

2011
Michael Chekhov

July 18, 1937

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Chaliapin
Stanislavsky

THE ART OF THE THEATRE VS. NATURALISM:

Evaluation of the Performance of July 17th:

The idea of this criticism is to give our directors and actors something to think of during the summer. Therefore, it is not in the nature of a correction, but is specially aimed to give you something to work on during the summer holidays. You will not be given any other work, apart from thinking, imagining, and concentrating on our sketches.

First of all, I must tell you that the work you have done up to today is tremendous. You have done much more than I had expected. The first term was a very difficult one, in which we tried to find each other. If you will think back on it, you will realize that you have made great progress as a group, as actors and artists, and as human characters, which also belongs to our profession.

If you will think about yesterday's rehearsal in terms of good or bad, you will get nothing from it; but if you will say from which point of view it was good or bad - if from the point of view of the far future ideal, then it was bad; but if from

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tification, objectives, the feeling of truth, etc., but these are only the groundwork for each actor. In the naturalistic theatre - "N" - everything is true and persuasive and like life. In the last half of the above diagram just given, there is something more. On the base of having truth, and objectives on the stage, you must add something more: the idea of the play. That means that each performance must incorporate not only objectives, feeling of truth, etc., but certain ideas which are the ideal of the group working on this or that play. It is the incorporation of something more than being truthful or justified on the stage.

THE IDEA OF THE PLOT:

The naturalistic theatre speaks about the plot, rather than the idea. The idea is what we are going to say to our audience through the whole performance. More than that, here is the rhythm, the music of the performance, the intangible parts. Here is art!

Below the halfway mark is the naturalistic theatre [referring to the diagram], but not art. In it we use our natural abilities. The real art begins only with all the rhythms, and ideas, and metamorphoses, and constructions of the play, and atmospheres, and everything which is above naturalism.

We have not yet reached even the naturalistic stan-

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dard. We are not yet able to speak or move well on the stage, or to justify our movements, etc., or have the feeling of truth on the stage. We are not yet even halfway. We have not yet touched the art of the theatre, and therefore we are really still children. We must continue our work very carefully, knowing that our ideal is still very far away. But we will never stop learning, even when we have become actors - we will always be students. To be able to continue our development, we must be brave enough to see quite honestly where we are as artists. This is the first thing I want to tell you.

I would like to make another suggestion to our directors, and that is that they try to prepare the following points in connection with the future work with the sketches:

SUGGESTIONS FOR DIRECTORS:

Everything must be simplified to the greatest possible extent, both from the technical and the artistic standpoint. To begin with, it is not possible to keep the audience waiting ~~twenty minutes between these small sketches, because even if~~ you act as geniuses, the audience will expire. We must make the pauses as short as possible, and this is the first task I give the directors.

SIMPLIFY AND DISCARD:

In simplifying the sketches, this must be done in three directions: a) settings, b) lighting effects (in every

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scene there are still too many changes, the best lighting being in Peer Gynt), c) sound effects. These are not as yet part of the performance; there are too many sounds in each play, and they are still very loud, so that they are disturbing and not helpful. You must simplify and diminish the quantities of these sounds and really try to elaborate their quality.

Regarding the music for Peer Gynt, this must be discarded, because in this sketch to have the music come simultaneously with the speech is unbearable. When I suggested it, I thought of some faraway sounds like breathing, not an orchestra. This sketch is a human psychological one; we don't need to have it interpreted by music. Actors and directors must have the courage to discard everything they have done before and begin all over again. This is the only way we will be able to achieve a standard with time. This is the second task I give the directors for the summer.

We must go on with the student part of our work until we reach the naturalistic place. Then we become actors; but we must try to solve some artistic problems, even if we are not yet grown-up actors. The directors must create really some artistic things during the summertime. You can approach this as you like. Each director must imagine many times the whole performance. It is very easy after these two days of performance to imagine future performances on the grounds or basis

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of what you have seen, and try to solve the following problems:

TEMPO:

a) Tempo, changing tempos, tempo as quality. To drag the performance or to lead it with temperament is another thing, but I am speaking of the changing of the tempos as qualities. It can be slow or fast, staccato or legato, and these are qualities. Look through your whole sketch, and prepare and write down what your imagination has given you as answers to this question of tempos.

BEGINNING, MIDDLE, END:

b) Each director must, by imagining his play, find the three parts: the beginning, the middle, and the end. The beginning and the end must be opposite to each other, either fully or partially, the contrast must be there.

CLIMAXES:

c) You must find at least three climaxes in each sketch. I say three because of the three parts: the beginning, the middle, and the end. In cases where the first and last part are so close to each other that the transition is only one moment, this is another question, whether there is a climax or not, but we will not touch on this problem now. We must speak of the three parts as if the middle part is a long transition, and it must have a climax. Therefore, you must find at least

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three climaxes. I have never yet seen one climax in your work. This requires more clear understanding of what the director wants to show as a climax, and how - this is the problem.

