



# SINGIN' IN THE RAIN

## LESSON 3: 'SILENCE IS GOLDEN!'

AIM: To develop story-telling and character through movement only.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVE: BY THE END OF THIS LESSON I WILL...

- \* KNOW that silent film acting requires specific skills.
- \* UNDERSTAND how I can use my body and facial expression to tell a story.
- \* BE ABLE TO create a silent movie style segment of 'The Royal Rascal'.

### TO BE SUCCESSFUL I WILL ...

- \* Have played with different ways of making entrances and exits.
- \* Have shown that I can use sword-fighting moves appropriately.

#### \*RESOURCES\*

TITLES  
YOUTUBE  
SYNOPSIS OF 'THE ROYAL RASCAL'

## GETTING IN THE ZONE

### CIRCLE:

### PASS THE FACE

Students sit in a circle and take it in turns to pull a face to their neighbour. The neighbour then pulls the same face back at the person who gave it and then turns to the person sitting on the other side of them and pulls a different face. Each student therefore pulls two faces: the one pulled at them and their own new one. A variation could be, no touching face, or you can use your hands to manipulate facial parts. Call out an emotion at varying stages around the circle and the students have to reflect an exaggerated version of that emotion on their face: Sad! Angry! Scared!

### MAGIC BOX

The students have 20 seconds thinking to think of an interesting object that they could take out of an imaginary box in the middle of the circle. Students have to then, one at a time, go to the middle and take the object out, trying to give as many clues as possible as to what it is they have just pulled out of the box. The student in the middle gets a point if it is guessed (as an incentive for them to make it as clear as possible). Categories can be used if students need extra help: animals; modes of transport; tools etc.

### TAKE IT TO THE SPACE

When cinema first emerged filmmakers could only record the pictures (movie is short for 'moving picture'), i.e. you could see what was going on but not hear it. Filmmakers and actors had to communicate the story using facial expressions and movements. The stories had to be simple and clear so that audiences could follow them. Actors were skilled at using their faces to show all sorts of emotions and feelings.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMKXw0bpLrc>



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### MAKING AN ENTRANCE

Students use a chair to represent the wings of a stage. One side is 'offstage' the other is 'onstage'. Students take it in turns to enter and exit (leaving a moment of stillness 'centre stage' according to the appropriate emotion or action):

- \* Enter slowly – exit quickly
- \* Enter quickly – exit slowly
- \* Enter angrily – exit fearfully
- \* Enter sadly – exit happily
- \* Enter directly – exit indirectly
- \* Enter lost – exit having found your way
- \* Enter nervously – exit shocked

There are lots of different ways to combine this. You can use more Laban movement words if the students are familiar with them – or just use emotions or action words. Levels can also be used (Enter low level – exit high level). In each case looking to see that the students engage their whole body and face in the movement or action to communicate maximum meaning. Play around with the pause on stage: make it longer/shorter. Freeze/act through it. Change facial expressions during the pause.

### MIX IT UP

Students in their pairs can combine entrance/exit so that they happen at the same time as each other or overlap. What stories can be told or are suggested from this? Share good work and start to talk about how narrative can arise just from using actions. Themes might emerge: scary villain, the rescue, hiding from someone, lovers meeting etc. all key themes in silent cinema.

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## THE MAIN EVENT:

### THE ROYAL RASCAL

In Singin' in the Rain we meet two huge stars of the silent film era Don Lockwood and Lina Lamont. They have made many movies together and are skilled in the act of silent film acting.

**Recreating the scene:** The hero, Felipe du Bois has just got together with a glamorous lady. But a villain, Gaspard de la Nuit is creeping up on them. Felipe spies him, leaves the girl and brandishing his sword duels with Gaspard and stabs him.

Two of Gaspard's associates appear and try to get to him but he ducks away. They accidentally stab each other and then Felipe is free to claim the lady's hand. Ground rules: Absolutely no contact during sword fights. Swords are imaginary and all must be conveyed through acting and body movements. Students work in groups of 4/5 using the titles if they wish.

Some time spent practicing miming safe and suitably flamboyant sword fighting moves might be appropriate.



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### SUCCESS CRITERIA:

\* Have I used my body in a bold enough way to communicate both the story and the emotion? Can I use my face and body to tell a story? \*

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### PLENARY:

What are some of the skills that the silent movie actors had? How did it feel to be acting in this way? Do actors still have these skills? What was going to be the challenge when sound finally arrived and actors had to use their voices for the first time?

Watch the SOOS version of The Royal Rascal (see SOOS website – available from September). How does it compare with the students' versions?