

DEVISING AND COLLECTIVE  
ORGANIZATION IN THE  
SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE'S  
HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of the collective structure and use of devising in the San Francisco Mime Troupe's history are intertwined with one another. In order to understand this relationship, and discover what it might contribute to the history of devising practice in the United States, I analyze a play from three separate time periods during the Mime Troupe's existence. These are: *A Minstrel Show, or Civil Rights in a Cracker Barrel* (1965), *Ripped Van Winkle* (1988), and *Ripple Effect* (2014). Using sources that are widely available to the public, I examine the public face of the Mime Troupe, and how the group's devising practice has been described and evident through their performance history.

In each chapter, I address Troupe leadership, what has been said publicly about their creation process, and critical and public reactions to the performances. Through the evolution of the Troupe's leadership, organization, and creative practices, the establishment of the Mime Troupe as an integral part of the San Francisco artistic landscape is evident. This helps to illuminate the unique and important place that devising companies have in the United States' theatrical past and present.