You will get the idea of the climax if you will remember only one thing: that climax is always tension. You will not be able to make a climax with light movements, etc., without tension. The reason there are no climaxes in your work is because of the lack of tension, which can be in two ways: full action and "as if" passivity.

MISE EN SCÈNE:

d) In many instances the weakest point in the scenes was the mise en scène. This is particularly true of Two Kings. Directors must imagine their sketches and see how to move their actors so that the mise en scène will be as interesting as the play itself. This is a task which our directors must imagine and be ready to incorporate it when we start our work next term.

SUGGESTIONS FROM CASTS:

The criticisms which we will each give the directors is an excellent exercise, because always in our theatre each member of the group has the right to say what he feels about the plays, although the director is the head and the master, and if he is willing to accept the suggestion he may,

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but he is not obligated to do so.

I must tell you that there is not much to be gained by criticizing our young actors as individuals, because each one of them needs the same things. Everybody needs the power to radiate atmosphere. Everybody needs to know how to use objective, justification, feeling of truth, etc. Therefore, what I have to say applies to everyone in general, and it would be wrong for me to speak to each person separately, although I must give suggestions to some of you in special cases. It may be more dull to hear criticism in general, but it is more right from the pedagogical standpoint.

I. What was the greatest achievement at last night's performance? The way in which you carried through the life. This was done successfully, and was a great achievement. Tomorrow I will ask you to do the same long, tiring exercise: to increase the life. You will get very much from this exercise because it is like blood, it circulates through the whole body. You will grow as actors through this ability to collect the life into your souls.

II. The second achievement was that almost throughout the whole performance you kept the atmosphere, and this was again very gratifying to me. You must realize that you are able to create the atmosphere

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to a certain extent, and to create the life, and to keep it as a jewel in your pocket. We must learn to appreciate what we have already reached. If a person can do something, and stops to appreciate it, this is the beginning of becoming conceited. However, if I say to myself that I am very thankful to my destiny that I have, for instance, two hands; and then I am in an accident and lose one, it will be too late to appreciate them. I must appreciate them while I have them; and if I am able to appreciate them, I will be able to use them in quite another way. Therefore we must appreciate what we have already achieved. We are able to radiate atmosphere, and we must be thankful to the school, and to our destiny, that we have this power.

III. We have already reached a certain level in our development as a group. Already this is streaming and radiating, perhaps even stronger than the whole performance of yesterday. We have a group which knows what it means to be together, to create one thing, to serve each other, and the whole performance. This is a great power; be thankful for it, and appreciate it, and never lose it.

STYLE: The Director's Work:

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Directors must think over another problem: the problem of style, which was lacking in yesterday's performance. There was no idea about the style. All the sketches were the same. This problem must be thought through during the summertime. You must try to find the line first of all: whether it is tragedy, drama, drama near to comedy, etc. Each director must find out what the style of each individual play is. For example, Paula's suggestion that The Fishing Scene be acted in waves is right.

CHARACTERIZATION: Suggestions to Individuals:

We have said once that for a real actor-artist, each part is a character part. To show oneself on the stage without characterization is not interesting and means nothing for the actor. Each part, even the part of the most beautiful lover on the stage, must be considered as a character part.

For example, Blair, in acting Kostrin, acts an old, passionate man "in general." If, after seeing this part, I ask myself what character I have seen. I would not know, because I have only seen an old man in general; Blair has not yet created a personality. This is not yet a characterization and not yet a figure. The same is true of Paula as Balladina - a tragic figure "in general," but the tragic personality of Balladina is not clear.

Just the opposite is true of John: he tries always to be a character, but he is not yet able to reach this because

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his body and his spirit are on two different levels, and they have not yet found each other. The soul and the imagination want something, but the body is not yet able to do it. The way he tries to find the character is right, and with time his body will find his soul, and there will be a certain harmony. When this happens, we will know that we have seen a personality.

In Blair's *Kostrin*, there are some traces of character. For instance, when he begins to speak to Gralon, and again when he says, "No, lady, no! A courier from the count awaits your orders." In Peer Gynt the moment when the mother asks, "Am I invited?" I feel I could write pages about the character; but afterwards it becomes only an old woman, weak and dying. It is important to have the feeling whether you are either creating somebody or something.

The latter half of our work, that part beyond naturalism, is always bound with the creation of new personalities. Imagine that you die, and you see before you all the images that you have created during your life. You will see many characters in general, and then you will see one or two people who you have created. It is very important to know when you have created something in general, and when you have created a personality.

