

Michael Chekhov

May 4, 1941

Demonstration at Edgewood School  
Edgewood, New Jersey

DEMONSTRATION  
FEELING OF EASE  
FEELING OF FORM  
CONTACT - ENSEMBLE ACTING -  
GROUP FEELING  
ATMOSPHERE  
STACCATO AND LEGATO  
FEELING OF TRUTH.

These things we believe must be at the actor's disposal without his having to think of them:

1. FEELING OF EASE:

Exercises - experience the feeling of ease in your arms and hands, then kneel with the same feeling of ease, then run about, and finally move to a musical phrase.

2. FEELING OF FORM:

Every movement can be made vaguely or formlessly, but we try to avoid this by means of exercises in which every movement has to be accomplished and finished from the point of view of form. The whole body must be experienced from inside as a strong, beautiful, harmonious form.

Exercises:

Raise the arms and hands, experiencing this feeling of form. Next, lie down and get up with the feeling of form and be aware of weight, lightness, and heaviness. Increase the feeling of weight and add staccato and quality. Add a musical phrase. Now exercise wrestling without muscles and



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combine feeling of form and feeling of ease. Do the exercise to a musical phrase.

### 3. CONTACT - ENSEMBLE ACTING - GROUP FEELING:

What does my partner on the stage want from me? How can I be sure that if I am acting today this way or that way my partner will understand me inwardly so that he will react on my acting with the same significance with which I react to his? We call it ensemble acting or group feeling. It is somehow connected with the personal, human feelings.

#### Exercise:

Form a circle and realize that there are other person around you. For us, each one in the circle is a personality. It is very simple. Each one must open his heart to his partners. Take hands and realize that there are other individuals in the group. Drop the hands and the lack of such physical contact will increase in each one the feeling that there are still other individuals around us. With this strong feeling of "I Am" and other "I Am's," we do the group exercises. Take a musical theme and move to it and try to incorporate the theme in the form of the group movement. Then form two groups and find the connection between the two.

### 4. ATMOSPHERE:

We believe that the performance has three parts:



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1. The idea of the performance we call the spirit of the performance. 2. The emotional feelings, the atmosphere, we call the soul of the performance. 3. And all that we can see and hear we call the body of the performance. The atmosphere is the realm of the feelings. We try to spread the atmosphere strongly enough on the stage so that it will be conveyed to the audience as the soul of the performance. We imagine the air filled with atmosphere in the same way as the air can be filled with smoke or a fragrance. As we imagine that the air is filled with this atmosphere, then we try to open ourselves to this atmosphere, and we begin to feel ourselves filled with this atmosphere, and we retain it. We radiate it to our audience. We act and move and speak being inspired by this atmosphere.

#### STACCATO AND LEGATO:

We must be able to give out to our audience everything that we have inside of us. The whole idea is that our inner desire to be with the audience arouses respect for the audience and each "I Am" has to fly out to the audience. Therefore, the physical exercise is only the means to awaken in the actor's soul the ability to be always with the audience.

#### FEELING OF TRUTH:

We must not only be able to use real things on the



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stage truthfully but also to use imaginary things.

Exercise:

Tug of war.