

OPEN SPACE THEME & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Convener: MICHA

Discussion and Recommendations:

THEME: What is the Theatre of the Future and my role in it?

THE FOUR PRINCIPLES

1. Whoever comes is the right people
2. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have
3. Whenever it starts is the right time
4. When it's over, it's over

THE ONE LAW

The Law of Two Feet

Butterflies and Bumblebees!

Be Prepared to Be Surprised!



Sessions with notes in Alphabetical Order

1. **Artistic Dreams: Where to Begin** – Janice Orlandi
2. **Chekhov and Chekhov** – Theresa Masse
3. **Chekhov for Art and Life** – Megan Callahan
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5. **Ensemble Work Revised** – Karine Scialom
6. **Explorations in Atmosphere** – Lionel Walsh
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11. **Michael Chekhov Meets Social Media** – Teresa Langston
12. **Michaelchekhovforum.com** – David Haugen
13. **Moving from Inspiration to Specificity** – Megan Callahan
14. **Nourishment** – Megan Gleeson
15. **Out of the Classroom, Into the Open** – Scott Mendelsohn
16. **Path of the Actor** – Scott Mendelsohn
17. **Setting up a Different Contract with our Audience** – Liz Shipman
18. **Student Movement** – Christina Bryson
19. **The Landscape of our Lives** – Tim Joya
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21. **Using Music for Chekhov Technique** – Mary McPartlan
22. **Working with the Camera** – Thomas Kingdom

Sessions without notes in Alphabetical Order

1. **Can Theater of the Future Bring Back Theater of the Past?** – Andrei Preda
2. **Chekhov as the writer/playwright** – Suzanne Bronson
3. **Connections and Goodbyes** – Mara Radulovic
4. **Crave – Exploring Sarah Kane: gestures and images** – Deb Keller
5. **Gigging Out – becoming a network for professional opportunity** – Liz Shipman
6. **Image Work and the Shakespeare Monologue** – Max Schadler
7. **Listen, listen, listen** – Bernadette Wintsch-Heinen
8. **Michael Chekhov in Turkey** – Burcu Halacoglu Yesil
9. **Old Timey Sketch Comedy – What do you know?** – Bethany Caputo
10. **Open Rehearsal: I Might be Edgar Allan Poe** – Craig Mathers
11. **Our Mission is to vibrate emotions in order to connect our real humanity & Exploring our work as rehearsal processes get shorter** – Elsa Valentim and Peter Tedeschi
12. **Recovering the Soul in Stanislavsky's System** – Pat Carriere
13. **The Role of Youth in Theater** – Paul Boothroyd
14. **Thinking BIG** – Theresa Langston
15. **Trans-cultural, Trans disciplinary Soul & Performance** – Pat Carriere
16. **Theater and the Singularity** – Gabe Rodriguez
17. **Violence – a bit of unarmed SAFD** – Deb Keller & Adam McLean
18. **What's really going on in a theater?** – Ragnar Freidank

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Artistic Dreams: Where to Begin

Convener: Janice Orlandi

List of Participants: Janice Orlandi, Craig Mathers, Scott Mendelsohn, Andrei Preda, Kenny Chong, Alexandria Moorman, Mara Radulovic

Discussion and Recommendations:

At the very beginning of the meeting Craig Mathers stopped by and Janice asked him what his dream was. His current dream is to memorize his lines for his play, *I Might Be Edgar Allen Poe* by Dawson Nickoles. The following are ways of memorizing lines that we spoke about that might be helpful.

A few ways to memorize:

- These are only a few techniques and everyone will have something that will work best for them.
- Say the lines out loud
 - o “Long term memory lives in the tip of the tongue” – Shelley Wyant, as heard from her acupuncturist.
- Move around the space while saying the lines
 - o Roll around; be as active as possible so they are really in your body.
- Record your lines and listen to them
- Have someone on book to help you memorize them
- If your scene partner(s) are around often, constantly surprise them with random portions of your scene. Start from an unusual moment in the scene so that all actors learn to expect anything.

After this Craig went off to memorize and we spoke to my (Andrei’s) dream. I have had an idea in my head ever since I was young and I would like it to eventually become a movie so we spoke to broader ideas as to how we can make dreams a reality. We quickly realized that before many ideas can be put into practice they must first pass through one specific medium: writing. As we kept talking about the value of writing I began to realize that nearly everyone in my group keeps a journal of some form or another. For my benefit, being that I am not a big writer, we began to share notes on how to begin as a writer, either recreational or professional.

