

Conference Time

A Book of Happenings

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Current Performance

29th October 2007
Monday Evening at 6:45 pm

Name
Business Man Performance 1

Setting
Chelsea College of Art and Design Parade ground

Events

The evening was crisp and cold. It was very dark. I arrived at the meeting point at the same time as James and we shook hands and walked, He was more handsome and clean cut than he looked in his picture. We walked, chatting to the edge of the parade ground. James put down a carrier bag and a rucksack, and set of across the parade ground. (I would have rather he took of his jacket to, but it seemed too cold to ask).

He read the Financial Times for about ten minutes whilst standing over a spotlight. He then made a phone call and crossed the parade ground to stand underneath a street lamp. A 'real' businessman who was limping crossed his path. It seemed ridiculous, I think it annoyed James as I was looking at them both, but I was supposed to be concentrating on him. When he settled by the lamppost a man in a Landover near by left his engine running for 20 minutes and didn't notice the businessman standing by his exhaust pipe. When the Landover finally left, it looked like a 1950's Detective film. After forty minutes I stopped him. It was getting very cold standing still. He seemed surprised that it was over so quickly. I thanked him and gave him his bags. It was suddenly less tense. A tension had been building up to the moment I had to tell him to stop.

He left the way he came and I imagined how strange it would be if I bumped into him on the way home, or on a tube the next week. So far I haven't.

13th October 2007
Tuesday afternoon at 4:15 pm

Name
Business Man Performance 2

Setting
Chelsea College of Art and Design Parade ground

Events

As I arrived to meet Gary he was there already. It was going to get dark in about an hour, but we just had time before it did. He was very jolly and didn't have any bags with him, which made life easier.

We stood at the edge of the parade ground and I explained to him what he was to do. He set off and I charged inside too watch from inside windows.

Immediately the room I wanted to watch from was locked and so I had to peer out of a window that was too high. Eventually I located him. He was sitting on a low wall reading a paper. He was sitting a bit like a fat baby, which riled me a bit. I wanted him to look smarter. Nobody noticed though, it was fantastic.

People milled around him -smoking, chatting, carrying things back and forth. I wonder if anyone at all noticed him. I went to a new window and discovered new rooms in the college at the same time. I was running and sprained my ankle. I lost him for a moment as he was next to the building I was watching from. I quite liked that I couldn't see him, but knew he was there. I walked outside and watched him from near a fire exit. I got quite cold. He was wandering around now; I noticed quite how many other businessmen there were crossing the parade ground at this time.

I let him carry on for ten minutes past the time I had stated to stop and then decided to stop him. He was alarmed that it was over so soon. We had a nice chat on the wall and he left looking a little confused.

19th November 2007
Monday Morning at 10am

Name
Conference Time

Setting
Chelsea College of Art and Design Parade Ground

Events

I arranged to meet nine people at 10am. Gary from the last performance was the only one I had previously met. It was pouring with rain and my feet were soaked. A tall pretty lady called Emma arrived first and on time and we chatted under a shelter, looking out for the others. She looked perfectly smart.

Next a man called Anthony. He was cynical about the weather and had a suede tan jacket on over his suit, which I feared he would not take off. The next to arrive was Alain, he was terribly shy and muttered everything, but looked quite the part. By 10:15 I was ready to leave when Lizzie arrived. She looked far too young and had two multi coloured scarves on. However her suit was good. Although five people had not turned up I decided to walk the ones I had to the parade ground and start anyway. I really wanted Lizzie to take of the scarves. I set them off and said they could stand underneath some arches to keep out of the rain.

I left them to it and went inside to watch. They occupied one arch each, made calls and read the paper. I could tell that Alain was pretending to be on the phone. Emma kept sighing and striding off onto the parade ground with her umbrella. At one point she left all together for about 5 minutes and I worried she had really got fed up, but she returned.

When the sun came out Anthony looked picturesque despite the jacket as he was leaning to the side with the F.T under one arm. I noticed Alain and Emma chatting and shaking hands. I wonder how the others felt about it.

Lizzie stayed in the same place and only wandered about at the last minute, with a large file she was reading.

When I went outside to meet them, I realised up-close how cold they all were, shoulders hunched and noses red. I hurried them quickly into a café near by for coffee and pastries. They asked how it looked and told me about how they felt about the whole thing.

I gave them each a pre addressed and stamped envelope, with a single sheet of lined paper in. They were to write down what they think happened and return it to me.

When I said goodbye to them I felt like I couldn't thank them enough, but it was a relief when I walked away and they were no longer my responsibility.

What follows are the responses I received over the following week in the order I received them.

Emma Parish

Monday 19th November

BUSINESS PEOPLE ART PERFORMANCE

Emma- Impressions of the performance

Am warming up again now, sitting on the train, going back home to South Norwood. I'm still- Obviously! - Wearing my business suit and I find that it makes me act differently. I'm taking up more space on the train than I normally would. I got my business case and umbrella spread out and I don't care! This suit makes me walk differently (taller more purposefully) and I've noticed people getting out of my way more. It heightens my status. It is a costume of a kind. The 'performance' today made me realise that business people are playing roles, putting on costumes- like actors do, like everybody does in life.

