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COURAGE, PLAY AND STORYTELLING

Tuesday, 07 March 2017 Konstantinos Symsiris MA Theatre Lab Blog 1001 Hits



RADA's MA Theatre Lab provides performance students with the opportunity to re-examine and broaden their skills in an experimental and collaborative environment. The intensive year-long course includes a range of masterclasses and workshops from guest teachers and practitioners. MA Theatre Lab student **Konstantinos Symsiris** blogs about a recent workshop led by Oleg Mirochnikov on the Vakhtangov tradition – a school of acting pioneered by Yevgeny Vakhtangov, with focus on spontaneity and transformation.

Last week our programme held a brilliant acting masterclass on the Vakhtangov tradition, led by Oleg Mirochnikov. After weeks of our rehearsing *Mother Courage and Her Children* this masterclass was what our group needed to get refreshed and become a bit more energised and playful on a sunny Sunday morning.

Oleg, an acting tutor whose work draws equally from the three great masters of the Russian stage – Stanislavski, Meyerhold and Vakhtangov – with a particular emphasis on the Vakhtangov technique, gave our troupe a precious lesson on being physically expressive, artistically courageous and

imaginative.

Vakhtangov's exercises, introduced by Oleg, started from a physical point of view where the actor is facing the audience without any 'fourth wall' and is maintaining complete awareness of the present moment. Well-structured games and different tools were given to provoke our imagination and devising through our bodies, in co-ordination with our breath and inner rhythm. We played with different objects, transformed their use or even form with our imagination, explored the space around us with our senses and expanded our physical and vocal limits. The possibilities discovered through our body engagement triggered imaginary journeys, which worked as a stable base to share our stories from a deeper yet playful point of view into the present. The various group games encouraged an open forum, putting us all at ease to learn, share and most importantly, play!

Words were nothing more than signposts in this journey of ease, joy and lightness. Such physical stretching can be truly liberating for any actor who is usually hidden behind words and intellectual thoughts about acting. Acting is about creating through the imagination and such exercises invited our creative thinking in a playful way.

I observed my classmates and myself surrendering entirely to the power of devising stories through our body investment and through pleasure. Every person looked freer, more confident and liberated. Everyone was smiling and enjoying the present moment. Everyone became a child again, seriously playing and devising stories via bodywork.

This masterclass was quite simply an amazing and inspiring experience. But the most important lesson we were reminded of, was the power of the body as a whole when something triggers our psychophysical imagination into the now. The Vakhtangov technique has many precise and amazing tools towards this and can make any devising procedure a thing of beauty and pleasure. It was a wake-up call and a reminder to surrender entirely to the power of our artistic nature and trust that it will do all the necessary things by itself without any need to impose anything. We became a bit more courageous in plumbing the depths of some mystery and producing joy through storytelling. We became courageous children once again.

Courageous children playing and sharing stories.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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