How to start writing:

- Pick a time in the day (possibly morning and night) when you will write for five minutes straight. Write a conscious stream of thought; it does not have to be a story, nor have a beginning, middle, and end. This will get you into the habit of putting pencil to paper. Even if you have nothing to write about, stay with the paper for the five minutes you have allotted for yourself. If you write this in the morning, for example, read what you have written at night to receive a slightly more objective perspective of your writing and its meaning to you. Try to do this every day.
- “A writer is one who puts words on paper.” – Scott
- “Do or do not, there is no try.” – Yoda
- Keep a small notebook with you in case an idea pops into your mind, whether on the subway or wherever you may be.
- Tom Petty said that whenever he had an inspiring thought hit him he would stop everything else that he was doing and write it down. Whatever he was doing he could go back to later, but he could not be certain that the thought would not leave forever.

As this discussion on writing continued, Scott Mendelsohn brought up a writer by the name of **Carol Pearson**. She has written a book called *Awakening the Heroes Within*, a book that speaks to the archetypes found within our society. Archetypes can be used by actors to learn more about their characters or even by people to learn more about each other and themselves. The archetypes are:

- The innocent
- The orphan

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- The caregiver
- The warrior
- The seeker
- The lover
- The destroyer
- The creator
- The ruler
- The magician
- The sage
- The jester

Each archetype falls within one of three phases: the beginning (childhood/homelife), the journey (leaving home/meeting people/discovering yourself), and the return.

It was around this time that Mara joined our group and brought forth the thought: “How do I continue my artistic work without it becoming stale or forceful?” We had a few answers to this question and they are:

- the biggest thing I would say is: give yourself a reason to work
- start a reading group and read a play with the group once a month. Discuss. This makes you commit to others and will therefore encourage you to complete your tasks
- Start a monologue book. Pretend as though you have an audition every few months and you need a new monologue for each audition. Fully prepare the monologue and do all of the work and record the work in your monologue book. Before long you will have a repertoire of ten monologues and you will be more than ready for the real deal when it happens.

Some other things that we discussed briefly throughout our meeting have been:

- It is not always the best thing to share your goals with everyone around you because then you take the responsibility off of yourself and you are less likely to get the job done. An example of this is: if I have a goal to go to the gym every single day and I tell all of my friends about this goal before I have even begun to complete it, my friends will praise me for no reason. I will get a reward without any effort. Also, if I do not go to the gym every single day, my friends will not be horribly disappointed in me and my failure will have no consequences... the stakes are lessened. However, if I were to not tell anyone I would be forced to take all of the responsibility on my shoulders. If I do not go to the gym in the end the decision lies fully on me and I must take all of my responsibility.
- Kenny came to our meeting and told us that he is currently at a change in his life. He went to University for finance but has recently decided that he wants to become an actor or a writer. This brought us to discussing that it is really never too late to follow your dreams and do what you really want. Also, it is not as though once you attempt to switch professions everything you knew about your previous work vanishes in a flash. Kenny will still have all of his knowledge concerning finance and at the same time grow in a wholly new way as an actor.
- Janice mentioned that she wants to network with people who might be able to partner with her to help her run her space in New York. While we did not find an immediate answer to her difficulties finding someone, we did talk about using students she was teaching to network to their teachers, and a website called LinkedIn was also mentioned. The website is called www.Linkedin.com and is a popular tool for business owners or individual artists/creators/entrepreneurs to connect to one another.

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Chekhov and Chekhov

Convener: Theresa Masse

List of Participants: Max Schadler, Theresa Masse, Theresa Nguyen, Christina Bryson, Craig Mathers

Discussion and Recommendations:

People's lives are destroyed while they sit around drinking tea.

How to internalize epic feelings/gesture, how does that manifest itself? How to explore the expansion and then contract it – how does this suppression create more internal movement?

Atmosphere: contrast of the beautiful lake and sad atmosphere
Where/why does the atmosphere change?

“Theatre should not present life as it is, but as it is in dreams” Treplev

It's Nina's play. She goes on.

She comes back for no less than to save his life. Free him.

Idea of characters in *The Three Sisters* and their centers. Where do they operate from?
Irina speaks from her mind, her planning center, the starry-eyed head.
Masha acts upon her feelings, from the heart, and is desperately clutching and reaching.

Olga wills herself to take care of her two sisters. And she will stop at nothing to protect them, even if she is left with nothing.

