

Perform for a Change

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How can performance art be used as a means of educating societies about culture, communities and conflict in a way that leads to long-lasting positive change within the communities in question? This has been a serious inquiry for me as a theater practitioner, hip-hop artist and playwright raised in some of the most under-resourced and compromised communities in the city of Boston, Massachusetts. I recently, as one of six Brandeis Ethics Center Student Fellows, had the chance to search for an answer to the question of how performance could be used to create a more positive community.

In the piece that follows I will explore the positive and negative issues that arise when you combine the theories raised in John Lederach's book *The Moral Imagination* with my practical experiences during the summer of 2006 at the International School of Playback in Poughkeepsie, New York, and the youth art program Contact Inc. in Brisbane, Australia. For five weeks, I worked as an intern at the School of Playback, helping organize the office and integrating the international students to their new surroundings. I also participated as a student in three of the Playback courses. I then traveled to Brisbane where I interned at Contact Inc. for three-and-a-half weeks in the month of August. My duties at Contact Inc. were to lead and help with the community workshops for various projects in addition to witnessing the processes used by Contact Inc. employees in order to achieve their mission statement goals. The organizations will be discussed in further detail later.

Moral Imagination

The first thing to clarify is who John Lederach is, and what is the "moral imagination." John Lederach is a distinguished professor of international peacebuilding. According

to Lederach, the moral imagination is "the capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist."¹ Morality provides a checks and balances system with imagination, where the morals keep the imagination locked in reality while the imagination leaves room for the individual to realize that his or her reality is not locked into a single pattern. The term "imagination" is used in order to "emphasize the necessity of the creative act."² Fulfilling the need for a creative act is more important than simply doing the creative act itself. The creative act stimulates the imagination to envision everyday life in a new way. This new perception of everyday life provides logic-driven opportunities for a reasoned exploration of which daily habits are beneficial and which are harmful. Lederach further develops his definition of the moral imagination by comparing multiple authors' meaning of the same subject. He states that the moral imagination "develops a capacity to perceive things beyond and at a deeper level than what initially meets the eye."³ Lederach believes that the moral imagination comes with a quality of transcendence – the ability to surpass the ordinary range of perception. With this ability to transcend, people are

able to generate a more pleasant future for all members of society motivated by their transcendent revelations. Lederach points out four mandates for the moral imagination: the centrality of relationships, the practice of paradoxical curiosity, providing space for the creative act and willingness to risk.

The concept of the "Moral Imagination" plays heavily in reference to my summer internship experiences. Both organizations where I worked as a summer intern have performance as an end product, whether in live or recorded media. By making the art a performance for an audience, members of society who witness the act are drawn into the creative act often without knowing the "moral" themes they are expected to connect with. This latter statement will become more translucent as we move deeper into what the organizations aim for and the ways in which they attempt to achieve their aims.

Performance is a form that requires the audience to transcend, or, in theater terms, "suspend their disbelief" in order to empathize with the production and connect to its themes. Most performance productions deal with more than the aesthetic enjoyment that

they are portraying: i.e. a love song is about more than the melody, a Shakespeare play is about more than peeking into the lives of strangers, a choreographed dance is usually praised when a story is clearly expressed via the visual movements, etc. The aesthetics are useful in shaping a future that transcends but it is only a small part of those processes. So the question of how to use the aesthetics of performance in order to lead society to a positive transformation presents itself. Here are two potential answers.

Playback Theatre

Thirty-one years ago, Jonathan Fox planted a seed in the theater realm called Playback Theatre. The purpose at the time was for members of a community to act out the real stories of others of that same community with a goal to build dialogue and empathy, which in turn will create an improved and better-connected community. The stories are to be told by the audience members on the spot, with the actors having no foreknowledge of the story before they are required to enact what the "teller" voluntarily shares with everyone. Since 1975, the Playback seed has blossomed into a form of theater practiced in over 50 countries. Jonathan now runs the School of Playback in Poughkeepsie, New York, that trains international students who desire to use Playback forms in their communities. The school is working on executing plans to expand to a position in the political world related to reconciliation and positive connections with the other, while simultaneously offering a variety of workshops in a globally diverse way.

Contact Inc.

