

## Turton Drama: Meaning Through Movement

**WHO:** Frantic Assembly was founded in 1994 by Scott Graham, Steven Hogget and Viki Middleton. Currently Scott is the only founder left in the company as Viki and Steven have pursued different careers within the industry. Frantic Assembly is one of the UK's leading **contemporary** theatre companies, producing **thrilling, energetic** and **uncompromising** theatre, constantly attracting new audiences. In **collaboration** with a wide variety of artists, Frantic Assembly continues to create new work that places **equal emphasis** on movement, design, music and text. Frantic Assembly is interested in the power of **collaboration** and the endless possibilities of theatre. They have a strong desire to tell stories, making them **relevant** and **engaging** for their audiences. They are driven to tell stories in voices we won't often hear, and find talent in places we don't often look.

**WHAT:** As well as creating their own shows, they have provided movement direction for others such as; *'The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-time'* and channel 4 series *'Humans'*. They have also set up a company called Ignition, which is a free, national training programme for young men 16-20. It aims to seek out talent in unexpected places and is committed to helping young men from across the UK with different backgrounds, skills and stories come together to find their individual and collective strength. In March 2019 Frantic launched Ignition for women.

**THE COMPANY:** Frantic Assembly are a company who use movement as an integral part of their practice. They can be seen as sitting under the wide and varied umbrella of 'physical theatre', though it is certainly not a term they themselves use to define their work. The company feel that the label 'physical theatre' brings with it a set of expectations, they were not interested in definitions, as, to them, they felt like limitations. Their unorthodox route into theatre had presented them with a world of possible styles and approaches, and to them, this was their strength. Frantic are known for working from a starting place of text and through a collaborative devising process, develop the ways in which they will present a text. The artistic director of the company does not come into the rehearsal process with a clear vision of the production, rather a few images, a list of song titles, various physical images, quotations and text extracts. From this the company works together to create moments within the production. They start small and gradually layer and develop their work. They refer to this as the **building blocks**.

### **THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME**

'Curious' is a novel written by Mark Haddon. In 2014 playwright Simon Stephens approached Mark and told him he wished to adapt his novel for the stage. He enlisted the help of Director Marianne Elliot and Frantic Assembly to help bring the world of Christopher Boone to life. The play begins with Christopher Boone discovering that his neighbour's dog Wellington has been killed with a garden fork. Christopher makes it his mission to discover who killed Wellington and along the way uncovers hidden truths about his own life.



Scan the QR code to watch how Frantic Assembly create their movement sequences.

Check your understanding:

-With a partner test your spelling and definitions of key words

### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

**Contemporary**– Something that is contemporary is said to be modern or happening in the present.

**Uncompromising**– When Frantic say they are uncompromising it means they are unwilling to change for the sake of others. They are proud of their work and of their unique style.

**Collaboration**– Working with others to produce something.

**Relevant**– Appropriate to what is being done.

**Engaging**– Making an audience interested in a performance

**Ensemble**– A group of actors who perform together. When working as an ensemble you must have **focus, discipline, trust, resilience** and you must be able to **listen**.

**Ignition**– A performance group designed to find talent in young people aged 16-20

**Building Blocks**– The act of breaking down the devising process into small and simple tasks. The building blocks can be built upon and come together to create a performance.

**Push Hands**– An activity designed to build trust between partners and develop an awareness of movement.

**Hymns Hands**– A sequence of movements using only the hands.

**Round/By/Through**– A sequence built up of a series of movements created by the actors. To help this process the actors can use the words round/by/through to create their sequences.

## Police Scene

**Siobhan:** He squatted down next to me. He said to me:

**Policeman:** Would you like to tell me what's going on here, young man?

**Christopher** *stops groaning*

*There is some time*

**Christopher** *lifts his head from the ground*

*There is some time*

**Christopher** *looks at the policeman.*

*There is some time.*

**Siobhan** I do not tell lies. Mother used to say that this was because I was a good person. But it is not because I am a good person. It is because I can't tell lies.