Breaking open specific moments:

Nina/Kostya scene: she has given him a gift. What is the psychological gesture that goes along with that? What is the last thing she does before dashing out the door? She recites parts of his play, performs it for him. She has remembered it despite him destroying it entirely.

Masha/Vershinin (final goodbye): Let go, let me go- I have to go. What is the wonderfulness of Kulygin coming in immediately after their final goodbye? Is he a man of utmost dignity? Masha may in fact leave her heart center with Vershinin. Kulygin steps into her space, and may give his to her.

Irina/Tuzenbach: When does it journey from idealized love to real love? Craig argued it's at the moment of the gunshot, when she realizes fully that it's THAT MAN that has been by her side from the beginning.

Nina/Kostya/Tragorin: The imagery of the dead seagull at her feet. She is THE SEAGULL.
Subject for a short story. A man comes along, sees her, and destroys her just because he can. What is the polarity in the scene for Nina?

Momentary solitude onstage. What is going on with the character? How are they behaving onstage alone? What is the gesture of being solitary.

Center shifts.

Where does POWER come from in Michael Chekhov work? (not status...power).

Outside in? Inside out?

The shifts: moment of change, uncertainty.

With so much text...what's driving it?

Getting the most out of the least. Full body sensation/experience out of the most simple movement, or shift of focus.

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Michael Chekhov for Art: Life, Work, and Play

Convener: Megan Callahan

List of Participants: Elsa Valentim, Viktor Melnikov, Scott Fielding, Suzanne, Tim Joya, Thomas Kingdon, Alicia Hall-Flesch, and Megan Callahan

Discussion and Recommendations: In the allotted space before everyone had arrived, Elsa, Megan, and Victor did a check-in with themselves; listening to their breathing, where they might be holding, and where their energy was. They felt between them as a way into the topic that they were about to explore. Scott then made the suggestion that the group be moved to the park, which was quickly agreed upon. So to the park we went! At the pretty park near the pond, we settled on a spot near an area where a circus group was teaching people to balance on a tightrope. It was a great spot to contemplate on creative energy and the Chekhov Technique and how we are incorporating it into our daily life and how that incorporation reflects and informs back into our work as artists.

Megan proposed the question “How can we really use this work in our daily lives?” And “How does bringing it into your everyday life then feed back into your artistry?”

We briefly discussed the quality of active listening and holding/walls/resistance to the impulses and sensations that are always around us.

Suzanne then brought up duality/non-duality and how we are really all one with everything within our lives and our work.

Megan mentioned Proactivity vs. Reactivity, being not just moved by impulses, but actively participating in how we respond.

Suzanne said she “checks out” all the time from sensory overload until she feels she finds a place of “rest”, then she feels she can open.

Alicia mentioned that she tries, in times of overload or stress to check in and try to plant roots to ground herself, or use ease to find a way to reconnect to the way she is processing stimulus. Of course not always, but when she can be aware of it to use it; and she has been finding that it is crossing over into the way she approaches coming at using the work, not just within the work itself.

Suzanne said that in her overload of impulses and not being distracted by the overload she finds that adding the Chekhov technique into the course of this is like putting more onto the pile.

Several of us suggested that perhaps she try to “Just do one thing.”

Tim has found that he is noticing changes in his everyday life since he has begun exploring Chekhov. He is sleeping better now, he is more open to others in a way that he was not previously, especially towards those who are not involved in the theatre.

Megan then commented on the dovetailing for her that has come out of the energy work that she did before coming to use the Chekhov Technique. She feels that the Chekhov work is, in a way, for herself, energy work for the stage.

Tim mentioned that he sometimes feels displaced when he feels that his senses are too exposed or sensitive.

Elsa tries to remind herself to keep opening when in discussions or reacting in everyday happenings.

Megan – “Awareness creates balance”

Suzanne said that being drawn/distracted by an incoming impulse or sensation can quite often cause her physical distress. Megan suggested that Suzanne or anyone, might want to try closing their eyes and focus on a place in their body where they are holding tension and breathe through it, or with eyes open find a point to focus on. From that point begin to allow your awareness to expand. If you feel you are getting lost, return your focus to that point.

Suzanne, “Yes. How easy that would be. But it’s just not possible for me to do that.”

Elsa, “Try to focus on one thing at a time and let that carry you.”

Megan, “Maybe try not to give things (all things that is) too much importance.”

Some of us suggested that she might just want to let the thoughts come and then just let them go.

Alicia then posed the question as to how this then inform and play back into our work as actors.

“Can we do one thing at a time as well as many?”