Contact Inc. started in 1989 as a youth theater company that encouraged primarily Aboriginal Australian and Torres Strait Islander youths toward success in the theater. A year later the organization adopted the Third Place Policy, which strives to create "a safe space where cultures can safely and meaningfully meet." This idea of connecting cultures led Contact Inc. to shift its mission to one concerning community development and the youth arts. Contact Inc. has currently developed into a leader in regards to helping disadvantaged youths find meaningful, cross-cultural connections while stimulating the arts in the participants and their communities. There is always a vast amount of work to be done at the Contact office, which offers a variety of programs for youth, consisting of different community-building processes and artistic outcomes. The artistic outcomes range from music videos, DVD documentaries, live theatrical performances, songs recorded on CD, and graffiti images.

What makes a community? There are many specifics that aid labeling individual communities. The nature of a performance production blurs the lines that segregate communities and allow the space for social change. The School of Playback serves as a center, combining Playbackers from all over the world as one community. The programs at Contact Inc. identify ethnic communities separately for some projects and fuse the communities together for others. Collectively a production's staff, cast and crew make up a separate community within society. This

performance community may be diverse in age, race, ethnicity or even experience, but it is connected by the goals of the production.

The performing arts create a community among the participants regardless of the specific communities that the participants are coming from. This new community, consisting of the members of the production, creates the platform needed in order to invoke social change, first among the production participants during the pre-performance phase, and then is passed on to the audience witnessing the production. The production process stimulates the participants to work together and deal with the drama that surrounds community teamwork. The outcome of this teamwork, the production, serves as a clear indication to the audience of the creative ways in which we as a community can all come together and find a transcendent reality.

There is good that arises with the bad in this process, which shows that careful calibration of the aesthetics of the performing art is needed in order for peacebuilding and community development to be successful.

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The Centrality of Relationships

John Lederach believes that an intense web of relationships that is inclusive of enemies as well as loved ones is a requisite part of peace building. He argues that the centrality of relationships must have elements of “humility and self-recognition”⁴ in order to be effective. Since successful reconciliation is based upon continuing platforms consisting of opposing parties in conflict, the initial establishment of the relationship is of great importance. If the initial development of the relationship is skewed, then the conflict is prone to show itself again over time. “Taking personal responsibility and acknowledging relational mutuality”⁵ is equally important. Each person has a part to play in the continuance and resolution of conflict, no matter which side the individual in the conflict identifies with. Once people are open to this idea and each other they can take the necessary steps to find a solution for their conflict.

At the School of Playback, centrality of relationships is a fact of everyday life. This past summer there were over 80 student participants registered to the School of Playback, representing 17 countries. Self-recognition naturally followed the frequent conversations about differences in cultures. It

was important for me to hear how my international peers considered Americans as a result of the media they witness at home, and how their perspectives changed over the course of time they spent studying in Poughkeepsie, New York. Listening to people voice their perceptions of me, or rather how I was being represented, took

great humbleness. The picnic table outside of the Playback students’ summer lodging often provided space for international potluck dinners and meaningful political, personal and social status conversation. The intense relationships that formed in numerous settings over the summer created empathy and a desire to learn the stories of others. These relationships were the seeds of an ongoing platform of conversation and empathy. But realistically, how many of these relationships last?

It is very difficult to maintain the 80 international relationships stemming from the Playback workshop setting. I have contacted about 20 of my Playback peers since my arrival back in the United States at the end of August. These e-mails and phone calls help continue the relationship that developed over the summer, yet the continuance of the relationship lacks the depth of the relationship upon its birth. Attempting to stay in touch with my new Australian contacts does not allow me the time to engage in dialogue with the remaining members of my Playback classes as of now, although my heart desires it. This lapse in the connection is less vital in the workshop setting than in a one-time production of a Playback. In the workshop setting of the school the students are expected to build positive relationships in addition to learning the core materials; we live together, eat together and work on bettering our Playback skills collectively. In a one-time production, the length of time that the production’s participants (including the audience) have is significantly shorter.

Playback productions have slightly different set of determinates for success. One of the things to look for at the end of a successful Playback production is a lingering audience that takes the time to meet and greet each other before returning to their “normal” lives. I can clearly remember chatting after a Playback show with a young girl who shared a story of a rough childhood. I personally identified with her story of struggling to be functional in a dysfunctional family and sought her out. Since that conversation I have not seen her,

but this doesn’t necessarily mean that the post-Playback setting is not a good space for developing the intense web of relationships Lederach is referring to. It is important to remember that Playback was intended for members of a community to perform for members of that same community; therefore my experience is as a visitor and not entirely genuine to the Playback form. I may have encountered this teenage girl again if we lived in the same community, yet since all my Playback production experience is as a visiting audience member, I am not able to say whether the relationships made have the potential of becoming deeply rooted and long lasting. I can say, however, that the workshop space set the platform for deep, interpersonal connections with greater ease than the one-time performance. I will discuss the appropriate parameters of a safe space in a section that follows shortly.