**Christopher** The dog is dead.

**Policeman** I'd got that far.

**Christopher** I think someone killed the dog.

**Policeman** How old are you?

**Christopher** I'm fifteen years and three months and two days.

**Policeman** And what precisely are you doing in the garden?

**Christopher** I'm talking to you

**Policeman** Why were you in the garden in the first place?

**Christopher** I could see Wellington in the garden, it looked like someone tried to plant him.

**Policeman** Did you try to plant the dog?

**Christopher** No, I did not. I like dogs.

**Policeman** Is this your fork?

**Christopher:** No.

**Policeman:** You seem very upset about this. I'm going to ask you once again.

**Christopher** *starts groaning*

**Policeman:** Terrific

**Christopher** *carries on groaning.*

**Policeman** Young man I'm going to ask you to stop making that noise and to stand up please calmly and quietly.

**Christopher** *carries on groaning.*

**Policeman** Marvellous. Great. Just flipping-

*The Policeman tries to lift him up by his arm. Christopher screams. He hits the Policeman. The Policeman stares at Christopher. For a while the two look at one another, neither entirely sure what to say or quite believing what has just happened.*

**Policeman** I'm arresting you for assaulting a police officer.

## Christopher's routine

I came home from school one day and no one answered the door, so I went and found the secret key that we keep under a flowerpot outside the kitchen window. I let myself into the house and wiped my feet on the mat. I put the keys in the bowl on the table. I took my coat off and hung it by the side of the fridge so it would be ready for school the next day and gave three pellets of rat food to Toby who is my pet rat. I made myself a raspberry milkshake and heated it up in the microwave. Then I went up to my bedroom and turned on my bedroom light and played six games of Tetris and got to level 38, which is my fourth best ever score. An hour later Father came home from work.

## Think about:

How will you use your body to create everyday objects?

How will Christophe interact with the objects?

How will you maintain a steady rhythm and sense of movement when performing?

## Judy's letter to Christopher

451c Chapter Road, London, NW2 5NG. 0208 887 8907

Dear Christopher. I said that I wanted to explain to you why I went away when I had the time to do it properly. Now I have lots of time. So I'm sitting on the sofa here with this letter and the radio on and I'm going to try and explain.

I was not a very good mother Christopher. Maybe if things had been different, maybe if you'd been different, I might have been better at it. But that's just the way things turned out. I'm not like your father. Your father is a much more patient person. He just gets on with things and if things upset him he doesn't let it show. But that's not the way I am.

Do you remember once when we were shopping in town together? And we went into Bantalls and it was really crowded and we had to get a Christmas present for Grandma? And you were frightened because of all the people in the shop. And you crouched down on the floor and put your hands over your ears and you were in the way of everyone so I got cross because I don't like shopping at Christmas either, and I told you to behave and I tried to pick you up and move you. But you shouted and you knocked those mixers off the shelf and there was a big crash. And everyone turned round to see what was going on and there were boxes and bits of string and bits of broken bowl on the floor and everyone was staring and I saw that you had wet yourself and I was so cross and I wanted to take you out of the shop but you wouldn't let me touch you and we just had to wait until you stopped screaming. Your father was really nice about it at first and he made you supper and put you to bed and he said these things happen and it would be OK.

I said I couldn't take it anymore and eventually he got really cross and he told me I was being stupid and said I should pull myself together and I hit him, which was wrong, but I was so upset. We had a lot of arguments like that. And after a while we stopped talking to each other very much because we knew it would always end up in an argument. And I felt really lonely. And that was when I started spending lots of time with Roger. And I know you might not understand any of this, but I wanted to try to explain so that you knew.

We had a lot in common. And then we realised that we were in love with one another - I said that I couldn't leave you and he was sad about that but he understood that you were really important to me.

And you started to shout and I got cross and I threw the food across the room. Which I know I shouldn't have done. You grabbed the chopping board and you threw it and it hit my foot and broke my toes. And afterwards at home your father and I had a huge argument. And I couldn't walk properly for a month, do you remember and your father had to look after you.

And I remember looking at the two of you and seeing you together and thinking how you were really different with him. Much calmer. And it made me so sad because it was like you didn't need me at all. And I think then I realised you and your father were probably better off if I wasn't living in the house.

And Roger asked me if I wanted to come with him. And it broke my heart but eventually I decided it would be better for all of us if I went. And so I said yes. And I meant to say goodbye. But when I rang your father he said I couldn't - He was really angry. He said I couldn't - He said I couldn't talk to you. And I didn't know what to do. He said I was being selfish and that I was never to set foot inside the house again.

