

# deStilte

## Handout MADCAP

Handout for foundation stage primary school



You can download this handout on our website: [www.destilte.com](http://www.destilte.com) in the education section.

This handout consists of various parts:

- A short introduction for teachers about dance and the dance company De Stille
- Information about the show MADCAP and its makers
- Suggestions for a number of preparatory tasks
- A feather and a leaf
- A cd with fragments of music from the show and some animal sounds

## Introduction

For every child, as with adults, the word 'dance' has different associations. There are many dance forms. Some think of video clips, others of disco dancing, ballroom dancing, street dancing or ballet with a tutu and pointe shoes (special shoes that enable you to stand on top of your toes). To prepare the pupils properly for this show, it is important to introduce them to modern dance; the dance form of De Stille.



## **From Classical Ballet to Modern Dance**

Until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, only ballet, or classical dance, was performed in official theaters. The dancers had to create the impression that they could defy gravity and be as light as a feather; hence the pointe shoes. Classical dance represented, and still does, lightness and courtesy. Ladies were lifted by graceful gentlemen. Fairy tales, such as *The Sleeping Beauty*, were chosen to show the elegance of the dancers: a true wonderland.

The pioneers of modern dance in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century wanted to show more than fairy tales. A contributory factor was certainly the beginning of the emancipation of women; women were not just frail and tender. Under the influence of ethnic ('primitive') dance they turned more to the 'darker' themes and a freer and more intense way of expressing themselves. What is considered to be impossible in ballet, such as rolling on the floor, moving of the hips, swaying of the head, is strikingly present in modern dance.

## **Body Language**

Dance begins with the language of the body, a language that we speak and understand all the time, without being conscious of it. We give off signals, even if we 'don't say anything'. Do we look straight ahead or to the ground? Do we let our heads hang or do we walk with our noses in the air...

We dance with full awareness. The dancers express precisely what they want to say with their body.

## **Dancing is playing**

Dancing is playing and while dancing a human identifies with his world. De Stille wants to stimulate children to create their own story; the boundless story of imagination. Albert Einstein already knew, 'Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere'. Thanks to our imagination we can also visualize the unknown.

## **Dance is communication**

Dance is communication. By dancing, a child does not have to grapple with spoken language. The language of dance is international.

## **De Stille**

De Stille is a dance company that produces modern dance performances for children. It is a professional company which is structurally subsidized by the Province of Noord-Brabant and Breda City Council. The dancers receive training on a daily basis: three times a week in classical dance and twice a week in modern dance. When there are no performances, they attend rehearsals in de Stille's own dance studio. De Stille employs ten dancers; six from the Netherlands, one from Russia, one from Austria, one from Belgium and one dancer from France. The dancers were selected by De Stille because they were the best at the auditions.

## The performance *MADCAP*

From the show's press release:

"It all seems so logical; a cage is connected to a bird, handlebars to a bicycle, your friend is your friend, be it a boy or a girl. By using simple objects, three dancers create a world in which imagination and friendship have a place. By following the stream, they learn all about the riverbed.

Simple causes have great consequences."

From an interview about *MADCAP*:

"Modern dance has a regular audience", says Timmermans. "We opt for everybody, everybody has been to school for a while. Children are an appreciative audience". Apart from that, he regrets that sometimes drama is the only association people have with the word 'play'. "Disastrous. People's primary urge to play is hugely restricted.

Also, in education play is often formalized. This, while everything is naturally interwoven with play."

From a review about *MADCAP*:

"*MADCAP* is about ten birdcages and large eggs. At the beginning of the show they suddenly roll onto the stage after which they are caught in cages. Later on, an egg floats through the air and a dancer regurgitates an egg. This show contains some beautifully choreographic inventions. PVC pipes at one time serve as a brace, another time as handlebars for a bicycle; and apparently, you can play the saxophone on a bicycle pump; music can be made by slapping one's thighs and a surgical glove can serve as a cow's udder. Furthermore, *MADCAP* is about playing; two girls are playing like sisters, until a third one appears. Then things go wrong: competition begins, playing gets new impulses, friendships develop and fall apart. The great thing is that Jack Timmermans does not want to lecture anyone; he merely indicates, casually, how important playing is.

*MADCAP* offers choreography that appeals to both young and old. The dance performance is really beautiful. Moreover, the tension is maintained for 55 minutes. The end is simply ingenious. A chick appears from one of the eggs but the little creature then rises in a spotlight, up from the raised hands of the three dancers, before falling apart with fluttering feathers."

Duration of the show: approx. 45 minutes

## Press release/review

On page 17 you can find a press release of the performances. On page 18 you can find a review of the performance. The press release (Press Release SP.doc) and the review (Play ingeniously incorporated in dance.doc) can be found in the attachment. You can put a photo with both articles.

For photos see: <http://www.destilte.nl/ds/download/Foto's%20SP/> and you can choose yourself which photo you want to put where.

