

Playing Make Believe

The Craft of Acting and
The Stanislavski System Demystified

Agenda

- * Observations
- * What is an Actor
- * The Responsibility of the Actor
- * Stanislavski System
- * Exercises
- * Questions

Observations

- * “Make Believe”
 - * Truth vs. Authenticity vs. Make Believe
 - * Translation and Cultural
 - * “Make” = to create
 - * “Believe” = to accept as real
- * Example: “The Essentials” movie

What is an Actor

- * Not someone who can remember lines and blocking
- * A creator; a contributor to the piece
- * A talented person who learned how to reveal the inner world of a character
- * The vehicle by which an audience understands the meaning of a piece

The Responsibility of the Actor

- * To “Make Believe”
 - * To create a character reality that the audience accepts as real in the context of the piece
- * How (in the context of the play/movie)?
 - * Understand how the character serves the super-objective
 - * Understand the character’s own objective
 - * Create the character’s biography
 - * Determine the character’s personal motivations/goals
 - * Create the character’s emotional life and how it effects their behavior
 - * Create a character physicality that is consistent with their history and emotional life
- * This work creates an “authentic” character

Stanislavski System is ...

“... the concrete technique by which an actor consciously transforms his psychological and physical behavior into those of the character and creates a unique life of a man in every role.”

– ‘Training an Actor’ by Sonia Moore

Stanislavski System (2)

What an Actor Needs

- * Control over his body and speech
 - * Training in body movement (dance, fencing, acrobatics)
 - * Work on speech, diction and voice
 - * Work on Shakespeare
- * Understand the use/misuse of “Externals”
 - * i.e. costumes, props
- * Continuous improvement of powers of observation and imagination
- * Poor performance in these areas lead to:
 - * overacting, tension, banal gestures, artificial intonations, “indicating” and shallow characters

Stanislavski System (3)

- * Applicable to any role - regardless of the size
- * Requires great demands on concentration and willpower
 - * Consciously control imagination and emotions – entire psychic and physical natures
- * Master the difference between Life's reality and Dramatic reality
- * The ability to convey to the audience the meaning of the piece
 - * Union of content and form
 - * The actor must live the character's experiences and express "inner truth" in vivid form (color, tone, speech, movement)
- * Living the role organically – here, now, today – avoiding clichés
- * Two parts to the formation and training of an actor
 - * Preparation of their "apparatus"
 - * body, voice, speech, powers of observation & imagination, constant control over the "feeling of truth", spiritual involvement
 - * Lifelong training/practice
 - * The actor's education
 - * Personal development
 - * Culture, needs, will to learn, artistic point of view ...

Stanislavski System (4)

Stanislavski on the System

The System is:

“... the technique which permits the actor to create a character, to reveal the life of a human spirit and to incarnate it naturally ... in an artistic form. This method is based on laws of the organic nature of an actor ... Its strength is in the fact that there is nothing in it which I ‘invented’ ... It developed naturally out of my long experience. There is no Stanislavski System, only the system of nature herself.”

Exercises

Class Warm Ups

- * Disobeying Hands
 - * Concentration and overcoming the resistance of the body
- * Vocal Exercise 1
 - * Voice/body control
- * Vocal Exercise 2
 - * Develop the will and memory
- * Improv 1 – Open the Door

Playing Make Believe

QUESTIONS