Eleanor's *Goplana* is a very strange case. There is already the germ to become a personality there. The director

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must have an eye for this precious thing, in order that he may help the actor to develop it.

There is one thing which may be dangerous for Jocelyn, as an actor. She is doing outwardly more than she is able to justify inwardly. She must watch the habit of making faces and gestures. Her special task is to justify everything she does.

To Mrs. Elmhirst generally I would give this suggestion: I think you must develop both as an actress and a director. So far you have achieved very much in these directions, but you must achieve still more. Don't take your weakness for artistic expression. Sometimes you are only weak, and you mistake it for the color of some artistic thing. You must be more like Jocelyn, and she more like you. You will find more expressiveness as an actress if you try to be more powerful. Having more power, you will be able to say many weak and soft things: for example, when you are trying to calm people in The Fishing Scene, you are not really calming them; you are being peaceful. As an actress you must be very unquiet inside, and yet try to make peace around you, but not by being weak inside. You must penetrate into this rhythm where storms are going on, and from these storms you will find quiet.

Suggestions to Alan:

What you have outside, you must turn inside. Before you are able to express things outside, you must have them in-

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side. You are as if turned inside out. You must radiate many things, and not incorporate things too quickly. This is a Russian characteristic. Before they take account of what is really going on, in them, they see that they are laughing or crying, etc. Before it is really born inside you, you begin to express something; and when it is done, it is too late because it is already done. You must imagine your character much more, without moving yourself. Let your character move, and ask yourself whether you are really full of emotions. Your body is developed, therefore it is too quick to serve. It anticipates things which are only developing in your soul.

Concluding Remarks:

In conclusion, I want to say: the directors' work for the summer will be:

1. To simplify everything.
2. To find the right tempos.
3. To find the right mise en scène and style.

If we are not ready by Christmas, we will not show our sketches to the public. Yesterday it was a torture for me even to have our friends present. Nobody in the whole world can explain to the audience that our work is not to be taken as a production. Unconsciously they take it as a production, and judge it accordingly. It is too dangerous. Therefore, we must close the door to visitors next term. Otherwise our work will be greatly retarded.

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The less you speak about our work and about our Studio, the better. By this I mean speaking professionally about what we are going to prepare and perform. It is impossible to explain our work; one must do it to understand it. I remember once trying to explain to Chaliapin what Stanislavsky's method was; and after speaking to him for hours and hours, he turned to me and said, "I do not understand." It is difficult to understand really. By speaking about our work, we only run the risk of being misunderstood. We must wait until we are able to show our work to the world.

One last word to Peter. You are a charming actor. You will never become conceited, because if you do, I will kill you! But you must get more and more warmth. This is like a recipe from a physician.

Comments Made by Michael Chekhov During Course of Discussion:

One of the principles of our theatre is to have this type of discussion, because the performances must be the joint work of our group.

In trying to simplify our settings, we must continue to make use of the height, depth, and breadth of the stage and space.

An interesting opinion about Two Kings was given by Mr. Shdanof, who said that sometimes he began to laugh, and then suddenly he stopped, because of some deeper meaning in the play, which he did not realize at once. This play is

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philosophy incorporated in very charming pictures.

The whole idea of this discussion is to say everything now, and not to fall into the danger of discussions afterwards, because these really kill our actor's ability. If you will enter into long, intellectual discussions, you will kill your performances.

SUGGESTIONS GIVEN BY MEMBERS OF THE GROUP,
IN CONNECTION WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF JULY 17th

Beatrice Straight:

Two Kings:

At moments the mise en scène was interesting and of good quality, but at other times it was so chaotic that it had no meaning whatever. The mise en scène in this play must be worked out very carefully, as it is so important. The idea of up and down on the throne can be more developed in connection with the theme of the play, and in the mise en scène. I felt chaos in the sounds. I felt that with the individual characters there was form.

With regard to the idea of the play and the theme of the play, I felt the theme of the two kings was quite clear, but the idea of the group was not clear. The director should try to work out the connection between the group and the two kings.

Costumes: I liked them, but felt there could be much more contrast in the form, color, and style. The idea of using

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the curtains is interesting, but it gives the play a different style to that set by the costumes, which are light and frothy; but the curtains gave another quality which is even more interesting. The first costumes which Miriam designed would have fitted in better with the curtains, as used in the play.

In this play particularly, unusual sounds and music could be used to advantage. There is a very amusing moment when the old king comes in and the new king is asleep, but something more interesting could be developed from the idea. The difference between the two should be more developed.