## **The makers of the show**

Choreographer Jack Timmermans, who came up with the idea for the show, advocates with this performance 'Homo Ludens' – 'Man at Play'; he believes you cannot play enough. Play is the handle of the door to creativity. In a world that is becoming increasingly faster, creativity is vital for survival. He thinks it is important that his shows give a free rein to the imagination of children and the audience. As a creator, the greatest enjoyment is to hear things about the show, which you did not come up with yourself.

Bert Vogels is the inventor and creator of the theatrical props. He is a visual artist, who is used to working by himself in his studio and only emerges with his art is perfect. For *MADCAP* his designs, with their loose parts, prove more than enough to induce play. This is the first dance performance for children in which Bert Vogels has participated.

Timothy van der Horst wrote the music for *MADCAP*. Amongst other things, he watched video of the rehearsals and set those to music, often accurate to the second. Timothy, who also produces CDs under the name Phil Martin, has worked with De Stilte on previous occasions.

The costumes were made by Ben Voorhaar and Sabrina Zyla of Karisma Costumes. The dancers preferred dresses and so that is what they got. Every dress is just a little bit different; after all, every person is a little bit different too.

Lighting design was by Anne Schwartz and Jack Timmermans.

## **Preparatory talk with the children by teachers**

The dancers tell their story without words; they make use of body language. What is body language?

You can talk about body language. Alternatively, you can practice it (or have it practiced) without the need to convert the classroom.

The teacher asks questions and lets the pupils respond with non-verbal examples:

## **Sample Questions**

'How do I make clear without words that everybody has to be quiet?'

'How do I indicate that I hear something somewhere?' I hear something really quiet'. I hear something REALLY LOUD... ssh.

What do I do then with my hands? With my body? With my face? (there are different ways: with the forefinger straight against the mouth or without forefinger with just pouting lips, etc.)

'How do I indicate that you have to stand up and you have to sit down?'

'I wave to someone, an imaginary person'; 'I want to grab someone's attention by waving'. 'I wave to someone who cycles past very quickly'. 'Can you tell by my gestures in which direction he went?'

People often express emotions in the same way; when you are happy, you go up with your body. (For example, a football supporter jumps in the air when a goal is scored.)

When you are sad, your body goes down. (A footballer who misses a penalty falls to the ground.)

When you are scared, your body moves backwards. That can be just a little bit or a lot, like when you run away out of fear. When you are very angry, you move forward.

*For example, ask one of the pupils to show how they would react when they:*

get a lovely present, or when they: receive a letter saying they are not allowed to go to school any more...

*Other suggestions for questions:*

'Can you show what you do when you are sad, when you are cold, when you are hot?'

'Does everybody do the same? What differences can you see?'

'Does a boy walk differently to a girl?'

'How do you sit when you want to appear tough? Or nice?'

'How do you behave if you want to show that you are paying attention?'

*(You know your children best. Ask the questions which you think are appropriate for your children).*

## Multiple-choice questions with photos and sounds

MADCAP, a free translation of the southern Dutch slang word *Speelvogels*, means 'playing children'. Yet not just children play a part in the show but also birds. That, of course, makes sense with props such as cages and eggs.

Below you will find a number of multiple-choice questions which relate to pictures of animals and animal sounds.

In the attachment to this handout you can find photos which you can show to the children and on the CD there are sounds for them to listen to. You can read out the questions to the children and show a picture or play a sound.

**What animal is in this picture?**



- A. cow
- B. horse
- C. bird
- D. sheep

**Which animal is in this picture?**



- A. dog
- B. frog
- C. bear
- D. tiger

**Which bird is in this picture?**



- A. parrot
- B. blackbird
- C. sparrow
- D. chicken

**Which bird is in this picture?**



- A. guinea fowl
- B. cockerel
- C. jackdaw
- D. cuckoo

**Which bird is in this picture?**



- A. chicken
- B. cockerel
- C. chick

## **CD with sounds**

**Which animal makes this sound?**

- A. cow
- B. duck
- C. chicken
- D. horse

**Which animal can fly?**

- A. sheep
- B. cat
- C. bird
- D. dog

### Which animal barks?

- A. duck
- B. giraffe
- C. dog
- D. donkey

### Which animal crows?

- A. cockerel
- B. chicken
- C. cat
- D. swan

## Making sounds

**A donkey brays**

**A pig** \_\_\_\_\_ (grunts)

**A bird** \_\_\_\_\_ (sings)

**A sheep** \_\_\_\_\_ (bleats)

**A horse** \_\_\_\_\_ (neighs)

**A dog** \_\_\_\_\_ (barks)

*Ask one of the children to make one of the sounds.*

*Would the animal sound different if it:*

*is hungry/wants to play/is tired/is angry/is sad?*

### More sounds

**An owl**

**A flamingo**

**A goat**

**A frog**

**A chicken**

**A bicycle has?**

- Handlebars
- A saddle
- A chain with a chain guard
- A carrier
- Pedals
- Wheels with spokes
- A brake
- A frame

**An egg belongs to the following animals:**

- A. bird
- B. fish
- C. crocodile
- D. snake

**And does not belong to the following animals:**

- A. cow
- B. sheep
- C. horse
- D. dog
- E. cat

**Which animals have wings?**

- A. bat
- B. bird
- C. butterfly
- D. bee

**Animals with no wings:**

- A. sheep
- B. monkey
- Etc.