Contact Inc. also links a variety of ethnicities in their projects. I left Brisbane at the beginning of the production process called *The Hope Tour*. This production included members of over 15 ethnicities and dealt with combining their hopes for a hip-hop theater performance. This project helps diversify the intense web of relationships. As an intern at Contact Inc. I was able to benefit from the past networking of the organization with other youth arts organization in the sector. The day after my arrival at Brisbane International Airport I found myself in a Youth Arts Queensland (YAQ) meeting. YAQ links all of the youth arts organizations in Queensland, ensuring they are collectively making the greatest positive imprint on the state’s youth. Being a witness to these organizations and their mission statements allowed me to show the student participants of the workshops I led the resources available to them with hopes that they would continue making use of these resources after I left. I borrowed a laptop with audio recording software for a week, a performance opportunity for my workshop participants in a cultural talent showcase, and workshop space from various organizations. It’s safe to say that without the

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help from various Australian organizations, including Visible Ink, Speak Out, B.E.M.A.C., Harmony Place and Transit Lounge, much of the impact I made in Australia would not have been possible.

I was overly conscious of the accessibility I had as an African-American male in Brisbane. In America I do not have access to many of the resources I received for free in Australia. My ethnicity, mission and hip-hop credentials made me a hot commodity in Brisbane, and people's natural response was to offer help if they could. Although I was unsure if the minority groups of Brisbane would have the same access to these resources as I did, it was imperative for me to, at the very least, show them where these resources lie. This is important to mention; different people receive resources with varying difficulties. This gap is what I am attempting to bridge through performance, yet the nature of auditioning for performances is often critically selective in terms of what is good art or bad. The notions of good and bad must be set aside, with the focus being placed upon the collaborative usage of the most influential sources available.

The Practice of Paradoxical Curiosity

The superficial nature of dualistic polarities, such as good vs. bad, hinders the moral imagination. The view of representing a side in a conflict, or a section of society, slows the process of finding a solution for the conflict or a better society as a whole. Lederach breaks paradoxical curiosity down to the Greek and Latin roots: *para doxa*, "contrary to common belief," and *cura*, "literally meaning to care... as in spiritual and physical healing,"⁶ In this neutral state free of societal norms, the individual frees his or her emotional capacity for empathy with the other. This curiosity invites complex stories, refuses dualistic categories of truth, and inquires about what holds "contradictory social energies" together.⁷ There needs to be an understanding that the situation is larger than what initially meets the eye, and that the only way the issue can be resolved is if all parties "suspend judgment...

and live with a high degree of ambiguity."⁸ The ambiguity serves as a tool to turn uncertainty and doubt to a positive pessimistic reality check, and not as a memory lapse of the issues that led to the ambiguous state.

Since most experiences are relative to the person and the position they are in at the time, it is important not to pass personal judgment on another based on one person's belief system. Instead, one must empathize with and understand another's belief system in order to be equipped with the tools necessary to find a peaceful system for compromise. This is an important issue with regard to the African refugees I worked with in Australia. I ran a series of workshops with a teenage group of African rappers. In one of the workshops, questions arose in regards to making mainstream music versus personal music. The workshop participants generally agreed that they preferred to make mainstream music for financial reasons. This was a huge blow to my workshop aims. I went to Australia to teach the youth how positive hip-hop lyrics could be as entertaining as mainstream rap without filling, surrounding and exemplifying their community with negativity. I did, however, understand where they were coming from. These kids witnessed and survived ordeals that jeopardized their lives in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Sudan and other African countries. To them their salvation lies in the money that could be generated by the "gangsta" rap mainstream scene; with the money earned from the music they would be able to provide a happy life for themselves and their families, something unimaginable to them back in Africa. The problem is they are not necessarily being honest in the lyrics that they create. This is a problem because hip-hop culture is spread all across the world. If a false, violent imagery is distributed to the media, then the viewers believe it as true and make judgments based on the messages in the music. By opening up room within oneself in order to hear a story objectively, empathy is obtainable – even in cases when the story is unknowingly false. I suggested to them that they use the stories

about their lives before they arrived in Australia for their music, and a few seemed to respond well to that method of working. I wanted them to feel that their narrative was neither good nor bad, but valid enough to be shared and heard. Once their usual belief of what makes good music is challenged, the music can be an agent to evoke an audience's paradoxical curiosity as well.

