

EXERCISES FOR RHYTHM
RHYTHM AND SPEECH
FEELING OF THE WHOLE - THREE PARTS
RHYTHMICAL PATTERN

EXERCISES FOR RHYTHM:

We shall go on with our rhythmical exercises - it is necessary to be more and more familiar with the simple things which we get at the last lesson. This is basic work, therefore, concentrate on it, take it as work and try to follow the main idea we are embracing now, and this idea is that by changing certain conditions in the rhythmical pattern, diminuendo, crescendo, etc., we change really the content of the thing - not content in the intellectual sense, but what we call interpretation becomes different. Will you please pay attention to this particular aspect of rhythmical life.

RHYTHM AND SPEECH:

We shall start with the boys in a very simple pattern. Kneeling on the ground all together, we shall move gradually from this contracted state and climb up and expand our bodies. Then I want you to find three sentences for contraction, transition, expansion:

"In the depths of human souls."

"Seek the unfolding of life's great mystery."

"In the wide immeasurable spaces."

First of all, explore this thing technically, without any speech, aim only to adjust ourselves to this pattern. Kneel down - get up - gradually expand your bodies. It is not

M. Chekhov

March 16, 1938

absolutely necessary for the whole group to be there as one organism.

Technical rehearsals are always necessary because technique, in our sense, means the ability sometimes not to notice the process of doing, and this is an absolute condition for every state of creative work, when you will forget your palate and your teeth then you will get the real result of Miss Crowther's lessons. When you will forget our Method, objectives, etc., then we will be really able to take the objective and to live in the atmospheres, etc. This is in general, on a big scale. On a small scale, like now, you must be able to mount the staircase so that you will not notice it. When you have to look at it, you are not being creative.

Now, we have done this technically several times and we know what we are going to do - take the first simply rhythm exercises, absolutely seriously, and they will bring us the result. The idea for the first time is to experience this process as a whole - nothing more. I mean the group as a whole, the beginning, the end, and everything as a whole. One harmonious whole. After the soloist has spoken, the group speaks the words and at the same time starts to move.

Now girls: Technically quickly. Enjoy this technical work. The same task as for the boys. Feeling of the whole, nothing more. This is the ground for every rhythmical pattern.

FEELING OF THE WHOLE - THREE PARTS:

First condition is to get the feeling of the whole for the rhythmical pattern. Then we shall take other conditions. I want to call your attention to the following: When you have done this movement with the feeling of the whole, certain interpretation was there which came from the condition that we are psychologically embracing the whole. Now, I will give you another condition, and you will see that interpretation inevitably comes through this rhythmical changing.

Will you now experience the second thing - the beginning and the end, and the middle part which binds the beginning and the end, or as we call the first part, the last part, and the second part. The whole, in which is the first part, the transitional part, and the third part - quite definitely the beginning, transition, the end. Do not confuse two things: The end, and the stop, which is the real stop (finish of the work). We call the last part, the cadence, the finish. Do you understand, not the stop but the last part. The whole in three different parts, and we have to experience them together. Create new eyes and new ears which will allow us to create this new thing. The result is not as important as the effort, the way to get it. Only the feeling of the whole. Three included in one - one consisting of three. Now, I want you to do it again - feeling of the

whole - three parts.

RHYTHMICAL PATTERN:

Boys: Condition for the rhythmical pattern. The succession I give you is quite accidental. By experiencing the first, second and third part we must be quite aware of the fact that the first and the last parts are opposite to each other in their qualities and in their powers. More or less opposite. When the beginning and the end are not opposite, that means that the event is not rhythmical, but in certain cases it can be done to underline the rhythmical contradiction. Now it is important to experience the whole in these three, remembering that the beginning and the end are opposite to each other. That means that by living through the first part we are anticipating the last, and when we have the last part we are remembering actively the first one. All the powers which are opposite to each other in the beginning must be elaborated and shown with expressiveness.

Shdanoff Play: The Possessed :

Scene: Mother and Beggar Girl:

You must see that if each moment, each point is touched by this rhythmical law it gives at once interpretation. When it is wrong it is nothing, it is only intellectual, but when it becomes organic it is right. Therefore, have your ears and eyes open for right and wrong things to discover.

If it is wrong, we have a certain feeling of suffering. Develop this feeling because if we are not able to suffer by seeing or doing inharmonious things, we are killing something. We must suffer. This is the only way to find out.

It is a very interesting example to understand that to discover something in art and science means always to create it anew. Therefore, when we are speaking about discovering the opposition given in the beginning and the end, that means to discover and to create it. It is important to know that all things which are so obvious must be discovered and created. To discover means to create the opposition between the beginning and the end.

Boys: We will repeat the same exercise with speeches. The task is to experience the whole, three parts and opposition, not only opposition. Boys and girls together.

This time it was more primitive than separate groups. The whole body and the group was not flexible enough. We have to continue this exercise for many days until we go through all points of rhythm. When we will overcome certain difficulties I will give you certain points. The ideal is, for instance, these three parts and opposition. We must be trained so well that it is quite like instinct.

I think we will get in time the ability to speak in this rhythmical way which is much more interesting than the world of materialism and which revives the world of matter,

M. Chekhov

March 16, 1938

settings, bodies and emotions - they must be revived by means of this strange world which we call the world of rhythm. It is a thing for the human will. The beautiful connection between human beings and the world of rhythm. What oppositions and compositions are there, and only to have the good will to make friends with the world of rhythm and not to be afraid of long work like this, because we are digging with our first movements, but we must know that there is something more there, deep down. We must dig with effort to do and find these things.