

Michael Chekhov

(afternoon)

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NEW PSYCHOLOGICAL TECHNIQUE FOR
REHEARSAL OF SKETCHES
THE SCHEME

Vakhtangov

NEW PSYCHOLOGICAL TECHNIQUE FOR REHEARSING:
The Cave of Salamanca:

Although we have a text for this sketch we must begin as with a vacuum, and create everything from the very beginning. Our technique is a new attitude of mind - a new psychological technique, a new approach to the work, a new feeling for the work. Concentrate on this idea for a few moments, it will not only give you power but it will lead your creative powers in the right way. You will not only have pleasure, but it will open in you the right source of creative powers.

At all times you must hear your director as if for the first time. To understand something once means not to understand it, but to understand that something many times to begin to understand.

Carnival:

The director must give his cast some action as well as the passive act of expressing. They must not only be, they must do. Therefore you must always try to find your psychological gesture. If possible the director must give the action - not to be but to do - and he must always make it very clear to his cast why they are doing something.

Balladina:

There are three climaxes: 1. When she goes to have her spiritual wound healed, and Kostrin comes in. 2. The

killing of Gralon. 3. The old mother is thrown out into the night. There are three moods - the first is an uncertain, unhappy mood, the second is a high moment when the picturesque character of Gralon comes in, and the third is the downward movement when Balladina throws her own mother out.

The Golden Steed:

At the moment when the Silver Steed appears the atmosphere is full of deep longing. This must be increased and the gesture is to ascend the mountain with the rider, then to fall down with him. Try the psychological gesture for the two brothers. They are digging up the earth and pushing it into their bodies in order to increase their feeling of being rocklike. Explore the time, space and quality of the gesture. By exercising your gestures you will be easy in your parts.

Carnival:

In creating the country, the costumes, etc., this will call for a study or special research around the play. As directors you must collect pictures, music, costumes, types of people, etc. Each director can do this - the idea for this kind of study belongs to Vakhtangov. It does not mean that we are compelled to follow such pictures and suggestions - it means everything and it means nothing.

The Fishing Scene:

The director has taken some things from the "scheme"

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If the mise en scene is found it is always very interesting for the cast. For example, after giving a gesture such as pulling in the boat, you can tell your cast where they are standing and what they are doing, etc. Then some words can be given and some sounds. It is necessary for the author to start to hear his own creation. He must hear how it sounds, then he can re-create it. The mise en scene will give you much freedom, and will make it possible for you to enlarge the play. You must begin to use real material and costumes. This is what we mean by creating a play all together.

THE SCHEME:

Directors should try to concentrate on using all the things in the "scheme" as it will enlarge the diapason. Try to concentrate and decide how you can use certain means to develop the play along the most important or most characteristic lines. Try to choose the most important means which will lead you to your aim most quickly. After some practice you will awaken this feeling that such and such is important. You will get a feeling for tempo. By using all the costumes and materials, and by building a study around the play, and by speaking the author's words you will really find that the tempo can be increased.

The Golden Steed:

Imagine the atmosphere, words and mise en scene. Ask yourself about the following three moments: 1. When the brothers speak about Antin between themselves and to the

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crowd. There should be a marked difference between these two moments. 2. The moment when Antin faints. 3. The crowd must not be passive. There must not be gaps in the progress of the play. Imagine the 3 moments.