

the Association of Theatre Movement Educators, Movement Theatre International, SDC (Stage Directors and Choreographers), and the Society of American Fight Directors.

MOVEMENT SPECIALIST

The movement specialist is an artist who is responsible for training and coaching students and/or professional performers in the use of the physical body for theatre performance. The movement specialist's job is to foster artistic growth, personal freedom, and safe and respectful exploration of the physical components of communication, and effective, efficient motion. Within his or her own unique expertise, specialists practice creativity and freedom of expression; empower students/clients, themselves and the organization; promote research into related fields. To achieve these objectives movement specialists will employ reasonable and accepted practices such as: visual demonstration and modeling, physical contact, written text, observation, and discussions that foster understanding.

The movement specialist's work with students/performers in production includes, but is not limited to: (1) Collaborating with the director and production staff to design a unique physical life for a production and a work process for the movement coach and or choreographer; (2) Creating a process for the performing artist in which they create, enter and inhabit the internal and external elements of a performance space; (3) Assisting in the ability of a physical instrument to maintain freedom from tension, vivid expression, a released and aligned vertical silhouette, and remain responsive to the world of the script while demonstrating specific physical character dynamics implementing the imagination; (4) Coaching the physical and experiential crafting of a specific character life involving physical, vocal, and experiential choices that are related to the character, not the performer, including: rhythm, tempo, styles, strength and articulate character definition, and choreography; and (5) Developing a warm up process specifically designed to address the demands of the rehearsal period and the production.

The movement specialist may also be engaged in: (1) Consultations with professional artists, teachers, and other professionals from all walks of life in the public sector; (2) Direction and/or creation of dramatic works, performance pieces of original work; (3) Teaching of other approaches to performance including: acting, musical theatre, singing or performing in film, television or broadcast media, vocal approaches to character and style, textual analysis and interpretation; and (4) Research and scholarship including, but not limited to, historical investigations, pedagogical advances, and performance reviews. Though accomplished movement specialists vary greatly in their depth of knowledge and ability in any one area, the range of proficiency typically required of the movement specialist includes:

A. Production Expertise

1. Fundamental knowledge of physical training pedagogies as demonstrated through study with various recognized physical training practitioners and institutions devoted to the study of physical pedagogies. Movement specialists will often have received training in multiple approaches to the discipline. A

few examples of these training methods are: dance, tai chi, yoga, period styles, combat, physical comedy, acrobatics, mime, mask, clown, or any one of many body use or movement techniques or approaches: Lecoq, Decroux, Bartenieff, Laban, Michael Chekhov, Alexander, Feldenkrais, Meyerhold, Suzuki, Pilates, Williamson, Bioenergetics, *Commedia dell'Arte*, Improvisation, Martial Arts, Viewpoints, and RasaBoxes. Theatre programs embrace somatic training in some form. They embrace training styles using extensions of the body in the form of anything from masks to weapons in combat to the red nose of the clown.

2. The movement specialist employs practices that assist with appropriate self-use and mechanical issues concerning the body (the instrument). These issues range from general care to corrective work. The movement specialist/teacher works with the development of the intuitive and kinesthetic understanding of the performer. A movement specialist will devise a process for creating an articulate body that demonstrates technical proficiency, full physical commitment and ease along with the integration of physical skills. This may include but is not limited to:
 - Examination of the muscles and the skeletal aspects of the body to foster optimum alignment, which is the ability to maintain a vertical silhouette within the body that demonstrates ease and radiates an engagement with the self and with the environment.
 - Tension release to facilitate ease of motion and the technical proficiency of the body.
 - Understanding of the process of respiration that supports all physical processes.
 - Teaching of movement skills and/or dance pedagogy to increase strength, flexibility, control, articulate self-use, and as elements of improvisation.
 - Addressing physical mannerisms as they affect the student/client.
 - Clarity and specificity in the physical shaping of movement dynamics.
 - Physical definition of character – training the body to be emotionally and physically connected to the specifics of the text.
 - Styles training – the ability to inhabit a physical and experiential reality other than one's own, including styles that may range from *Commedia dell'Arte* and Restoration manners to twenty first century dance.

3. A movement specialist will assist the student/performer in the exploration of the body as an expressive tool of the creative imagination. This may include but is not limited to:
 - Teaching physical articulation and the use of the body as an instrument of perception and expression facilitating the transformation of the body.

- Developing the ability to externalize and communicate the character's goals/objectives and inner state through movement, with or without text.
- Increasing the powers of concentration, observation, and sensitivity to others; and applying these skills to working collaboratively in groups.
- Assisting in the achievement of attaining the skill, confidence and freedom of expression required to play diverse characters and to convincingly convey differences of age, physical condition, class position, historical period, and emotional attitude.

B. Literature and History

1. Knowledge of dramatic literature, including historic genres.
2. Excellence in analysis of scripts to delineate the historical, literary, and stylistic considerations in preparation for designing stage movement and/or coaching of productions.
3. Knowledge of the history of theatrical production, including the history of acting, performance styles, and physical theatre techniques.
4. Knowledge of economic and social history as a context for theatrical production and style.

C. Administration

1. Excellence in oral and written communication skills.
2. Ability to effectively work and collaborate with various artists and technicians in a variety of professional and academic settings.
3. Understanding of rehearsal process, management and scheduling.
4. An understanding of professional ethics and practice associated with theatre and performance.

Overall excellence from the movement specialist requires the ability to integrate knowledge consistently in the areas noted above. Movement specialists must work with an understanding of the conceptual requirements of any given production, collaborating with directors, voice specialists, designers and performers in a shared vision of the creative work. Such expertise is demonstrated by participation in realized production, both on and off campus.

Additional information about the expertise and skills expected of the movement specialist may be available through the ATHE Acting Focus Group, the Association of Theatre Movement Educators, Movement Theatre International, and SDC (Stage Directors and Choreographers).