Balladina I:

Mise en scène in this play is much clearer, but I feel that from the moment of the showing of the knife until the death of Alina, the theme must be worked out much more dramatically. It is such an important moment that it should be given much more importance in the mise en scène. The scene between Goplana and Balladina must be much stronger. As the theme is tragic-lyric, the whole scene could have much more richness and power, building up from the dramatic into the lyric. At the moment it is almost lyric all the way through. I don't feel that it is justified to hypnotize Balladina with the knife. The scene is lovely now, but small. Through the development of the characters, it can be played on a much larger scale.

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Palladina II:

This scene needs a lot of work with the actors to develop the tragic theme. The mise en scène through the Gralon scene must be more interesting. The use of sounds is important. Through the mother's scene the characters must ~~be much more elaborated in connection with the qualities of~~ storm and wind. These qualities must be made much more powerful. I feel that the moment of the mother's metamorphosis is wrong: to show her broken and quiet at the end of the play is not right. If she is broken but not quiet, the audience will have a feeling of greater tragedy. She should develop another quality of wildness. (Comment by Mr. Chekhov: The Mother's danger is that she is getting younger and younger!) The line of development of Kostrin's character is that as a servant, he becomes more a master.

(Beatrice Straight's comments, continued):

The Fishing Scene:

Trying to imagine it as if from the audience, I feel that it is very telescoped; the actors do one thing immediately after another. For instance, the sighting of the boat could be much more elaborated. The most important thing is to develop the pauses and moments of quiet: the beginning of the scene being much quieter, and the end being full of speech and sounds. More time should be given for reaction and development of a moment like the sighting of the boat. Perhaps

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the feeling of waiting could be more stressed at the beginning of the play, right up to the sighting of the boat.

The Golden Steed:

The transitions between the scenes must be more elaborated.

Peer Gynt:

At times the mise en scène could be more speaking. Because it is such an intimate scene, each movement is significant; therefore, if the same positions are repeated many times, the audience gets a feeling of monotony. The theme of separation - the mother going one way, and the son the other - can be more stressed than it is at the moment.

Comments of Peter Vasaroudizis: [Technical Assistant to M. Chekhov]

The more simple our settings become, the fewer structures required, the better it will be. This will be possible if the psychological gesture of the structure is found. The same thing applies to the lighting. With regard to sounds, it would be a good idea for the students during the summer holidays to listen for unusual sounds which could be used in our work.

The Fishing Scene:

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The director of this scene has concentrated mainly on developing the atmosphere. I would suggest that more attention be paid to elaborating the mise en scène.

Two Kings:

This director sees everything in his imagination, but finds difficulty in putting it into practice. I would suggest that during the summer the director tries to imagine the whole play many times, and then tries to elaborate one little piece of it.

Peer Gynt:

I would suggest that the director of this scene should try to become the opposite of what he is in life: he should try to be "out" rather than "in".

Balladina:

The director is sometimes too quiet, and explains too long. The director is a human being, but as a director he is a horse.

Golden Steed:

I would suggest that the director change everything in the play: mise en scène, atmospheres, everything.

General advice to directors: Try to change things!

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Comments of A. Harkness:

I suggest to directors and designers that they rehearse more often from the back row of the theatre. This will give them a feeling for the theatre as a whole, and establish the relationship between the stage and the action. I feel that the curtains very often hinder the action and are heavy and confused.

Balladina:

I think it would help the actors if when they come with a new reading of their roles, the director would either approve or disapprove, or give them some directions.

Comments of Blair Cutting:

In connection with Two Kings, I felt that the old mise en scene was more helpful to the actors. We should have more full rehearsals in order that the actors may get a better feeling of the whole. This applies to all the sketches.

Comments of Paul Rogers:

The directors should "fly over" the whole play much more often than they do. This will help to find tempo and rhythm. I would suggest a more thorough organization of the technical side. Everyone should know what he has to do. The

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director must be more aware of the qualities the actors have to give, in order that he can use them. Sometimes the directors lack the ability to find their way to the actors. I would suggest attempting more subtle and original sounds.

Comments of Paula Morel:

The Fishing Scene:

I feel that the style is dictated by the fact that it is a realistic play about real country people. This kind of people only punctuate with movements and sounds. In the play we have been working too much on sentences, and from our speech comes the action. On the contrary, in life such people do something with their hands or bodies, and the speech comes as a result. Peasants do not work from their speech, but the speech comes through their movements. I feel that perhaps the rhythm of this play lies in the silences, and that the speech does not motivate the actions.

The Golden Steed:

I should like to change everything about it, and everything I did in it.

Peer Gynt:

I feel that the play should be developed in connection with the theme that the mother is leaving the place, and that Peer is coming to her for escape. The mother's dying

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stops his means of escape. With such an interpretation, Peter's present character is too sympathetic.

