**Pantomime Class Notes**

**Pantomime:** *No definition will please everyone but that said, pantomime is the art of using movement and facial expressions rather than primarily the spoken word to communicate. The word pantomime has been used to refer to both an individual as well as an actual production or performance. An individual can also be called a mime but the contention of some that pantomime can only refer to a production is contrary to both the historical and modern popular usage of the word.*

**History:**

The Greek “pantomimus” which literally translates to “imitating all” was a highly regarded form of solo dancing often accompanied by music which encompassed both comedy and tragedy. It’s popularity was also widespread amongst the Romans until the Christian church forbade it’s public display. Some contended that this Roman dance form managed to survive through the middle-ages but this is often disputed due to a lack of evidence. Different forms of theater have tended to justify their legitimacy by claiming to be based on such older traditions which might suggest a motive to such questionable claims.

The Italian renaissance improvisation theater known as Commedia dell’arte ushered in a new form of pantomime during the 16. Hundreds which spread throughout Europe, England and the world but particularly established itself in Paris. Specific characters including Pagliaccio or Pedrolino (known as Pierrot in English) or Arlecchino (Harlequin) were the set stars of these productions.

The term pantomime is closely associated with the general ability to communicate beyond the barriers of language or class. With this in mind, many performing troups travelling from England performed throughout Europe from around the year 1600 without needing to learn the local languages. Many elements from the Commedia dell’arte were to be seen in their repertoire.

Well Known Pantomimers:

**Charlie Chaplin-** Sir Charles Spencer "Charlie" Chaplin, KBE (16 April 1889 – 25 December 1977) was an English comic actor, film director and composer best known for his work during the silent film era.He became the most famous film star in the world before the end of World War I. Chaplin used mime, slapstick and other visual comedy routines, and continued well into the era of the talkies, though his films decreased in frequency from the end of the 1920s.

**Marcel Marceau** was a French actor and mime artist most famous for his stage persona as "Bip the Clown". He referred to mime as the "art of silence", and he performed professionally worldwide for over 60 years.

**3 Things Pantomime Encourages in Actors:**

* Meaningful movements
* Significant gestures
* Animated facial expressions

**3 Elements that Portray Character**

* Gestures
* Facial expression
* Movement

\*\*\*\* All movement starts with the **CHEST**

\*\*\*\* Fingertips are where all arm motions should end.

**Relaxation:**

* Relaxation exercises are not only useful but he also improves mental and physical well-being.
* Relaxation is a foundation of acting; using relaxation techniques in voice and diction should be used in training to be an actor.

**Terms relating to movement:**

**Resistance**- term for the firmness or its solidity of an object in opposition to outside force

**Kinesthesis**- the neuromuscular awareness the body feels in a particular physical position

**Isolation-** The separation of parts of the body for individual development and expression

**Cross -** moving from one place on stage to another
**Gesture-** movement of any part of your body to help express an idea or an emotion

**Preparatory Action**- A movement opposite to the action that the mime wants the audience to follow
**Rotation**- The turning or pivoting of a part of the body such as the head or a chest