Playback also uses notions of paradoxical curiosity in performance. As a Playback actor you cannot let your bias influence the teller's truth mentioned in their stories, as it will hinder the ability to empathize in the audience, and production members. I encountered this problem in a class titled "Playback Experience." I was asked to play the role of a father who had passed away as a result of a heart attack. The teller's story ended with the new widow finding a gift that the husband intended to give her in the husband's clothing six months later. In my portrayal of the father, I grabbed my heart, screamed, and lay on the boxes placed in the back of the acting space. I was covered with a black cloth by another actor and remained that way for the rest of the enactment of the story. While under the black cloth my thoughts wandered to my grandfather who died in a similar way. From that point on I was immobilized by images of my grandfather and mourning. I was no longer present in the story with the other Playback actors, which was immediately apparent to me

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once I finally pulled the cloth from my head and saw the faces of the teller and audience. The acting team was accurately criticized for portraying the story too morbidly; the essence of the story was the mother's and father's connection in spite of his death, not his death itself. Since my acting didn't allow the teller to see the true situation they were in, the cathartic release that tends to happen never did. We repeated the story, with slight changes, until the teller was happy with her story told and witnessed. In this situation, my paradoxical curiosity required me to "numb" my personal perspective in order to do justice to the teller's story. I portrayed what my grandfather's heart attack meant to me instead of what the father's heart attack meant to the teller. By including my personal emotional baggage to the teller's story I unfairly tainted the way in which the teller perceived his or her own story; I saw the heart attack as entirely awful and the essence of the teller's story, while the teller found beauty in the events that followed the heart attack. Once we re-did the story appropriately, everyone in the room better empathized with the teller, which is the goal. As an actor I needed my paradoxical curiosity to steer me away from what I consider the accurate emotional response for the ordeal that happened. It is the job of the performers and production staff to create the environment that is accepting to all individual perspectives of every story; if this does not happen and the perspectives allowed in the physical space are limited, then the transcendence will also be limited, which is detrimental to peaceful resolution planning.

Provide Space for the Creative Act

"The Moral Imagination," according to Lederach, "finds its clearest expression in the appearance of the creative act."⁹ The creative act sparks something new that is transcendent while deriving from something grounded in reality. Most often people are not able to transcend reality, which is why providing

space for the creative act is so important. The space should create the belief that "the creative act and response are permanently within reach and, most importantly are always accessible, even in settings where violence dominates."¹⁰ The creative act empowers people to challenge their beliefs about what is real and tangible against their beliefs about what seems impossible. The space suggests that a resolution to the issues at hand is outside the scope of the troubled reality that created the issue, and it gives the individual a safe space to ponder his or her transcendent future reality. The reality pondered is personal as well as the reality of society. "People who display a deep quality of moral imagination in... settings of violence demonstrate a capacity to live in a personal and social space that gives birth to the unexpected."¹¹ The audience of a performance has a group reaction particular to the audience of that production and personal reactions particular to the individual witnessing it. As a result, each night has an unexpected outcome.

A large portion of the success of Playback comes from its theatrical spectacle. The spectacle begins with the ritualistic set-up of the minimal Playback set. The placement of chairs, musical instruments, and colored cloths all play a part in defining the space as safe for the stories and holding the audience to the safe space standard. The cathartic feeling of seeing yourself in a situation outside of the situation is established by the creative act of Playback. Yet the teller will not tell his or her story if the physical space does not allow a search for emotional and educational space. At the end of my second Playback class, "The Knowing Listener," I made a brief statement that demonstrated this phenomenon of the unheard stories because of a lack of comfort. I was asked to put this idea into the song that follows. It is a critique of the tight connections made at the School of Playback and questions whether it is a good or bad thing.

Love Bubble

Chorus:

This is a love bubble

Meaning double the trouble

And I'm skeptic 'cause my life is so hectic

It could feel good to leave the hood

And get the love I should have got...

Or maybe not // What you mean?

