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Facial Music!

How come, that we usually are so cautious showing our feelings with facial expressions? The answer probably is fear of exaggeration, which in stead frequently leads to quite the opposite, namely a death mask rather than a live face. That really is a shame as the face contains a whole world of communication! Non-verbal communication is right there! We know that background music stirs up intense feelings when communicating. That is why movies almost always have background music. The music intensifies the drama. Now remember – facial expressions have the same function as music. Let's call it facial music!

A while ago I had the pleasure of being the Master of Ceremonies at the Concert Hall of Gothenburg. At the event, the internationally known, leading choreographer and dancer Mallika Sarabhai (also MBA and Phd) acted with her dance group and orchestra. They performed fascinating theatre dances and conveyed strong non-verbal messages to the audience both with body and not least with facial expressions. I had the opportunity to closely study them and took particular notice of their facial expressions and the perfect harmony with their body movements. Everything moved constantly in their faces. The mimic expressed happiness, surprise, anger, love, friendliness etc, in harmony with the stories. This truly was a show of non-verbal communication. Facial music!

The nearest we can come to this probably is charades and nothing wrong with that. On the contrary, charades is a splendid practice game, not only to practice body movements but also facial expressions. If we want to practice facial expressions in particular, we must of course chose topics which are especially suitable for that.

Indeed we often use our face to spontaneously express something that we react to, i. e. as a result of an occurrence such as fear created by threat, pleasure created by praise etc. But, on the other hand, we can just as well "create" something with our facial expressions to which other people can react. That is exactly what we have to do when playing charades and what we ought to do when are on stage creating scenarios which lay stress on our message. An angry face creates a spiteful scenario, a scared expression creates a threatening situation, a happy face creates positive atmosphere etc. An unintentional stone face creates nothing! An intentional one can however be humorous.

We try to persuade, inform and/or entertain with what we say, but easily forget that the face is an invaluable helping tool to create scenarios which support what we wish to convey. We simply need to act with facial expressions to create background music. Facial music!

An enjoyable link: <http://www.dotolearn.com/games/facialexpressions/face.htm>

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