Balladina:

The idea of the spiral in this play is the one thing we should hold on to and develop. This could be done in the setting by continuing the spiral behind the Saint; then the presence of the Saint would not lose its importance as it does now. I feel that Gralon and the mother should come from below to above, and Balladina and Kostrin from above to below. In considering the style, we have never realized that the play comes from the people, and that religion plays a big part in it. And the Saint would have a significance for Balladina, because it is a religion which comes from the people. In Balladina I, we have not yet found how the theme of love can be combined with the theme of killing, which is all worked through with the theme of nature.

Two Kings:

The director of this scene should find the relationship of the group to the two kings, to the court, and now to the curtains. The relationship of the crowd must be found.

Comments of Patrick Harvey: [Musician-Composer]

The Fishing Scene:

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Too compressed. There is material there for a play about three times as long as the present scene. Who the people are, and what they are doing is an important thing to establish. This is important from the narrative point of view. We should know something about the characters and what they are doing. Mother Gillard is surely a high point in the play. If you are going to have her, certain responsibilities arise in regard to her. You must show in detail the relationship between Mother Gillard and the crowd. There are very good grounds for drama if you make Mother Gillard the object of the crowd's hostility, although she is a kind old person wanting to help them.

Balladinas:

If these two scenes are to be considered as parts of the same play, I feel they lack unity. As a member of the audience, I require more explanation. For example, the audience should know why the mother is going mad, and why she has been in the castle.

Peer Gynt:

Everything in the narrative is there for the audience.

The Golden Steed:

The "bread motif" sounds. There is no justification for these sounds. There should be some rough working principle about the use of sounds in the scenes.

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Two Kings:

I feel that the costume of the young is too great a contrast to the others.

Comments of Felicity Cumming:

Balladina I:

The setting seems to be two-dimensional. The distinction between Balladina as a human being, and Goplana as an elemental being is not clear.

Balladina II:

This seems to be in two parts. Up to the moment when Gralon comes in, it is awe inspiring, but after his entrance the audience seems to sit back. In choosing a costume, the actual figure of the actor might be more considered.

Peer Gynt:

At the beginning there seems to be a good deal of contrast between the two characters, but towards the end they seem to take on each other's qualities.

The Golden Steed:

I feel that this director is in danger of becoming too "precious," because of his use of detail.

The Fishing Scene:

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The director does not seem to have sufficient confidence in herself, and this makes it difficult for the actors. Even if the director knows that what she is doing is not right, and the actors know it is wrong, the director must have sufficient confidence in her ability to carry the thing through. With regard to the costumes, I felt that they had no relation to the structures, and that the lighting had no relation to the acting. There could be more connection and harmony between them.

Two Kings:

The characters seem to be too individual and have no connection with each other, except for the costumes. The contrast between the chaotic movements and the long silences was good. I felt there was too much repetition in the text. (Mr. Chekhov's comment: "I found the repetitions very beautiful, as in some of the legends and stories of Buddha, where there is always repetition. It gives something rhythmical.")

Terence Morgan (comments):

I would like to make a suggestion to all designers. Before deciding on a set, the designer should set it up and experiment to see whether it can be easily moved or not.

The Fishing Scene:

My impression is that the lighting makes the set too still, peaceful, and quiet; whereas it should make it more tempestuous. It seems to me that people just walked on and something happened.

Balladinas (I and II):

The text of Balladina I seems to be very disjointed. The idea of the spiral could be strengthened if there were a bigger space to act on and there was actually a circular stairway.

Henry Young (comments):

Balladinas:

The director has so many ideas, but is too kind to her cast; she must be more of a dictator. The fact that all nature is against Balladina is a theme which could be more developed.

Peer Gynt:

Peer's character should be much wilder and more spoilt, and therefore, more lovable.

Two Kings:

Very brilliant. The costumes seemed to be too colorless. The director sometimes leads the audience up to a laugh, and then does not give it to them. The audience is left wondering.

John Schoepperle (comments):

The Fishing Scene:

My criticism in general is the way in which the directors direct. This particular director should know more clearly just what she wants in the play. What mistakes there are, are brought about by lack of clarity regarding the main idea. For example: Mother Gillard - why is she, and what is she doing? The director must have more feeling for the main idea of the play.

Balladinas:

The same criticism applies here. The director does not seem always to know what she wants.

Golden Steed:

The director should try to think of and imagine the play as a whole.

Gretel Schreiber (suggestions):

In every sketch I found that the music and noises were the weakest part. The set of Peer Gynt was too horizontal and too open.

Jocelyn Wynne (suggestions):

The Fishing Scene:

As a member of the cast, I felt groundless and weak. Perhaps the director could give the cast more objectives at different moments - something that we could fall back on when inspiration gives out.

