Basic Qualities of Great Pantomime
CDCI West
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Even without much training or time, you can emphasize three qualities necessary to effective pantomime.

1. *Consistency*: Objects that are mimed must remain the same size. A steering wheel cannot shrink and expand; drinking glasses cannot float off in mid-air, but must be set down; a broom handle is not a wet noodle.

2. *Exaggerated Resistance*: If a mime pushes against a door, pulls a rope, lifts a suitcase, pushes a button or performs almost any action, the resistance of person against object must be exaggerated and made “bigger” than in real life. In real life, picking flowers may take no effort at all, but in pantomime, the actor must make the action more definite, sharper, bigger.

3. *Exaggerated Expression and Gesture*: If a mime points to someone, cries, laughs, becomes sad or angry, reacts in shock or horror or joy, the facial expressions and gestures used must be exaggerated, or made bigger, than in real life.

Basics of Pantomime Storylines

1. *Keep it Simple*: In pantomime, the storyline must be simple if the audience is to understand. The process of watching a well-executed pantomime is itself satisfying; a complicated plot simply muddies the action.

2. *Tell a Story*: In making up a storyline, actors think in terms of initial situation (beginning), complications and problems arising from that situation (middle), and a solution to those problems (ending).

3. *Be Fantastic*: In pantomime, complications and solutions can be less realistic, more creative and more fantastic than those in realistic improvisations with dialogue. It’s easy and entertaining to present, through mime, a shoe store scene in which the shoes are first too tight, then too loose, then too high, then too heavy, with the customer finally deciding to go barefoot. (This situation is an exception to the rule of object consistency in pantomime.)

Enjoy your pantomime experience!
Mrs. Dobos