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Megan, “Yes! It’s all there we can play and live in duality and non-duality.

Megan then suggested that we use her water bottle as a talking stick and pass it around, so that each of us can say whatever we want about this, in however that means to us. So we did!

Thomas – He mentioned how his teacher Mara Radulovic, a major influence on him talked with his class about finding your path of living through, “generous living”. To remember to treat your self generously, and to open your heart to good food, good rest, good thoughts. He said he tries to open his heart in his work as a waiter before he approaches his customers as a way of staying open and receptive to what they need and for good giving and receiving.

Victor: In personal life and artistic life – quite often actors approach them as separate things: the day to day and the artist’s life. An artist can choose to pick up a character from the street, from real people, or he can use his imagination from ourselves as the beginning for building character. Chekhov invites us to use our imagination more to create than to copy the real world.

Tim: Imagination in regard to super ego, ego and id. Is the Chekhov work a stripping of all of this? Self doubt – where does that begin? As opposed to a child with a wide open imagination. I am trying to get back to that child like state.

Alicia: In the moment I am doing a dual role as scribe and participant so I am attempting to do this by staying open, working with ease, and writing from out of the flow with no thinking but letting the impulses move me.

Suzanne: In her working life I feel ‘less than’. Knows I bring ‘less than’ to my daily activities. I want to be able to bring all that I can to my work. I can’t rely on switching it on and off. Holding myself back from letting go and this has created a kind of spiritual crisis. If I could let go I know it would cross over into my work. Is it because of fear? Or am I trying to edit too much?

Elsa: Chekhov is a magical process for me. The work is a door. Once I crossed it I felt a connection with everything. I felt a part of the whole and this was a cleaning up of the ego and judgement. As an actor before finding the technique I relied on approval and disapproval and now my focus is more on finding myself, on myself and bring part of the whole through the work.

Scott: An actor is an actor all the time. Not an actor only when working specific hours. You are an actor in your life. Look at the world as the actor would look at the world. There is no divorce of self as to how one approaches life or work. In life we have a dominant center or archetype that guides us. On another day we might have another one given the circumstance and input from life. If you use your self in the same way as you do working as an actor it would get you into trouble.

If you let everything come at you all the time and become sensitive to all around you, it would be too much. It can make you go crazy. On stage if a character pisses you off you want to be able to act out of those impulses. If you walk through life that way it would be too much.

Victor to Scott: How do you feed your everyday life?

Scott: Like at a buffet, if you over stuff yourself with all that is around you make yourself sick so you can’t, you just take what you need. There is a part of your life that is your own and not to be shared. A part of your life is brought into your work on the stage.

The first challenge that we have as an actor is how do we get in touch with and use our will in our lives. Which is most important for actors to understand and get a hold of. Ease – how can we really use ease? Actors need the will to have concentration. We cannot just as actors follow our intentions wherever they want to go. An actor needs to know where to put their concentration. For example, thru Meisner’s repetition, and your partner’s hair is on fire it would be ridiculous to comment on your partner’s earrings. So you use your will in life as well as on stage to keep your intention present. Maybe the actor’s will is weak and the practice is to keep bringing it back and choose to put your attention (your will) where the fire is. Use the will to focus the concentration.

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Megan: I'm interested in the psychic protection for the actor and thresholds and will and ego. Will focuses strength to resolve. Years ago I had an experience of a colleague shushing me in front of fellow colleagues and years ago I would have taken it very personally. But now, through Chekhov technique I don't let these things effect me so much.

Elsa: I have formula through the Chekhov technique. Receive, transform, give back. I use this in my life and my stage work and we need to do it from the heart. If you keep the emotions in and don't transform them you give just the same thing back and it can get stuck or become a wall or holding. You have to let it come in transform it and then give back out of that.

Megan: In my yoga practice there are typically three choices when emotions come up. Usually two are chosen. One you choose an image laden phrases (like a flooding of emotion and way bigger than self) overwhelming talk. Oh my god that is so incredible. Two- stopping words like 'I shouldn't, couldn't , etc.'" The ideal is three- the middle- "Here I am, This is what's happening, etc." This keeps the self rooted in the present. It helps to keep the self malliable, flexible to transform.

Elsa said that if you transform emotion from the will, you are giving back through the will. She sees the ego connected to the will. She feels it is ideal for an individual to be centered in the feeling center, with flow going from heart to mind to will.

Megan brought up that there is some questioning in some Chekhov practitioners as to whether or not the ideal center is in the upper chest or in the gut.