Balladinas:

Whenever there was great tension on the stage, the thunder got louder. I don't think the use of the dagger between

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(Jocelyn Wynne's suggestions, continued)

Balladina and the Saint is very good. The connection between Balladina and Kostrin was not clear. The voice of the mother beginning with, "I am no murderer to wander in the night," gets louder instead of dying away. The only connection I felt between the two Balladinas was the recurring sound made on the saw. The end of Balladina II had a strange casualness after the mother scene. I don't understand the connection between Goplana and the sisters.

The Two Kings:

The scene between the two kings was too drawn out and relied on the actors for improvisation. I felt there was a lack of justification at times.

Peer Gynt:

Peer does not seem to realize his mother's death, although it was very clear to the audience. He should be more rough, more of a peasant, in order to give a greater contrast to the dying mother. I felt I wanted the chair to rock.

Gavin T (suggestions):

Two Kings:

About the costumes: I felt that the characters were all too different to be put in the same color. I felt that the jester's costume did not fit his voice, and his voice did not fit his costume. The opening speech did not seem to be up to the standard of the rest of the text; the other repetitions were good.

Balladina I:

I like very much the interpretation of Goplana and could see it worked out in the form of a dance, which would also help

(Gavin T suggestions, continued)

to convey the idea that she is an elemental being.

Balladina II:

I felt there should be longer pauses and less movement. There seemed to be too much movement for the tragedy of the whole thing, and the intimacy of the chapel scene was lost.

The Fishing Scene:

For my own part, I experienced difficulty in not being able to fulfill my objective before I had to leave the stage. General suggestions regarding costumes: It would be a great help if the designers would consider the actual problems of making the costumes when designing them.

Joan Tolman (suggestions):

Two Kings:

When the new king is descending the steps, the curtain falling down behind him is very good. The mise en scène during the first part of the play was not clear; it was all too cramped. With regard to the direction, John is always too nice about everything and is satisfied too easily. If you have an objective to please him, it is fulfilled before it should be.

The Fishing Scene:

The mise en scène was not clear. At times there was not enough atmosphere. And I feel there should be a different ending to it.

Balladina II:

In some parts the actors were acting what should be felt by the audience, their faces could not always be seen. In both

Balladinas the death of Alina and Gralon should be shooting up from the spiral, so that they should die on the right instead of the left of the stage. In Balladina I the style was missing and it was much too slow.

The Golden Steed :

There was no feeling for the whole, and the style did not seem to be there.

Peer Gynt:

The actual moment of the mother's death was not clear.

Lina (comments):

Balladina II:

Why does Kostrin go on and off at the beginning without any reason?

Patricia G. (comments:

Fishing Scene:

The thing that impressed me more than anything, was how wonderful it was to get the impression of the sea into the movements of the actors. I think that if that could be carried out fully, you could almost feel the breakers without the help of any sounds. You could increase the feeling of tension by increasing the feeling of fear and yet clinging on to something. At the end, when they have lost everything, the tension would be ended.

The Golden Steed:

I would suggest that this would be made more simple. I feel it is too complicated at the present time.

Balladina I:

I did not get the impression of a lake or a forest; the setting struck me as being rather artificial.

Peer Gynt:

The setting gave me the impression of a very still, frosty night, and there seemed to be no need of the sound of the wind. The sound of the sleigh bells seemed wrong to me, because these should be only in Asa's mind. Peer lost too quickly the impression that he comes from the outside world into the world of the dying mother. He became too sympathetic too quickly.

Eleanor Falson: (comments)Balladinas:

The settings could be developed more effectively. In Balladina I there could be much more space. In Balladina II it should be much more compressed, with movements on the vertical part. With regard to the costumes, I feel in Balladina I there should be a lot of color; and there should be less color in Balladina II. The costumes should get stiffer, and should change during the scene in Balladina I. I think Alina should be killed halfway down the spiral, and Balladina should be driven down to the end of it. The Saint should be part way down the spiral. Balladina should face Kostrin. The mother's destruction should happen further down the spiral. Kostrin and Balladina's movements should always be down, down. Perhaps at the end there could be some flashes of lightning which would light up the back and reveal a reflection of the setting of Balladina I. Kostrin should always be obviously trying to get power over Balladina.

The Fishing Scene:

Instead of starting the play at the end of three days of waiting, it might be possible to present the whole metamorphosis of waiting in the play and have it appear to last one day. The cast should be at a point of great anxiety at the end; whereas, by the end of three days, you have really got beyond the most terrible tension. I would like to see the play started at a lower point of tension, so that it could grow steadily through the whole play, in increasing waves. The early morning atmosphere should be more elaborated. This could be done by having the people come in with longer pauses in between; they could just come in and sit and wait; this would give a sullen and heavy quality. The scene should be played on a lower set, and the whole play might be much lower and heavier in every respect.

