

REHEARSAL OF SKETCHES  
TEMPO  
INTENSITY OF LIFE ON STAGE  
MISE EN SCENE - COSTUMES  
PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE

TEMPO:

From today on we must do some new work. There are some people who are able to do more in a day than other individuals. This is one fact. Another fact is tempo. Recall our experience and you will see that we start our work in one tempo, and if the rehearsal is successful we begin to increase the tempo unwittingly. When and where do we lose the tempo? This is a very fine point because tempo in this sense is not a question of doing something quicker. It has to do with the feeling of life - the intensity of life, the value of life. If we wish to be professional people we must start every rehearsal with this feeling of the full intensity of life. You can do this, or you can begin with part of your life active and the other part sleepy. You must make an effort to overcome this so that we will gain very much time.

INTENSITY OF LIFE ON STAGE:

Why do we need this tempo? At the opening of our school I mentioned something. I said that our aim must be to find the connection to the whole world around us. We must never be a separate group - a sect. We are working for humanity and for society. How can we give what we are preparing here with such love and activity, how can we give this to humanity? It means nothing to be an egotistical group. We will discover how to be useful to society, and we will grow in this way.



M. Chekhov

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But one thing must be taken as a first step - we must work in tempo. If we lose part of our activity we will not be able to join the social life. If we appear before society with a twenty-five percent tempo when society is moving at one hundred percent, we will be smashed. We are preparing something for the suffering world around us. Tempo is the first step to be taken towards the social life.

As long as you believe that your body is all that you have to fill the stage space with, you will always suffer on the stage. The audience will not be able to understand you if you are confined by your real body. You must create another body which is your artistic projection. Then you will discover what it means to fill the space on the stage. Try to feel that your body is enlarged so that you are taller, bigger, etc.

Balladina:

Goplana is very much in contact with the elements. Her connection is with the earth. The earth is drawing Goplana down, down, down, to its center. It is like the winter when Goplana is under the earth. Then with the spring she comes up and becomes alive and full of love. With all her power she drives forward to the object of her love. She is drawn down into the center of the earth, contracting more and more until she can contract no further. Just like a grain of sand. Then she begins to expand. She gathers strength from the earth all the time, until she can drive anything



before her. The object of her love is a very simple earthy peasant boy.

(Director's exercise:)

Balladina, with her hand on Alina's head forces her down gradually as they walk around in a circle, Balladina behind Alina. Then Goplana's outstretched arms behind Balladina, driving both Balladina and Alina on. After Alina falls on the ground, Goplana continues to drive Balladina on, and when she stops she is drawn backwards by Goplana. Goplana is partly elemental, partly human and she is used by the author to explain the evil forces in the play.

Criticism:

The gestures and their composition were very good and very important for this play. They represent the spine of the play. But it was done too quickly. What was good was that the director had taken the whole play, and embraced it in her exercises. All directors must do this from time to time. You must remind your cast that the whole play is to be done. When you give exercises for small moments, you must also give exercises for the whole play so that the results will come sooner.

Goplana should not be so close behind Balladina. If there is more space Balladina will feel the elemental forces better. Alina must have a gesture to do when she is



going down. When trying to show weakness on the stage do not drag the hand - this is very common with actors and it is not true. It must be the opposite - try to lift your hand. The director, Mrs. Elmhirst, has found very clear exercises for the spine of the scene.

The Fishing Scene:

The real tempo or activity has not yet been reached. You lose so much energy in this way. Tempo will awaken certain things in the actor's soul which are necessary for creative powers. It was right to try to use many words, but you must tell your actors absolutely clearly which way you wish them to go. The psychological gestures must be given by the director.

The Cave of Salamanca:

To explain the play to your cast many times without giving any special direction is a loss of time. The actors must do this again and again in their own time. If the director spends his time for this he will never go forward. If he wants his cast to imagine something, it means that he must give them a special point of view, a new event which will inflame in their imaginations some special aim. The director must speak to the imagination of his actors, as John does, otherwise it is good for nothing.