# Tasks in the games room

## **Cycling**

*sit on the spot:*

hold the handlebars, wide handlebars, narrow handlebars, 'photo'

pull up knees and stretch legs, left and right ('cycling')

lovely in the sunshine, fast, against the wind, slow

stop for the red traffic light, GREEN

uphill, downhill

go forward, move backwards

*Stand up, around the hall:*

big bicycle, grab handlebars

get off, get on

straight lines, bends, squares, circles

cycle behind each other, cycles alongside each other

criss-cross, stop for each other.

*suggestions: play with speed and stops, play with energy, heavy-light, and with directions. 'Watch where you're going.' You can cycle with bravado, cautiously, together in the same direction, at same speed.*

## **Floating (for example, a feather fluttering down)**

*On the spot in the hall:*

rock very gently, float

blow, keep yourself in the air

from left to right, slowly towards the ground

land softly on the ground

adopt various positions on the ground

## **Flying**

from the ground with arms like wings

flap your wings and rise

big wings, small fluttering wings,

fly round corners using the wings

fly low, fly high

glide with arms wide

make the sound of the wind around you

*suggestions: slowly, controlled, or like a young bird, from very big to very small, go up and down, hear the wind.*

*The music of the show is energetic and fits in with the cycling and also the sound of the wind which can stimulate the suggestion of floating and flying.*

*Tip: blow up a balloon and demonstrate its lightness. Or give all children a balloon and let them hold the balloon with both hands, so they stay in the air like a true balloonist.*

## ATTACHMENTS



**bird**



**frog**



**parrot**



**guinea fowl**



**chick**

## Press Release

Breda, 10 October 2005

MADCAP; onto new worlds

MADCAP is a free translation of the southern Dutch slang word 'Speelvogels', meaning 'playing children'. A splendid word for a splendid event: children at play.

And when a child plays, alone or with others, in that game reality gets a face.

In De Stille's MADCAP, three dancers enter the stage to establish their place in the game, to share their imagination and to confirm their friendship. Relationships are put to the test; choices are enforced, because three in number causes conflict.

While friendships are being built, broken off and resumed, a subtle game unfolds on the stage with various objects which, in the hands of the players, get a new meaning. With the necessary creativity, the three dancers achieve harmony with each other on their journey through a number of worlds of their own imagination. By following the stream, they learn all about the riverbed.

The theatre props were specially designed and created for this show by visual artist Bert Vogels. The music was composed 'in tune' by Timothy van der Horst. The costumes were designed by Karisma Costumes.

Choreography: Jack Timmermans

The performance is danced by Lobke Jeurissen, Francesca Lombardo and Camille Pidou.

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## Review

### **Play Ingeniously Incorporated in Dance.**

Brabants Dagblad – Monday 7 November 2005

By Rinus van der Heijden

'Playing' was Jack Timmermans' source for his latest choreography *MADCAP*. His company De Stille had its opening performance in Breda.

"Are the three female performers playing or dancing? This is a question you keep on asking yourself when watching *MADCAP*. For Timmermans, that is the greatest compliment you can pay him because he conceived *MADCAP* for children of four years and over. They are introduced to dance in a playful way. The show, its Dutch name is 'Speelvogels', which means 'playing children', was made with minimal resources. Hardly surprising, because Timmermans, just like a number of other dance makers, fell by the wayside for subsidy. But those almost endearing theatrical props, such as PVC pipes and an old bucket, are extremely functional, just because of their simplicity.

*MADCAP* is about ten birdcages and large eggs. At the beginning of the show they suddenly roll onto the stage after which they are caught in cages. Later on, an egg floats through the air and a dancer regurgitates an egg. This show contains some beautifully choreographic inventions. PVC pipes at one time serve as a brace, another time as handlebars for a bicycle; and apparently, you can play the saxophone on a bicycle pump; music can be made by slapping one's thighs and a surgical glove can serve as a cow's udder.

Furthermore, *MADCAP* is about playing; two girls are playing like sisters, until a third one appears. Then things go wrong: competition begins, playing gets new impulses, friendships develop and fall apart.

The great thing is that Jack Timmermans does not want to lecture anyone; he merely indicates, casually, how important playing is.

*MADCAP* offers choreography that appeals to both young and old. The dance performance is really beautiful. Moreover, the tension is maintained for 55 minutes. The end is simply ingenious. A chick appears from one of the eggs but the little creature then rises in a spotlight, up from the raised hands of the three dancers, before falling apart with fluttering feathers.

How can it be that the existence of this company could be in peril because of cancelled subsidies. It is the sheer destruction of artistic capital."