This is a love bubble

Meaning double the trouble

And I'm skeptic 'cause my life is so hectic

It should feel good, leaving the mud

And getting the love I never got...

Or maybe not // What you mean?

Verse 1:

I mean the school of playback to me is like a dream

An average of 4 actors acting out a scene

Instruments with a musician to make them sing

A conductor connecting and protecting all things

International peers here for similar things

How for five weeks my lips to cheeks beamed

Although I've never been part of a playback team

team

But my past life and this life is kind of hard to bridge

This bubble of love I'm in is such a switch

And so rich. How can these opportunities mix?

This love bubble is such a big privilege

But too much of any privilege is bullshit so,

Were my reality go? Is it far or near?

Here or there? Is it close or on another coast?

Is what I feel real? Or the fact that

Lovingness is one way playback heals and gives back?

Is it safe to say that we come from all across the map

To Vassar to study at a place where the bubble stays safe and intact?

Isn't that a trap if in fact our study bubble is sealed?

I'm head over heels with these questions, and no answers

Despite really good lessons, which I consider a blessing.

I'll stop stressing and share what I know

When it comes to Playback, there's much I don't know

Chorus

Verse 2:

*I got a pair over here. Yeah, I got a pair
And I'ma share this pair real simple
Playback is so gentle / hip-hop hooray
Playback is too gentle / take it away
Criticism and praise at the way
Some stories never find their way
While others shock and amaze
Once they're put on display
In the essential way
Cleverly capturing everything the tellers say
But the love bubble can't be all wrong
Only when we overplay the good and don't
show the wrong
As if participants are weak and not strong
And the story shown is too sweet. But who are we
To make the judgment call to paint over the wall
When the graffiti we see will make you pause
And drop your jaw and not in awe.
A better plan is to work harder beforehand
And start to expand, and understand
Who's reaching out for our helping hand,
And who doesn't give a damn. And why is it
during that heightened theatrical state, that
we're known to make
They too don't feel the foreground of something
great?
They may feel the fear of telling too much
But in our workshop setting we don't feel like
such, cause*

Chorus

Verse 3:

*The bubble builds up trust within us
Trust brings honesty between you and me
Working through honesty honestly breaks the
bubble
Being less bubbly means less connection
troubles
And once we're all aware of our love and our
pain
It's clear we're all connected but none of us are
the same
In this love bubble.
But I'm going back to my block when the
classes stop
To wait and watch for the bubble to POP!*

The love bubble theory developed during the last day of the "Knowing Listener." I left class with a few other students on my lunch break and went to a little eatery called Baby Cakes, slightly off campus. I had to pee really badly, yet Baby Cakes had no public restroom. I didn't want to leave the company of my classmates; I was enjoying the time we were spending together and knew from the experience of my previous class our time together wouldn't last. After we ate I felt like my bladder would explode. I went to neighboring stores and restaurants and ran into the same problem: "no public bathrooms." Panicked, I chose the abandoned alley method. I walked deeper and deeper down this alley until I met a wall... a wall on which the words "Die Nigger" were spray-painted. I decided this was the perfect place to pee. Seeing the wall snapped me out of the "love bubble" that I had been in since I started my Playback classes. It reminded me that everyone in the world didn't have the same agenda of coexistence. It is really fortunate for a love bubble to develop in the workshops, yet if the bubble is too lovey-dovey then there is no space left for the most tragic and complex stories. I remember a number of stories that I wished to tell but did not feel the essence of the story could be dealt with in an accurate way, not out of others' spite but out of their need to maintain the bubble of love; I didn't want my story to be the one to end the love. On the flipside, there were many stories that I did tell because of the loving way they would be interpreted and enacted by the members of the love bubble. There is an in-between point that is the creative space Lederach would strive for.

At Contact Inc. the workshops require the participants to do activities expressing themselves in artistic ways that they normally would not. Creating a space where the participants feel safe to share and explore themselves though engaging in the creative act is just as important. Contact Inc. understood the importance when it developed the Third Place Policy. Since the policy defines the space as a safe environment where cultures can meaningfully meet, the safe space structure is

held together strongly in the workshops. This allows the participants to be more diverse, which leads to more transcendent visions. Having to collaborate on a project with members of another culture will open the imagination to the benefits of foreign concepts with the use of paradoxical curiosity. But sometimes finding the space comes with its difficulties.