Peer Gynt:

The metamorphosis of Peer is not clear throughout the scene. Somewhere there should be some bigger line of development.

The Golden Steed:

The brother should be much more powerful in order to make us believe that they might really get up the mountain. The people should really be more in their power. Antin should not give away the end of the play so many times. The brothers' "Hold them!" scene should be closer to the place where they enter the stage. Then they could have one line of progression from the left-hand corner up to the mountain and down.

Two Kings:

The metamorphosis of the crowd should be made much clearer. Perhaps the idea that they were really inventing the two kings subconsciously could be elaborated in a very interesting way.

Catherine Gabrielson: (comments)Fishing Scene:

The style should be more clearly defined. Now it is partly realistic and partly expressionistic. The rocks are expressionistic and the acting is realistic. If the play is to be realistic, we should do away with the set we have and work along Paula's suggestion about peasants. This could be done by showing nets or boats on the sets. If it is to be expressionistic, then the whole thing should be intensified much more, especially with regard to the acting.

Balladina I:

The set should be more expressive. The metamorphosis of Goplana's character should change her to a much more powerful being.

Balladina II:

The gesture is not definite enough, and a more straight up and down gesture would be better because it would show Balladina being driven, being more confined. Kostrin is a very interesting character, and at the end he should be shown as a scintillating, evil power, driving Balladina down. The character of the Saint is very beautiful, but I feel that it should be more significant. We do not know now quite what he is sup-

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posed to be. Perhaps he could be Balladina's conscience. His face could be made up as a reflection of her face, and his movements and speech could be similar to hers.

Peer Gynt:

There was not enough variety. The lights were too peaceful, and Peer was too peaceful. If immediately Feet entered the room, it could become more and more restless, it would show the idea of the play: that Asa lives and longs for Peer, but as soon as he comes, he disturbs everything for her - the room might almost tremble. When Peer goes out into the world again after his mother's death, it should be different for him. This might be done by lights to indicate the greater chaos into which he is going. When Peer tells his story, the action is much more interesting.

The Golden Steed:

The setting is too lyrical for the costumes and the present figures.

The Two Kings:

Perhaps this play could be more stylized, but also more human. The director's mistake when approaching the play was that he gave the stylization first. If he would begin with the human part next term, the play would be much funnier and much more tragic.

Miriam Garthe: (comments)

Balladina II: The Saint plays such an important role in the first part of the scene, and then seems to lose his connection. The noises and sounds offstage when the mother

enters are too primitive and too obvious. The rhythm of the whole play is often disturbed by the thunder.

Peer Gynt:

Peer's costume is too soft in color and texture.

Two Kings:

The use of the echo is too primitive.

Peter Funnard: (comments)

Peer Gynt:

The director should go very cautiously in trying to develop color in the play. He should concentrate on trying to develop Peer's character next term, but he should remember that it is a very short scene, and perhaps it would be better to take only two sides of Peer's character and develop them fully. Don't bring in too many of his varied characteristics. Perhaps only his love for his mother, and his imagination.

Balladina I:

Perhaps the director could work with more precision and clarity in developing those interesting and fantastic qualities in the scene, but in doing it with much more precision make them vague. Perhaps the actor should act it naturalistically at first, and then build the strange waving movements on this solid foundation. I would like to compare The Fishing Scene and Balladina I. In The Fishing Scene, you feel it is too hurried and not a big enough gesture, while in Balladina I it is too slow and the gestures not big enough. The connection between the two sisters should be explored.

Balladina II:

I feel after watching this scene that something heavy is dragging me down, not just the pure tragedy, but something too heavy and not sufficiently tragic.

The Fishing Scene:

I think it is very rich. I think the Mother Gillard scene should be a much more important moment in the play. I feel the ending is wrong; it makes me unhappy. Perhaps the sounds at the end are wrong. There is lots of material in the scene, but the proportions are all wrong. It would be very interesting if the tempos were of entirely different proportion. The quarrel scene should develop more slowly, and the actual quarrel should not take so much time.

The ending in Balladina II is a very good line; it should be elaborated and made more clear. On the other hand, the ending of the Two Kings is weak and leaves the audience without any idea of what it has been all about.

Two Kings:

The director should try to find a new psychological gesture for the whole play, one that would give the actors an idea of the whole play.

The Golden Steed:

If the director continues along the same line, he must find the connection between the setting, the text, the costumes, the characters, etc.

Deirdre Hurst : (comments)

The general suggestion to all directors, that they work even more closely with Miss Crowther, will prevent the loss of much time and effort, because if the directors have a clear idea of what they want, Miss Crowther is able to direct her work along the same lines. In this way, the character and the speech will be developed simultaneously.