And so I haven't. I wonder if you can understand any of this. I know it will be difficult for you. I thought what I was doing was the best for all of us. I hope it is. Christopher I never meant to hurt you. I used to have dreams that everything would get better. Do you remember you used to say that you wanted to be an astronaut? Well I used to have dreams where you were an astronaut and you were on television and I thought that's my son. I wonder what it is that you want to be now. Has it changed? Are you still doing maths? I hope you are. Loads and loads of love, Mother.

Paddington station

**Christopher**      Left, right, left, right, left, right.

- Voice One**      Sweet Pastries.
- Voice Two**      Heathrow Airport Check-In Here.
- Voice One**      Bagel factory.
- Voice Five**      Eat.
- Voice Three**    Excellence and taste.
- Voice Four**    Yo! Sushi.
- Voice One**      Stationlink.
- Voice Two**      Buses.
- Voice Five**      WH SMITH.
- Voice Four**      Mezzanine.
- Voice One**      Heathrow Express.
- Voice Two**      Clinique.
- Voice Three**    First-class lounge
- Voice Four**      Fullers.
- Voice Five**      EasyCar.co.
- Voice Two**      The Mad Bishop
- Voice Three**    And Bear Public House
- Voice Four**      Fuller’s London Pride.
- Voice One**      Dixons
- Voice Two**      Our Price.
- Voice Three**    Paddington Bear at Paddington Station

- Voice Five**      Tickets.
- Voice One**      Taxis.
- Voice Two**      First Aid.
- Voice Four**      Eastbourne Terrace.
- Voice One**      Praed Street.
- Voice Five**      The Lawn
- Voice Three**    Q Here Please.
- Voice Four**      Upper Crust.
- Voice One**      Sainsbury’s
- Voice Two**      Local information.
- Voice Five**      Great Western First.
- Voice Four**      Position Closed.
- Voice One**      Closed.
- Voice Two**      Position Closed.
- Voice Three**    Sock Shop.
- Voice Four**      Fast Ticket Point.
- Voice Five**      Millie’s Cookies
- Voice Two**      Coffee.
- Voice Three**    Fergie to Stay at Manchester United
- Voice Four**      Freshly Bakes Cookies and Muffins
- Voice One**      Cold Drinks.
- Voice Two**      Penalty Fares.
- Voice Three**    Warning.

## Curious Incident– 10 key moments

1- Christopher and Mrs Shears surround her dead dog in her front garden. It has a garden fork sticking out of it. Both are distressed.

**Mrs Shears-** *What in Christ's name have you done to my dog?*

2- Christopher and Ed (his father) are talking at home. Christopher wants to know where his mother is.

**Ed-** *I'm afraid you won't be seeing your mum, for a while....she needs rest...she has a problem with her heart.*

3- Christopher talks to Mrs. Alexander, his neighbour as he's trying to find out who killed Wellington.

**Christopher-** *I don't talk to strangers but I'm doing detective work.*

4-Christopher pretends he is an astronaut in space.

**Christopher-** *...And I can pretend I'm in space...and all I could see would be stars.*

5- Christopher remembers a holiday in Cornwall and his mother trying to persuade him to come into the sea

**Judy-** *Christopher! Look it's lovely.*

6- Ed finds out that Christopher has been talking to Mrs. A and that she has told him about Judy and Rogers affair.

**Ed-** *Don't give me that. You knew exactly what you were doing.*

7-Christopher discovers letters from his mum who he believes to be dead, hidden under his father's bed.

**Christopher-** *Then I noticed lots of envelopes and they were all addressed to me. And this was interesting and confusing.*

8- Christopher runs away to find Judy and tells her that Ed said she was dead

**Christopher-** *Father said you were dead*

**Judy-** *What?....Oh my god.*

9- Judy and Ed confront each other at Rogers flat in London. Christopher is in the bedroom listening

**Ed-** *What is the use in writing to him...I cooked his meals, I cleaned his clothes....*

**Judy-** *So you thought it was ok to tell him his mother was dead?*

10- Christopher gets an A\* in his maths A level.

**Siobhan-** *Aren't you happy?*

**Christopher-** *Yes. It's the best result.*

**Performance brief**

- For your assessment you will be assessed in the following areas-
- Your ability to work cohesively as an ensemble during rehearsals and the final performance.
  - Your ability to demonstrate different characters by using your vocal and physical skills.
  - Your ability to use movement in performance to create meaning and aid story telling.

