

Developing Key Competences Through Drama

DEVISA - B Class

“Eight By Eight”

Picking up where we had left off in December of 2017, the main goal of the scenic and acting research we undertook with our students was to develop a show in which they could not only strive to overcome the difficulties that came to the forefront during their last creative process, but also give them the opportunity to enjoy, on a stage, a level of freedom, of acting freedom, that, up until this point in their journey as young actors, they had never been able to experience.

If the question “Who are you?” was the starting point of the work previously presented, answering that very question was, we felt, the only way forward. And answer it we did, in the most simple of terms: we are our dreams. Both the conscious and the unconscious ones. The way in which we dream, the way in which we project ourselves and those around us in the infinite worlds of fiction to which we are continuously giving birth, is the most defining trait that each of us has. They can be collective, yes, but they are also very much an extremely personal possession, a sort of “personality DNA” that gives context to our past, guides our present and through which we can shape our future.

In our research, instead of creating the words through which we could express the power of our dreams, we instead relied on the words of others, classical words, such as the ones found in Shakespeare’s “Hamlet” and “The Tempest” and Calderón de la Barca’s “Life is a Dream”, but also contemporary ones, diving into the works of Neil Gaiman, one of the greatest dreamshapers of all times. We also searched for words in portuguese, through the poetry of Fernando Pessoa, José Saramago’s dream diary and José Luís Peixoto’s poetic prose, and we went beyond the concept of dreams as abstract or surreal, taking from Martin Luther King’s most famous speech the indomitable desire to transform political dreams into liberating reality. We took the words of these powerful dreamers and, from them, we drew seven monologues, seven very different takes on the idea of dreams as the foundations of our innermost self. Comical, tragical, surreal, contemplative, explosive, intriguing, nonsensical and all-around fun, these seven monologues were the perfect medium through which the members of the project could find themselves facing an audience armed with little more than themselves and their dreams, diving within to create energy and meaning without.

It was the first time that such a challenge was presented to them and, we now realise and hope, only the first of many.