

Michael Chekhov

June 26, 1937

STYLE - ACTIVITY
AWARENESS OF THE AUDIENCE

STYLE - ACTIVITY: Exercise:

Form two groups and take different places, making one composition in the heroic, tragic mood. Speak with your own body, and let it tell you something about the style which we call heroic tragedy. Ask your body whether each limb, each part of your body is full of this style - our musician will play something which expresses this theme. Next, change it to the style of tragedy which is nearer to drama; you must do this by means of slight alterations; speak to your body. Then, through slight alterations in your body, give the impression that this is drama - no longer tragic, but very near to tragedy.

Let this style penetrate your whole body, and be responsible not only for your own position, but for the whole group. Speak with your whole body. You must be sure that this special kind of activity - which scientific people call "style", but which for us is a special kind of activity - is expressed in what we call drama near to tragedy. Then take the next step and try to find another kind of activity - drama which is near to comedy. Speak with your body and do nothing with your intellect in this exercise. Now, comedy which is near to drama; then comedy near to vaudeville; then vaudeville which is near to comedy; and vaudeville which is near to circus; and last - clowns!

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AWARENESS OF THE AUDIENCE:

Today you have made many mistakes, but the most important one is that you have not taken into consideration the real audience which you had. This must be done instinctively. In other exercises, when we are alone we are always placing our audience somewhere, but if we have a real audience then we must have the instinct to perform for them.

Another mistake was that the group itself was not very plastic - it was as if you had only part or half of your body - you did not use the whole body as you have done many times. You are able to use your bodies one hundred percent and more, but this time you lost this and your bodies were very inexpressive.

The third mistake was that you have not taken into consideration that there must be two groups; two groups or two parts building one group. You could not find this rhythm which consists of two and the something invisible in between which makes three.

What was good, and very good from our special point of view, was that you made your changes in your body by very slight alterations. This is very important. To make a great tragedy or comedy in a big way is very easy, but to do so by making the slightest alteration is very difficult and very important. You have done this today finer than you have ever done it before.