

Michael Chekhov

(afternoon) June 3, 1937

STYLE  
COSTUMES AND COLORS  
LEADING QUESTIONS

We are always speaking about how the directors must use the Method and how the actors, during the rehearsals, besides what the director is giving them, must use the Method independently. It is a very important point that our actors, having the same Method as the director, must not be helpless because the director is not using all these things. The actors must use their own energy to find other things. It is as important for the actor to do this as the director. Please pay special attention to this from today on.

With regard to the technical rehearsal, the actors must justify the mise en scène which the director gives and not be real puppets. They must appeal to the feeling of truth, and then they will give some suggestions to the director himself, and it will be a real collaboration. Being actors, don't depend on your director's mind only but direct yourselves. Please try to direct yourselves and when working at home, you must work with the Method until you will get it in your hands and in your power so that you will be free. If you do not do this you will keep yourselves back very much.

The reason for the work we have done with comedy, tragedy, and drama is because in seeing all the sketches we are doing, I don't think you feel the style in which you must rehearse and act. For instance, today Balladina was absolutely without any tragic style, but it is a tragedy. Only John's

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performance was more in the style of this grotesque story. The actor must find in himself this style. The actor gives the style to the performance.

Another important thing for our directors and actors is that they must be very aware as to whether what has been asked for is a concrete thing or whether it is an abstract thing. Often the director gives so many orders and nothing is realized, and yet the director goes forward. Directors must try to reach, to a certain extent, what they have ordered, and the actors must really do, accomplish, and achieve all the things the director has given them. Then there will be mutual satisfaction.

The idea that the director is responsible for the performance and must inspire the actors is true, but the cast must also inspire the director because if the cast is absolutely immovable and impassive, the director will expire! This is a very practical thing, without which we will sit on the same place or fall down. Therefore, we have our Method and rules.

#### STYLE:

Style is something we must develop in the following way: Vaudeville is the term for what we call farce. It is naive and superficial. For instance, The Cave of Salamanca is comedy, but it borders on farce. Tragedy is always more than the human being as it were - touching heaven and touching

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hell. Drama is always touching the human being.

#### Carnival:

The director must learn to discriminate - he must not give too many suggestions all at one time. For example, to ask the actor to do something with atmosphere, character, radiation, and mise en scène all at the same time is too much for the actor to do consciously. But if the director will rehearse each thing separately, then the actor will unconsciously carry what he has done in one exercise into the other, and it will be richer for the previous experience.

#### COSTUMES AND COLORS:

##### Taming of the Shrew:

Peter was looking for forms but ended up by getting only impressions of many, many costumes in all colors. The actors cannot wear the costumes, many of which were very lovely. Sometimes the costumes and scenery were quite out of harmony with the action. The costumes were over-elaborated, and there were too many colors on the stage at the same time.

#### LEADING QUESTIONS:

##### The Fishing Scene:

1. When are you most active physically? 2. When are you most active in your intensity? 3. Which is the most important moment in the scene for these characters? 4. See the moment of inner activity and speak one sentence. 5. Speak

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one sentence at three different moments in the play, for instance, "The boat!", at the moment of longing, then at the moment it is sighted, and then when they realize that there is only one man aboard. Combine this with the movement you see for each moment.