

Michael Chekhov

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TEMPO

TEMPO:

We will try to get tempo by overcoming the difficulties of our bodies. Try to do everything with the feeling of ease, not only as an exercise, but as business on the stage.

Exercise:

Two groups - (1) building barricades; (2) climbing the barricades; (3) overcome one group; (4) the other group defeats them. You must get a feeling of ease in your bodies, although the exercise is a very noisy, physical one. It must be done so that your own body and the physical things will not overpower you, but you will govern them. About the voices, you have to speak muted but full of temperament, as if it were night, and you are speaking about what you are doing. In the second part it must be the voices which are no longer muted, but which are exclaiming things in short staccato exclamations - open. When the one group comes to defeat the other group, it must be full voices - no longer staccato.

Light voices and bodies and radiating, "I Am." No element of hurry must be there. That kills and destroys it. Make an inner effort to have real presence - radiate it - purely psychological. Take on your bodies as if they were a suit of clothes. Master the whole situation.

Exercise:

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A fantastic victory in which everyone has to do some movement which must give the impression that they are heavy, but the body must be relaxed. To the count of 1, 2, 3. The tendency to hurry must be watched.

We always know what our aim in general is, and we always know the means - that is the proper school - we never work without aim and means - realise this each time.

Exercise:

The aim is the same, to get the tempo. It will be expressed in the following three things: (1) When you hear the music, it will suggest the atmosphere and the idea of the theme. Before you start with this music, which will be in terrific tempo, you will each create sentences or exclamations. Under the influence of this inner tempo in the music, each must create one sentence. (2) You are moving as a whole group in the tempo which the music will give you - create a group. (3) When you fix the group, each must again create a sentence or exclamation.