

Michael Chekhov

November 5, 1936

ATMOSPHERE
THE RHYTHMICAL PATTERN OF THE PLAY
CREATING THE PLAY - FIRST APPROACH

ATMOSPHERE:

Remember in doing exercises for atmosphere, do not overlook the atmosphere and so do the thing for the action alone.

Question: At what point do we get into the acting? How do we know where to stop? We confuse the atmosphere and the action.

Answer: Let them come together, action and atmosphere, and you will be right if you have atmosphere and action. But if you only have action without atmosphere, you will not be right. You are free, and this is a question of your instinct.

The Golden Steed:

We have tried to go through the play, discovering and creating the atmosphere. The second step is to find the speech for the play. We must speak to create the atmosphere, and we must speak out of the atmosphere. First, try to imagine the picture of this world of the fairy tale with the mountain and everything we have done in our imagination, and try to feel the atmosphere and send it out.

THE RHYTHMICAL PATTERN OF THE PLAY:

First find the atmosphere, and then try to find the dialogues and soliloquies in the music of the atmosphere. First,

very simply, try to find what is the music of the words. Each scene has its own rhythmical gesture, and this is a very very complicated thing, this rhythmical pattern of the play. The rhythm of the play is the highest spiritual movement of the play. When you begin to feel this, you will speak your words with much more understanding.

Find what gesture there is in your words. First find the gesture before you speak, then you will find the right speech. Each word has a gesture, and we must find the gesture in harmony with the atmosphere. The more instinctively we feel about the play, the more we will discover in it.

CREATING THE PLAY - FIRST APPROACH:

Each evening we must work on our plays and images. These are the things we must do:

1. We must continue the reading of the play again and again, and let the images grow and change.
2. We must try to speak out of the atmosphere, throughout the whole play.
3. We must find the gestures of the words. Do not fix them, as there are an unlimited number of gestures. As we understand the composition of the play more and more, you will find gestures dictated by the composition.
4. We must work with the images. You must see and imagine your characters, and you must do this more and more until the character will be absolutely clear for you.

N. Chekhov

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5. We must create one play, and each character must be in harmony with the other. Our imagination must be absolutely flexible.

6. We must see the feelings. It is not good to try to feel what your character is feeling because you will awaken so many personal feelings which are so small in comparison with our creative ability. Therefore, we must appeal to our creative abilities to see the feelings.

When you try to see the movement in your imagination, then at the moment when you try to make the movement, you will be able to incorporate something more with your imagination. Take this - it is a gift. The problems are given to awaken the creative power and the imaginative power. Don't allow your images to be embodied only with the body.