**What will my assessment look like?**

- You will select 4-5 key moments from the story ‘The Curious Incident Of The Dog In The Night-Time’.
- For each moment you will create a tableaux and then layer dialogue from the play into your tableau.
- You will then find a way to transition between your scenes.
- After creating your scenes you should examine where you could add some of the following sequences that you have created this term into your work. You should include at least one movement sequence.
- The police scene
  - Christopher's routine
  - Mum’s letter
  - Paddington station

This will be performed as one performance. You will be assessed as an individual and this mark will contribute towards your end of year test score.

**Technical cue sheet**

You may wish to use music during your performance. It is strongly advised that you use music in any movement sequences, as it will help you maintain a steady beat when moving. If you do need music you need to complete the cue sheet so that the person operating your music knows when to start and end your track.

Track	Cue line	End

## Meaning through movement evaluation

Before you start your work make sure:

- You are writing in either blue or black pen
- You have written the date in the top left hand corner of your book
- You have written the title in the centre of your page at the top
- You have underlined your date and title with a ruler

**You should answer the following questions in your book. All answers should be completed in full sentences.**

- 1) In what year was Frantic Assembly founded and by who?
- 2) Select three words that Frantic Assembly use within their company aims and explain what they mean.
- 3) Why does Frantic Assembly choose not to define their work as 'physical theatre'?
- 4) When working as an ensemble, what skills are necessary in order for the ensemble to work successfully? Provide details of when you demonstrated these skills
- 5) Describe how you incorporated a movement sequence into your performance. Explain what impact this had on the audience.
- 6) What skills did you need in order to successfully create your movement sequences- explain when you demonstrated these skills.
- 7) Describe how you adapted your voice and physicality to portray one of the characters you played.
- 8) Explain what your biggest challenge has been during this scheme and why.
- 9) Which moment of your work was the most successful and why?
- 10) If you could improve your performance what would you do and why?
- 11) Which performance (group or individual) did you admire most and why?



## Homework

During this scheme you will have a piece of homework each week.

It is important that homework is completed on time and done to the best of your ability. In a few cases, homework tasks will relate to the following weeks classwork, therefore, if you do not complete the work you will not be in as strong a position to start your learning the following week.

All homework tasks must be completed in your class books. This booklet is an additional tool to aid your learning, it does not replace your book.

If you are struggling with any of the pieces of work please come and find a member of the drama department who will happily help you.

	Task	Completed
1	Using your knowledge organiser, revise all information regarding Frantic Assembly and the glossary of terms.	
2	Evaluate the Frantic inspired movement that you have created in class, use the questions provided.	
3	Use your knowledge and understanding of the character Christopher to create a character profile.	
4	As a group you are to learn the lines for Christopher's routine. Decide as a group who is learning which lines.	
5	Read the interview with Scott Graham and answer the questions provided.	
6	Use your knowledge and understanding of the characters of Judy and Ed to respond to a series of questions.	
7	Write down the movement sequence you created and rehearse it at home.	
8	Create a storyboard (comic strip) of ten key moments from the play.	
9	Learn any lines that you have for the performance.	
10	Learn lines and bring in any props or costume next week.	
11	Think about the most successful element of your performance and how you could improve it.	
12	Complete you end of unit assessment.	

## Homework task two

In your book write the title

### 'Frantic Assembly inspired movement'

You can either choose to write the following question out in your book or you can embed the questions into your answer. For example if the question was 'Who are Frantic Assembly?', you would write *Frantic Assembly are a contemporary theatre company who use movement as an integral part of their practice.'*

1- Describe what skills were necessary during the 'Quad' sequence that you created at the start of the lesson. Explain why these skills were needed.

2- Describe how you initially felt when asked to create your movement sequence using Round/By/Through.

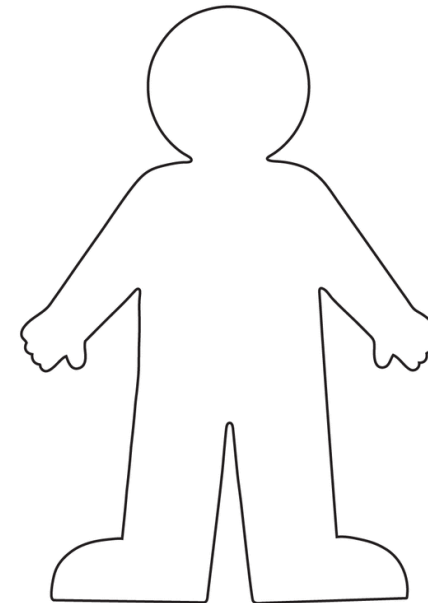
3-How did your performance change when you began to examine the moment before the touch, the moment of the touch and the moment after the touch?

