

RHYTHMICAL ACTIVITIES
STYLE
IMAGINATION - TIME
FORM
STYLE

RHYTHMICAL ACTIVITIES:

Sentences, and how to use them. "Now, my dear, tell me all about it." Take it only as a whole, with feeling of the whole. Will you please divide into three parts: "Now, my dear, (small pause) tell me all about it."

This is not to be proved, but I appeal to this rhythmical feeling. We have seen that this is the way to interplay the sentences, the scenes, the characters. The ideal is, of course, that these things must be forgotten, and then they will arise inside of you as if of themselves - unconsciously. Then we will really get the ability to use our rhythmical abilities.

Now, speak the sentence again as a whole. Do a comparatively long pause, not as a special thing, but as a pause.

Spy: "I refuse to let you wriggle out." This subtle feeling for these fine rhythmical things must occur in us when we are making this attempt to hear it, and to do it more and more carefully. This attempt must be always there, the feeling of rhythm will not come through the head but only through the inner contact to hear the rhythm.

Will you say the same sentence without any sharp

divisions between the first, second and third part, but have a feeling in general of the boundaries:

1. I refuse
2. to let you wriggle out
3. pause

Nobody can tell you what is wrong as there are so many ways to make it right.

Now, will you take the following sentence:

1. Because you once meant (in this first part there are 2 parts) (1) Because (2) you once meant

I want you to do one long moment in which are certain parts. I would recommend you to take a simple movement in three parts. Try to experience it first of all as a whole. Then in three parts. Then only first part, with two parts.

Vary the sentence, and vary your mood - hear with your whole being. By doing such exercises we will get not only powerful speech, we will get our "presence" on the stage if we are sure that we are living rhythm. Please do it very quickly - in one breath.

Now, we shall take another exercise - three parts -

The Deluge.

- 1st part - enemies and animals
- 2nd " - coming storm - chaos
- 3rd " - pause

The Deluge:

We will consider as the first part, the whole scene until the first noise of the storm. Then the second part

M. Chekhov

March 10, 1938

which includes everything until the moment when chaos and panic ceases, and only when the pause is turned, begins the third part. These are the conditions I give you. Will you imagine the whole scene so that you will anticipate the whole as three parts. The less descriptive the better - more archetypal.

The only thing I want you to experience is the three main parts, paying attention to the feeling of the whole, without paying attention to the special divisions which are obviously there, and try to strengthen by keeping in your experience, in your soul, in your emotional life only these three parts. That means, of course, that each single part must be experienced in the whole.

I could really feel the will to get these three parts and it was to a very great extent successful. It was difficult because the parts are so long.

In the physical world this chair exists as it is, but in the world of rhythm it exists as we want it. We have to interpret the chair as we want.

Now, we shall go on with the same exercise but you will do it to experience as a whole, without even three divisions - only one part - and try to do it like a scheme first, as if it were a rhythmical gesture - compressed. The rhythmical task is to experience the unity, the oneness of the whole.

One mistake. You have not understood the justification of this quickness. You have acted as if you have very much time. If we know we are going to do it quickly, the justification is quite a different one. Now, I want you to repeat the scheme still shorter. Try to live in it with your artistic instinct - in a very short archetypal scheme. Do it as quickly as possible to justify it with only the feeling of the whole.

Now, do it again, still shorter. Pay attention to the beginning. I want you to take it in three parts, by acting the beginning, please have anticipation of the end, and by acting the last part, remember the beginning. The more you come near to the end, the more rises in your soul the beginning. The middle part is the mysterious place not to be repeated. When you will come to this middle part, try to experience that we are in the middle part, the fine psychological part.

STYLE: IMAGINATION - TIME:

Shdanoff Play: [The Possessed]:

We shall try to speak some sentences from the play based on two things: imagination and time. We shall pay attention to the speech only. Imagination in the style of the play.

Will you try to recall this time form; get it simply through your psychological effort. Try to keep your

bodies free.

Now, try to imagine in the style of the play; imagination and style in the speech - this is the main idea today. At the end of the scene when Nicholas is sitting speaking with the invisible spy - this invisible gentleman in spectacles - about "usual and unusual" people, imagine in the style of the play, how he speaks. After this long torture and psychological fight with this image he is extremely exhausted and falls asleep sitting on the chair. The door opens and the mother appears in the room. She looks at him and sees his pale tortured face, his tired mouth, his beautiful strange eyebrows, with a tremendous love and desire to help him. She sees he is sleeping and she turns to leave him, asleep and resting. At this moment he opens his eyes and looks at her and says, "Mother, dear." The mother is frightened and starts and says, "Yes, I only...I only wanted... to see how you are. I am sorry...I have wakened you." He says, "That is all right - I was awake."

