

# LABAN EFFORTS

Rudolf Laban was a dance and theatre practitioner who developed a system of 'effort actions' to explain qualities of movement. We referenced three categories in the workshop:

- 1) 'fast or slow'
- 2) 'heavy or light'
- 3) 'direct or indirect'

You can use a combination of these to explore different movement qualities, before looking at what characters these can unlock.

- Ask your students to find their own space in the room. They should focus only on themselves and what they are doing and not worry about anyone else.
- Ask your students to hold up one hand and move it in a way that is light, slow and indirect.
- Let that slowly inform the movement of the whole body so that eventually the group is moving around the space in a light, slow and indirect way. What's the vocal quality for this? Make the sound all together.
- Pause some of the group so they can watch other people moving in this way – what characters are being created?
- Ask all the students to move around again, but this time to scale their movements down so they are still moving in a light, slow and indirect way but their movements are more natural. It might be helpful for them to think of the qualities as a secret the characters are keeping to themselves.
- Pause some of the group again, and ask who these characters are?

You can then repeat this exercise and experiment with different combinations. For example, ask the students to move in a way that is slow, heavy, direct or fast, heavy, indirect, all the while thinking about the different characters that are being created.

These defining characteristics exist in combination as these eight 'efforts':

<b>PUNCH</b>	Direct	Fast	Heavy
<b>SLASH</b>	Indirect	Fast	Heavy
<b>DAB</b>	Direct	Fast	Light
<b>FLICK</b>	Indirect	Fast	Light
<b>PRESS</b>	Direct	Slow	Heavy

<b>WRING</b>	Indirect	Slow	Heavy
<b>GLIDE</b>	Direct	Slow	Light
<b>FLOAT</b>	Indirect	Slow	Light

- We suggest that you ask your students to move in the combination of qualities and then introduce the name for that action. This will give you a shorthand for evoking physicality in later rehearsals.
- Once the students have experienced the movement you can add language and note how different qualities can affect their voice. Start by saying a line in conjunction with the movement/effort action (e.g. ask them to punch an imaginary punch bag or wring a wet towel), and then try to take away the movement and just imbue the voice with this quality.
- Reflect with the students on the different characters created, and how that character's intentions or feelings change depending on how you are delivering the line.

#### Examples:

Lady Macbeth may speak/move with a 'Wring' quality when she is losing her mind.

A fairy may 'Float'.

A murderer may 'Punch' or 'Slash'.

This can be a useful exercise to bring students out of their own heads and start to act on instinct as it is grounded in such simple physical instructions. You may want to use this to help your actors unlock the physicality of their own character, or even use it as a casting tool with the whole group.