MISE EN SCENE:

The director must begin his work in a positive way, for instance, by reminding his cast that "we are artists."



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This phrase may be spoken for the hundredth time, but it must be more alive each time, then it will really be stimulating. The working tempo is not yet right. As the director you must come with definite aims and tasks. This will help to keep the tempo and the activity of your cast. The mise en scène exercise was wrong. It was not mise en scène, it was action but action without objectives. You did not give objectives. For mise en scène it was too long, and meant nothing.

You must show mise en scène if you have to lead your cast somewhere, and you can show it with some indication of what kind of style you wish the play to be in, etc. For atmosphere you gave some pictures out of which no atmosphere could grow. This means that they were not clear for you. They must be much clearer. The atmosphere was not necessary for doing the first mise en scène. The director was trying to bring two forces together - atmosphere which was not atmosphere, and mise en scène which was not mise en scène.

The director is like a conductor - he cannot be dependent on his notes. By doing many experiments which may be wrong, the director will find the right way. A poor director will cling to some of his ideas, but the good director will try everything. Don't be afraid of experiments which can be wrong. The more experience you get in the theatre the less mistakes you will make, and the freedom will always remain with you - the joy in your work.



## COSTUMES:

Why have you been asked to choose some costumes? Because it will help you to express what you want with your image for one thing, and for another your costumes will speak to your audience. You must choose something of which you are sure. To put on a costume does not just mean that the actor is going to wear it - it must be part of his character. He must see it clearly in his imagination and see his character and adjust his costume to fit in with his character. He must adapt it to the needs of his character, and in this way it will become part of him and an expression of his character, rather than just material which he wears.

The Golden Steed:

We have tried rehearsing for various things - for feeling the space, for psychological gestures, and today for incorporating our images when we have costumes, etc. We will use them all in turn, as a spiral form. Today we will try to experience our play, The Golden Steed, as if consisting of three main parts; three main atmospheres. The first part is the passionate one - the Copper Rider - the red earth - flames and smoke. The second part is the Silver Rider - light - air - spirit, nothing heavy, nothing material, everything flying very high. The third part is the Golden Rider. It has the quality of the shining sun. It is all the colors of radiant sunshine, but at the same time it is



earthy. In our interpretation, golden means to be firmly on the earth - the heroic mood.

The Meeting:

For the incorporation of images you must have the feeling of truth! You must find some new, original qualities about your character - some original way of expressing the qualities. Contorting the body is nothing which has not been done again and again by actors in the past. You must see the imaginary character and try to fit into it with your body. Slight gestures will create the illusion of the figure if you really see it, whereas any amount of extraordinary distortions will only be superficial, cheap and uninteresting. Through your feeling of truth you will find your image.

Balladina: (Director's exercise:)

Kostrin has the head of evil, and Balladina the heart of evil in this play. Kostrin is all evil - his purpose never wavers. He is a stealthy character, standing behind doors and creeping along walls. He is as cold as stone and as relentless. He gives this quality to Balladina. They walk together with their wrists shackled - the mind of evil and the heart of evil become one. Gralon is a wide-open free, inflated, happy character in comparison with the closed, wicked characters of the others. He fills the space around him.

Criticism:



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PSYCHOLOGICAL GESTURE:

The director's psychological gestures are not always pure gesture. They are sometimes symbolical as well. As a director you must be more careful about action. With you the gesture remains a symbol rather than a gesture. The gestures are good but you must give more action. The psychology is good, but the gesture is weak. For instance, when Balladina and Kostin are shackled. You must tell your actor what she must do to be stone-like. After the psychological gesture has been done it can be done internally.

In giving psychological gestures, the director must elaborate them more and more. For instance, standing by the door. In doing this the director can tell his actor that he is trying to penetrate into the room, while trying with his physical body to be out of the room. The director can ask him to try to be some feet beyond his body, and try to push it forward as a very small thing. At once the figure will be right.