I want you to speak absolutely only in imagination and in the style. This strange kind of pulse or heartbeat is what the author wants to have in this play. This is an emotional idea. This is very much in the style that we want to get. When the form is there, you will get the desire to fill it. Without any intellectual content - this is the actor's approach. Understand how important it is to find this feeling

of tempo which exists through this whole play - the tempo in the kind of life which is the same through the whole play. Imagine in the style, then be aware of what the style is. There must be no "hurry" during the play unless the action actually calls for it.

Now, this scene we have taken in the form of a scheme - imagine in the style. After this long and difficult night which Nicholas has had with the convict, the beggar girl, the engineer and the idealist - this is one long night - he comes back unhappy because he is always seeking for something which he cannot find. In this unhappy moment Liza appears without knocking at the door. She appears before him, having apparently had instructions from the spy - the gentleman in the spectacles - but she herself does not realize that she speaks his words, that she fulfills his plans. She thinks she speaks to Nicholas from her side.

Nicholas: You! What are you doing here?

Liza: My fiance has gone away - to his estate - on business. I have been expecting you day after day and wondering where you were.

Nicholas: But, you shall stay?...But your fiance?...

Liza: How can I tell; what does it matter?

FORM:

We are going to exercise in the style; you must again imagine in the style. You must speak the sentences correctly psychologically. This strange dialogue seems illogical but it means much to them. The form must be filled psy-

M. Chekhov

March 10, 1938

chologically - not by physical tension - fill the body with the form. Try to find the satisfaction when the form is there - then the tempo will come at once.

We speak always of feelings and fire, but the fire must not be formless or shapeless. When it is fire without form and shape, it is not art, it is chaos. And in these attempts which were without form, chaos and cosmos were interchanging. When there is form there is real fire and power. Feeling with form. The stronger the form, the more fire you can give. When the form is there we are happy to show our fire, but when it is not there we are often ashamed of our fire. Pay attention to the form with which you cover your fire.

The Meeting scene:

The spy declares the meeting open. Incorporate the style in the speech. First of all, imagine the characters: The spy is always threatening to break the form, so he must inevitably experience the style in the wave form as a breathing pulse. If it becomes one straight line it will lose the power because it becomes too even.

Beggar Girl scene: (Fairy Tale scene)

Imagine that these two personalities are living in two different worlds. She is always living in the world of fairy tale unreality, beautiful, and fantastic, and frightening dreams. Imagine all these things in the style. Nicholas

is living in the reality which is always ugly. He is seeking for something, but he does not know himself what it is. He has found this strange girl who tells him fairy tales as if her fairy tales were realities. He tries to penetrate through the fairy tales to her world of fairy tale. When she speaks, her gesture is to open the door into the world in which she sees all these images. His gesture, by hearing the fairy tale, is to touch where this door is - he feels the door is open but cannot find it, therefore, by making this tremendous effort to find the door which she opens for him, he begins to tell himself the fairy tales. He does not interrupt her, but he speaks continuously because he is grasping and seeking for this door. The task is to incorporate your imagination in the style.

* * * * *

STYLE:

Spanish Evening:

Will you, through inner effort, get this style. Start quite consciously what we have to do to awaken in us to get this style. Butterflies coming from the sky and touching the earth and flying off again - the butterfly - changing objects.

Scene:

Old People standing before the windows with wreaths

M. Chekhov

March 10, 1938

waiting for the bridegroom who is nearly ready. The Old People are happy and full of expectation that the bridegroom will appear at any moment. They will lead him to the carriage, and the whole group will move towards the church. Their idea is that they will throw the wreaths before him. He appears at the window to show that he is nearly ready, then is frightened by the sound of the music and disappears. There is the music to which they all react. Each word, each sound must be complete. Each movement complete in the "butterfly" style, but being old, they only "touch the earth" psychologically. The young people are very unhappy, and almost crying. The old people's bodies are almost breaking they are so stiff. When the bridegroom appears with the mother, she dominates and directs everybody. Every glance, every movement from her affects everybody. She is always busy - doing three things at once.