## Homework task three

In your book write the title

### 'Understanding Christopher'

In your books you should draw the outline of a person. This should be as long as a page in your book. This figure represents Christopher. You should then add as much detail to the figure as possible. This is called a Role on The Wall. The information you are adding should be information that you have gathered about Christopher. Anything that describes Christopher's personality should go on the inside of the figure e.g. he struggles in social situations. Anything



## **Homework task five**

Read the following interview with Scott Graham and answer the questions that follow in your books.

*Sarah Gough, Arts Editor, chats to Scott Graham, Movement Director of Olivier-winning West End and Broadway production The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.* Scott Graham, co-founder of physical theatre company Frantic Assembly, has an impressive portfolio. Responsible for a fresh reimagining of *Othello*, as well as devising modern classics like Abi Morgan's *Lovesong*, it was no surprise that the National Theatre called on him to choreograph their adaptation of Mark Haddon's award-winning novel. I chatted to the man behind the movement about his own company as well as *Curious Incident's* unprecedented success.

**Your company is pioneering in many ways, what with the energy and physicality you generate on-stage. What inspired the creation of Frantic Assembly?**

So I joined a Drama society at University because I just wanted to do a bit of theatre. When I did that I had no idea that there was this whole world of physical theatre out there. At the society I met my friend and co-founder Steven Hoggett. The two of us got inspired by the work of a local company in Swansea who were very physical and visual – we didn't know theatre could be like that. Steven and I were very switched on to it and just wanted to learn more about it. Our English degrees started to drift into the background a little bit. It was the mutual validation of telling each other that we could go for this that convinced us to try it. We wanted to create theatre that felt 4D, so that you could feel the heat behind it, you could smell it. Without that it was just dressing up and telling stories.

**Is it the movement that comes first? How have you approached the movement direction of *Curious Incident*?**

What existed first in this case was the novel. Mark Haddon's book posed an incredible challenge but it's also a gift. Somebody said to me: "you do realise you're about to adapt the nation's favourite novel." No pressure! Simon Stephens (the playwright) decided he wouldn't take a commission from anybody; he'd just go and write it. In his writing he already knew two things: he wanted Marianne Elliot to direct it and he wanted Frantic Assembly to do the movement. So with that in mind it gave him a little bit of confidence to take some risks.

**Has *Curious Incident* been your biggest challenge?**

Yes, but it's important to set yourself new challenges. It's a very brilliant team. All of us were taking risks and none of us were sure this would work. The National Theatre, who produced and created it, weren't convinced it would work. It's taught me a massive amount and I'll carry this experience through to new work.

### **Questions**

- 1- What official title does Scott Graham have during the process of creating the show?
- 2- Who approached Scott Graham to choreograph the adaptation of *Curious*?
- 3- Scott says 'we wanted to create theatre that felt 4D, so that you could feel the heat behind it, you could smell it.' What do you think he meant by this?
- 4- Why do you think people thought adapting the nation's favourite novel would be such a challenge?

## Homework task six

In your book write the title

‘Investigating characters’

I would like you to spend some time reflecting on what you have read this lesson. I would like you to think about the characters Judy and Ed and answer the following questions.

1-How did you feel when hearing the letter?

2-Who did you empathise more with?

3-What reasons could she have had for leaving?

4-Do you think Judy made the right decision? Justify your answer.

5-Do you think Ed was right to hide the letters from him? Justify your decision.

## Homework task seven

In your book write the title

‘Paddington movement sequence’

In your books write a step-by-step set of instructions on how to perform your movement sequence for Paddington station. It may look something like this:

Step One: Walk forward 8 times

Step Two: Make a sharp left turn

Step Three: Walk forward 8 times. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> step raise your hand in the air.

## Homework task eight

In your book write the title

'Key moments from The Curious Incident Of The Dog In  
The Night-Time

You should highlight ten key moments from the play. Once you have these ten moments you are going to create a storyboard, which details the moments. A storyboard is like a comic strip- it has a picture of the key moment alongside a small amount of writing to describe what is going on. Before you start, it may be useful to draw your grid out in your books. See the example if you are struggling.

