

Michael Chekhov

(Afternoon) November 30, 1936

LESSONS GIVEN BY STUDENTS
INCORPORATION OF IMAGES

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The Golden Steed:

We must come to our rehearsals - after working - with a feeling of joy that we will be able to do what we have thought about and rehearsed in our mind's eye at home.

Each play has always a general atmosphere - it is another question which we either know very well or have only a vague feeling about. It is always possible to feel the general atmosphere, more or less. Each rehearsal must be started with the general atmosphere.

Will you please create this general atmosphere and fill the room with it. Under earth: this is the theme for the introduction and up to the moment when the crowd says, "Up there." Subterranean: nadir - darkness. The sleeping, tragic, despondent people lying on the frozen blue-green earth for thousands of years without hope. Like a breath from the earth, they stir slightly and sigh and disappear back into the ice. A second time they stir in the direction of the mountain and say, "Up there, up there." Then slowly they return to their sorrow. The first woman speaks in an atmosphere of longing - the longing of the whole world toward the mountain. Then the next voice speaks, like a muted string, full of longing. The third voice, and then the old woman, increasing the feeling of longing but continuing to keep the voice muted.

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The crowd echos, "We wait, wait, wait," with longing.

Each work, each sentence must be considered as a jewel. There is no sentence on the stage which is not precious.

I would like to speak about the lessons given by students on Saturday. Alan's mistake in the waterfall exercise was that there were too many directions. This made the exercise only a struggle of bodies, and it was ugly. That was a mistake in direction. The group's mistake was in how they moved - they moved too passionately. The aim is to bring lightness to this exercise. We must have the feeling of flowing and prove that in these difficulties we can be as easy and as light as liquid.

With Paula, the idea of the exercise was not too clear. When she said that the movement would create the atmosphere, that was not right. Through the movement you will create a mood, and the mood will create the atmosphere. In the exercise with fear, there was no feeling of fear. Your imaginations were so weak that you did not get the mood - it was empty. Many moved before getting the mood - that was lying. The teacher must stop and start the exercise over again when that happens.

Again let us speak of Alan's lesson. We have shown our group exercises to our audience too early. We were not ready. Alan suggested the very beginning of group movements by being in the room, in the space, etc. This was beautiful

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and necessary, but it was done too quickly. Try to create a series of lessons for this purpose - elaborate each example. Next term I will start the next step with group exercises, and I will give you some laws. I have not done this to date because I want to appeal to your instinct only at this time.

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Everyone brought a different style to the stage. We must somehow find the right style. The director will help you with this later on; but to begin with, we must be aware of the style of the fairy tale, and each one must try to find the style which will unite the whole. That which comes at the first moment will often remain in the character until the very end. You must keep these characters - try not to lose them. If you want to throw them away, it is all right, but do not lose them unwittingly. You must decide whether you wish to have certain characters or not. Like eating and drinking, each day you must live with your images. Each day, each hour you must live with them and work with them.