imitation, status and exaggeration to portray your character.
- 4 Describe the moments where you felt you used slapstick well. Can you explain how timing or the reversal of status may have influenced this moment?
- 5 Did you manage your rehearsal time well? Explain how you followed a creative process and how you might improve your time management in future playbuilding activities.
- 6 Choose one group's performance and evaluate how they used imitation, exaggeration and status to portray their characters.
- 7 Discuss one group's use of slapstick moments. Pick two slapstick moments you felt were particularly good and explain why.
- 8 Explain your understanding of the value and importance of comedy in performance. Include in your discussion examples of how comedy can be both entertaining and provocative. Your examples may come from your own work or the work of others—past and present.

Performance task: don't slip on the soap!

Student Teacher

Group names

By completing this task you should be able to:

- perform physical comedy, including a slip, a trip and a fall
- explore and demonstrate how the status relationships between characters create comedy
- utilise the skills of imitation and exaggeration to create parody
- explore and discuss ways in which comedy can contribute to performance work.

Key learning areas	Level of achievement			
	Beginning	Consolidating	Mastering	Excelling
<p>Creating, making and presenting ideas using skills, knowledge, techniques and processes:</p> <p>Have you used skills, techniques and processes to structure a comedy performance by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effectively incorporating imitation, status and exaggeration in the representation of your soap opera character? • including an effective and appropriate character voice? • incorporating appropriate body language and movement to portray character? • including exaggeration to add humour to character portrayal? • incorporating slapstick and lazzi to heighten comic moments? • sustaining and developing character? <p>Have you rehearsed and presented a performance for a specific audience by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • structuring the drama into a coherent and polished performance incorporating effective scene transitions? • incorporating close-ups at the ends of scenes? • finishing your play with a cliffhanger ending? 				
<p>Responding:</p> <p>Have you used your critical thinking and communication skills to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflect on the development, rehearsal and shaping of your performance? • effectively use questioning to interrogate how comedy is created through character and situations? • show strong knowledge of the various types of comedy and the historical and social influences? • record all planning, rehearsals and decisions in your logbook? • record your observations about soap opera character types? 				

Comments