The Golden Steed:

I always feel in this scene a lack of justification and feeling of truth. This is due, perhaps, to the many old things which have come to us from work done in the past. But unless this feeling of truth is found, the scene will never be convincing, either for the actors or the audience.

Balladina I :

I felt this scene was unreal, without being real. A dream without the reality from which the dream could spring. The lovely, pastel, Japanese quality of the setting had absolutely no connection with the heavy, violent setting of Balladina II. The movements of Balladina I were too stylized and came from an entirely different world than those used in Balladina II. At the present moment these two scenes have no connection. I felt that the pauses were too long in many instances and lacked justification. Goplana's character must be elaborated in every way, she must belong to another world. At the moment, there are really three worlds in this scene: the faint world of reality, the too strong dream quality, and the elemental world of Goplana.

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These merge into one another, but without a clear understanding of where their boundaries are. The style must be more clearly defined.

Balladina II:

I feel the biggest task at the moment is for the characters to try to find each other in the sketch. We are still acting individual performances without sufficient relation to each other.

Peer Gynt:

I felt the old mise en scène, when Peter stood up by the mother's bed, was better. It gave variety, and at the same time created two worlds: the intimate world with the mother, and the world in which Peer has been living since he left the mother. When he stands up, the director can use his height to make the mother even more broken and small; it will also give the audience a suggestion of the swaggering quality of Peer, which justifies his looking away from his mother, and becoming engrossed in his own bravado at that time. This would also increase the tragedy of the moment when he turns to her and finds her dead. She has been, in a sense, his audience during the quarrel with St. Peter.

Two Kings:

I felt the first mise en scène very confused at times: the cast was all huddled in one corner for no apparent reason, there seemed to be no form to it, and there were too many inconsequential movements. The use of the curtain added to the confusion, and it looked as if the actors had been

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accustomed to a much larger space, and were getting in one another's way. I would suggest that the curtains should come right down in the "Throne Room Scene"; otherwise the half-concealed space behind them is very confusing to the audience. It was very difficult to define which were significant moments and which were trivial ones. These must be found in order to give form to the play. The movements could be almost clock-like in their precision; they should never be naturalistic. There must be some clear idea of what the play has been about when the curtain comes down, but at the moment this does not exist.

Suggestions made by Miss Crowther, in connection with the performance of July 17, 1937:

Much that has been said today also applies to our work with the voice. When I listened to the sounds yesterday, the speech seemed so small in every case, and the voices were thin.

Two Kings:

In many cases, the character swallowed the speech in this scene. For example, in Blair's case, there was a very clear character there, but the speech was not clear. It is really more helpful to begin with a straight character in speech, and then add the characteristics on to it.

The Fishing Scene:

At the opening moment, many of the words were lost, and many of the smaller words were lost through^{out} particularly

at the beginning of the speeches. The audience should never have to wonder about the words. The speech was all very small, and should be much bigger in gesture. We must learn to be able to express joy in our voices, without the quality of tragedy. We must learn to speak out of a distance and to a distance.

An important point is the hand gestures which have been given to help you to get movement in the speech. This has gone to such an extreme that you now use your whole bodies and really get tension in your speech. In future we must take away all hand movements until you can learn to use them properly.

Some things cannot be excused. After being told twice, you should never have a fault in pronunciation, nor a wrong vowel sound.

Balladina I:

Much of the speech was not heard. Goplana's accent pulls her up. If you find yourselves being pulled back each time you speak, your character will be lost.

Golden Steed:

Some of the voices got right into the head, and some drawled. The "Silver Moment" was so very small that it did not express anything.

You should never feel that the gesture hampers you; it should always remain flexible. With regard to noises and music offstage, I was astonished when I heard the music in Peer Gynt, because the words were not audible above it. When such a thing is attempted, it must be rehearsed many times in order to find the right harmony between the voice and the sounds.

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Sometimes the character was lost, and this may have been on account of the speech. For instance, the mother in Balladina II lost her character at times, but the direction of the whole character was much bigger.

The similarity of the voices must be watched. We must have unity in the way we speak, but you must keep your own voices and your own characteristics. This you must watch for yourselves very carefully. You will never be given a pitch in voice, or a placing, which will make your voice like anybody else's. You must keep your own voice and develop it.

Next term we will develop the dramatic, tragic, and lyric styles, which we need so badly.

I would suggest that in future the texts should be vdry carefully considered before the play is begun. Many of the lines in our present texts are poor as far as the English is concerned, and some are very difficult to speak; this applies particularly to translations.

I would suggest when rehearsing in the future, that the time be given for us to work as a group in each scene. It would really be more helpful than the individual work, and this way we would know what the director really wants. We must know where the voice of each character is to be placed.