

DIRECTING THE PLAY

In the work we have done with The Golden Steed, we have tried to coordinate our speech with our gestures. Our second step is to start again from the beginning and try to find the right atmosphere. Then, out of the right atmosphere, and the right gestures, we will find the first idea of acting. If we are successful in this work, then we will see what it means to direct a play.

DIRECTING THE PLAY:

The director must prepare the play long, long before he knows the actors. Having all his ideas and plans, the settings, the mise en scene, the characters, and rhythmical pattern of the play and everything, the director must give all these things gradually. He must have enough patience until the actors will not only understand but will be able to do what he suggests. Then he will give one thing at a time. In the past, the actors have often not been able to incorporate the director's ideas, but in our Method, the director will only give small pieces of what he has in mind. The actors must take these with imagination. Some of you will try to be directors.

We know that we are able to see an image of an abstract idea - the idea of Truth, for instance. You can have a very strange image for this. We have a play, The Golden Steed, which we have worked on, and we are trying to find the characters,

M. Chekhov

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atmospheres, etc. If I tell you that the Princess is only Truth, then you will have an image of what it means. While we are working, our ability to create images from abstract ideas begins to be the ability to create concrete ideas. Therefore, if you don't lose this way of understanding everything by means of the imagination, you will be able to escape the error of intellectualism.

If the director speaks to actors who are not able to see the abstract image, then it will remain only in the mind, and they will not be able to act in the way we see. But if we will create the image, we will not be able to create the idea that the Princess is Truth, for example, without making an actor's effort to do this. It is an entirely different thing to understand the idea or to feel the idea through the image.

Therefore, I will try to give you some hints as to the direction which we must imagine more and more, and then we will come to the time when we will do together one thing; this one thing will be the main idea of the play, without speaking about it. Then our audience will look at our ideas. The audience should never be thinking about the play. They must only understand and love with us. They must love the Princess, the Black Prince, the play, the sorrow. We will be able to give the audience the material to love and feel if we are able ourselves to love and to feel during our rehearsals.

The Golden Steed:

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For an actor to imagine a height means to do something to be uplifted. This is what is meant by imagination in the new theatre - not only pictures, but some wish. We might almost say that we do the height of the mountain in this play. Imagine that you are lying at the foot of the mountain at the beginning of the play - you have been lying there for hundreds of years.

Atmospheres: 1st Atmosphere: Starting with the atmosphere at the beginning of the play - the dirty blue-green light, the cold, stone-like people lying asleep for centuries in an atmosphere of endless sorrow. They begin to stir at the sound of the Guard's voice, they move a little and are still again. 2nd Atmosphere: The appearance of the Copper Rider on the mountainside. The feeling of hope stirs in the people. 3rd Atmosphere: The appearance of the Silver Rider. The people are excited by the spiritual force of the Silver Rider. 4th Atmosphere: The appearance of the Golden Rider. The surge of joy and hope in the people. The fulfillment of all their longing.