I enjoyed the experience very much. I wasn't particularly aware of being watched or filmed. The suit and bag gave me an easy way of behaving in a certain way. I found I disliked having to wait outside in the rain as a higher status business woman- I began the performance feeling quite cross about the situation of waiting (as Emma I'd accept waiting) A story grew between the four of us, I think- we were all waiting for a conference to start. We didn't rush talking to each other, wanting to make it as 'real' as possible. Generally people (in London!) don't just chat to each other. I only had a conversation with Alan (work mainly, then he told me about his sick son and I felt uncomfortable because I felt like he'd crossed a line – a business man telling me this personal information. As Emma I would have found it natural to listen and sympathise, but dressed for and expecting business, I didn't know how to react. I avoided him slightly after that)

Looking forward to seeing the filming + still photos

Please send me a copy to my email address:

Emmaparish@yahoo.com

Thanks.

Emma

P.S: Please send £9 for my travel card (1-4 peak travel card- I live in South Norwood) – A cheque to Emma Watson (my legal name) would be ideal.

Thanks Grace! Good luck with the rest of your course. Let me know if I can help with any other performance

Alain English

DEAR GRACE

I ENJOYED WORKING ON THE PROJECT WITH YOU THIS MORNING. IT WAS A VERY INTERESTING CHALLENGE TO BOTH CREATE AND SUSTAIN A REALISTIC CHARACTER IN THE SITUATION AND TIMEFRAME THAT WAS GIVEN. FOR THE MOST PART, I THOUGHT I SUCCEEDED. THERE WERE TIMES MY OWN PERSONALITY SLIPPED OUT AND AFFECTED THE PERFORMANCE. SUCH MOMENTS, HOWEVER, WERE OCCASIONAL AND WHEN THEY OCCURRED, BRIEF.

THE CHARACTER I CREATED WAS AN AMERICAN FROM WASHINGTON, BASED IN READING BUT SENT TO THE CONFERENCE, RENDEVOUSING WITH A RICH ASSOCIATE FLYING IN BY HELICOPTER. I THREW IN SEVERAL LINES OF THOUGHT OVER THE PERFORMANCE, INCLUDING FAMILY TROUBLES, OFFICE WORK, PEAKING WITH THE COLLEGE ARRIVING LATE AS WELL AS MATERIAL GLEANED FROM THE NEWSPAPER I WAS READING. I AM UNCERTAIN AS TO THE TOTAL LOOK AND PLAUSIBILITY OF EVERYTHING I ENACTED, BUT I PULLED IT OFF IN THE BEST WAY I COULD MANAGE. INTERACTION WITH THE OTHERS WAS PRETTY MINIMAL, ALTHOUGH I DID GET SOME GOOD RAPPORT WITH EMMA. THE LOCATION AND WEATHER WERE NOT A PROBLEM, ALTHOUGH I HAD TO SHIFT MY POSITION WHEN SOMEONE TAPPED AT THE WINDOW!

WHATEVER HAPPENED, I HOPE YOU ARE SATISFIED WITH THE PERFORMANCE I GAVE, AND I WOULD ENJOY THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH YOU AGAIN. GOOD LUCK WITH THIS AND ALL PROJECTS IN THE FUTURE,

REGARDS,

ALAIN ENGLISH

Lizzie Laycock

'Business People-Art Performance'

Chelsea College of Art & Design

I thought this was a very interesting piece! I like the idea that you takenormal people with normal occupations, business, but you plonk them in an unlikely environment and yet they carry on as normal. It's like normal life, but its been slightly manipulated. At least that's how I interpreted it!

On the acting side it was a great challenge. You wouldn't automatically think it'd be hard, being that there's no lines to learn and no proper audience, but the fact that you don't know when students will be looking out the window or where and when the camera is filming means you have to stay in character all the time, like you're in your own little world, and you can't afford to slip back to your normal self and switch off.

It was a very original concept and I'd be very interested in doing some more in the future.

*Sorry about the essay! Once I start writing I can't stop! Please do get in touch if you need anymore help- it was great fun and good practise for an actress!

Lizzie Laycock

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Anthony James Berowne
Rainy Days AND Mondays

IT'S RAINING ON MY PARADE

GROUND(S) FOR DIVORCE-NO-STAY-STAY ITS ONLY
HALF A DAY

HOW CAN IT BE SO COLD WHY DOES STANDING MAKE
YOU FEEL OLD

IF,I SIT AND LEAN ON WALL.....NO!NO!NO!-
IS THAT WHY BUSINESS MEN ARE TALL?

THEY GET PAID- I DO THIS FOR LOVE
NOW WHO'S THE STUPID ONE.....

THEY MIGHT HAVE THEIR IVORY TOWERS
BUT I HAVE A PISS-WET PARADE GROUND

ALL THIS FOR A COFFEE AND A BUN
I SAID ALL THIS FOR A COFFEE AND A BUN

IT MUST BE LOVE, LOVE, LOVE OF ACTING
DANIEL CRAIG FILMED NEXT DOOR IN THE TATE
BRITIAN

ANTHONY JAMES BEROWNE JUST GOT FILMED

Anthony James Berowne

26th of February 2008 5pm- 7pm

Name

Stage two, interim show

‘The Chelsea Open’

Businessman performance

Setting

Outside Chelsea College of Art and Design. Business man will be standing next to a lamppost.

Events

The businessman will be able to be viewed from this point for the duration on the private view of the show.

By Grace Schofield