

Lessons to Teachers

LESSON XII

THE IDEAL
MOVEMENT - THE BODY'S ARTISTIC
POSSIBILITIES

In your efforts to understand our work, do not fall into the bad habit of intellectual understanding only. It is a grave danger. The other habit is just as bad, that of doing only the practical side of the work and not feeling anything or relating it to the mental or intellectual. This second danger is the one into which opera has fallen. The whole of opera has become "my voice," because everyone is thinking "my voice." There you see only practice without thought. You must know your own weakness and decide whether you need more mental understanding or more practical work. Practice comes from two streams - one is real practice and another is thinking about this practice. If you are only practicing, you are doing only one side of the work; and the same is true if you are only thinking and understanding. You are only doing half of it. Both sides are very important - to think over the exercises and problems, and then to really practice them.

THE IDEAL:

We have spoken about the ideal which you must always keep in mind when teaching. The ideal of your pupil, the

ideal of your theatre, the ideal of the class for today, the ideal for the performance. These ideals will only take form if you are working very regularly in their creation. After you have worked regularly with the creation of an ideal, you will see how much more concrete it becomes in your mind, and the more help you will have from it. It will inspire you, and you will feel it very very definitely. It will guide you and give you advice, although you may not be conscious of where it comes from. Therefore, don't be satisfied with a very vague feeling for the future of the theatre - that is nothing. You must have a concrete feeling about it. You must have an ideal.

MOVEMENT - THE BODY'S ARTISTIC POSSIBILITIES:

Do the movement exercises as a teacher instructing her pupils. In giving the lesson you must speak very slowly, always bearing in mind that your students are hearing what you have to say for the first time. Remember our aim is always to reach an artistic movement. Nothing else.

After the students have really understood the exercises and their aim and have done them, the next step is to ask them to do the same exercises very very rapidly and play ball very quickly. Then the teacher must ask them what they have felt, and they will say, "Nothing." This means that they have not been conscious of their bodies while they were moving quickly. After much practice, they will be able to

do this, and we have many things to add, but we must start with a very simple exercise.

At times we ask the pupils to move more slowly or more rapidly than the normal movement. Slow or fast movement is not normal - the normal lies between the two - but we must experience these extremes in order to feel that we have a body and that the body can move or be still. The normal lies in between, but we cannot appreciate that until we have experienced the extremes. We must know what our bodies are capable of.

In order to "know," the pupils must discover possibilities in their own bodies - must explore these possibilities as if for the first time and must be aware every time they discover a new sensation or reaction during the movement exercises. In that way, they will develop an awareness of the great possibilities within their bodies of which they have previously been absolutely unaware. They must discover, explore, investigate, and experience their bodies as for the first time.