Just outside of Brisbane City one can find Milpera State High School. This school is for migrant, refugee and immigrant students between the ages of 12 and 18 who wish to have enough proficiency in the English language to become successful in other high schools and in the community in which they live. I left Contact Inc. at the beginning of their collaboration with Milpera State students on a Third Place hip-hop theater project called *The Hope Tour*. Half of the participants of the project were from Milpera State and the other half were students coming from various schools or from their post-school lives.

One of the concerns mentioned when taking the Milpera children out of school to rehearse hip-hop theater dealt with what their culture considers academic space. In many cultures the performing arts are not valued as a means of education in the same way that a math or science class is. I have no knowledge of any the Milpera students unable to participate in the project, but I also didn't stick around for the duration of the process. I wish to emphasize the amount of risk it takes to go against what is normally academically acceptable in a particular community. The decision has to be made though use of paradoxical curiosity in a headspace that transcends what is acceptable and what is not.

"I walked deeper and deeper down this alley until I met a wall . . . a wall on which the words 'Die Nigger' were spray-painted. I decided this was the perfect place to pee."

The Willingness to Risk

Lederach's final discipline deals with the ability to risk – "to step into the unknown without any guarantee of success or even safety."¹² Out of this ability comes a method for crafting a better life. "The journey toward change...requires more than a strategy of good ideas or techniques. Fundamentally it requires a willingness to risk and great vulnerability."¹³ The vulnerability is the key that opens the door of reconciliation.

Performing is a risk in itself. To stand in front of an audience and be judged is a risk actors and musicians take all the time. Playback performances and risk go hand in hand; improvisation is a huge risk. The storyteller is putting his story at risk in plain view of the

audience. The risk is easier for the teller to take once the safe space is established, yet it is still a substantial risk. The audience takes a risk by hearing, seeing, and empathizing with a story that they may or may not be ready to witness. The actors take a risk every time they embody the stories. An actor can be personally

or emotionally tied up into a scene, which raises the question "Is it good for them to act in the story?" (Fox). It also is not good for a particular actor to continuously play the same archetype. The actor is burdened and the audience is caught in an expected way of

perceiving things. A successful production is one in which the nature of the risks taken in the production keeps the audience members guessing about their normal way of perceiving. This shift in perception can also be influenced by the aesthetics of the performing arts. Improvisation as a form is usually a comedic source of entertainment. The in-depth, serious nature of Playback improvisation already shifts people's ordinary perception of what the improvisational form should consist of. The new perception in the safe space should shock the audience into a state of vulnerability useful for the moral imagination. Demonstrating the story in a way that simultaneously nurtures the vulnerabilities of the teller, audience, and actors is a difficult balance to achieve and takes careful calibration.

In Australia, the workshops leading up to the creation of the production are a risk. The activities are full of self-exploration and vocalization to the group of the realizations made in those explorations. It is a risk for these teenagers to express their self-learning to one another at a point when popularity is in high demand with a supply that is never sufficient. In many of the workshops I ran with the local rap groups, breaking down the "gangsta" image to get to the real person was risky work; no one wanted to appear un-cool in the eyes of their peers. A few breakthroughs did happen, which most often had a domino effect on the other participants of the workshop. It's a risk to break the threshold and show your true self. For the last workshop I did I organized a barbecue and invited all the members of three rap groups for an evening of coming together. One of the groups didn't show up. As a result of them not taking the risk in being present, the peaceful connection, which could have potentially led to a better-linked hip-hop community among the Brisbane youth, never happened.

Conclusion

So what does all this mean? It means that performance can be used as a tool to educate and build communities, but the process has to include the centrality of relationships, the practice of paradoxical curiosity, space for the creative act and the willingness to risk. An easy mistake is to believe that the performances are the hardest part of the work. In my opinion, the hardest part of the work is connecting the content of the values learned in the rehearsals to the actual performance. The workshops and rehearsals have to take place in such a way that the themes the performance wishes to explore are always readily available in the process. This means that much of the hard work resides in the planning of the rehearsal needs before they begin. By doing this detailed work beforehand, the perception the audience is being directed toward is shown through their witnessing it happen, as opposed to being instructed as to what they should be perceiving in a lecturing style. The process of production creates social change among the participants, and the audience is a witness to the final outcome of that social change, giving audience members a new transcendent idea of how social change can happen and what positive results can come from it. As a result, the participants will receive the tools necessary to continue their activism and positive relationships with the other when confronted by conflict, or community development issues in the future.

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