And we closed with a funny story that Elsa told us about a friend of hers that said Chekhov helped him quit smoking. He posed the thought that if he wants to smoke where is that energy coming from. If it is coming from the will, than the will is on fire and so he imagined sending ice or water into his will and that way he put out the fire. And his cravings to smoke went away.

Wow! In so many ways Chekhov's incredible work informs our temporal lives, our spiritual lives, and most definitely our artistic lives directly in our work and as the artists we are now and still becoming.

Why is Constructive Rest so Constructive?

Convener: Tim Joya

List of Participants: Tim, Megan Gleeson, Thomas, Mike Hogan, Kenny Chung

Discussion and Recommendations:

Constructive rest is a blanket term for the various methods that teachers of movement, body wellness, spiritual healing, and yoga bring the body to a state of active rest to rejuvenate the body's energy. What is notable about constructive rest in comparison to sleep is that often after sleeping one feels a sense of grogginess rather than an improvement in well-being. This session was convened to explore what factors allowed constructive rest to reliably provide a sense of well-being.

Megan emerged as the most knowledgeable on the subject and came to the session with a strong yoga background. The other participants presented their various questions and concerns about constructive rest. These questions included what positions, lengths of time, and processes are used to find a state of constructive rest. Tim provided insight as to the previous positions he had been taught, which included lying on your back with your feet on the ground and your arms to your side or on your belly.

When discussing the benefits of constructive rest, Megan provided insight into the chemical interactions that occur within the body. Often stress hormones can overwhelm your body and your nervous system can become frazzled and constructive rest provides a healthy flow of serotonin to combat these stress hormones. Constructive rest also improves blood and oxygen flow. Additionally, constructive rest benefits one's physical alignment and mental state. In both oxygen flow and physical alignment we found that bringing our thoughts to breathing and finding our neutral spine assisted in relaxing the body into an improved state. We also discussed how there is a tendency for people to fall out of alignment and collapse and how constructive rest allows you to open up in a gentle manner. When it came to the mind, the benefit of constructive rest was found to be the ability to linger on the moments between thoughts.

The participants tried various constructive resting methods, such as ocean breathing, controlled count breathing, lying on the back with feet on the ground, and legs up the wall pose. The session was concluded with a 10 minute legs up the wall rest.

How to explore & create ensemble work using M. Chekhov Technique?

Convener: Karine Scialom

List of Participants: Patrick Carriere, Bernadette Wintsch, Mani Wintsch, Tom Kingdon, Roberto Colossimo, Christa Macbeth, Rena Polley, David Haugen, Scott Burrell

Discussion and Recommendations:

All the participants express their interest in the question and what attracted them to attend the discussion.

We found out we all had the same word in common: ensemble.

Each participant gave their definition of that word ensemble.

What is an ensemble?

What isn't an ensemble?

What makes an ensemble an ensemble?

Ensemble:

An unit or group of complementary parts that contribute to a single effect.

A place where people grow together and contribute equally.

A group of people engaged in the act of listening

A place where there is individual-collectiveness- Churchness. (*Sobornost'*)

A place where one is aware of the self and others at the same time.

A place of support, appreciation and awareness.

A place where there is a sense of whole, and each part of the whole create something greater than ourselves.

A place where each person own a piece of it. A place where there is a living question, an inquiry.

How to create an ensemble?

Start with little games to invite trust. Touching each other, hugging each other. Connecting with each other.

How to maintain an ensemble?

Each person needs to be part of and responsible of the survival of the ensemble by bringing something into it and be fully responsible for it.

An ensemble needs to have form, something that hold each parts together.

It needs to meet regularly in order to explore.

The space between meeting is also a space where the ensemble grow.

Have a common spirit of inquiry

Have an objective to grow as an ensemble and that is the higher ego of the ensemble.

The ensemble lives between and around its members.

Each part of an ensemble is not:

Selfish, Egotistical, Competitive

How do we want to create together as an ensemble?

As people like-minded get together:

Whatever comes is the right person

Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.

Whenever it starts is the right time.

With one question we became an ensemble. An ensemble starts to create with a single question.

Be prepared to be surprised and create together. The audience is part of the ensemble.

Explorations of Atmosphere

Convener: Lionel Walsh

List of Participants: Peggy Coffey, Suzanne Bennett, Gretchen Egolf, Anne Brady, Mary McPartlin, Tasos Paloukous, Alexandria Moorman, Peter Tadeschi, Kate Bromley, Burcu Halacoglu Yesil (participants), Adam McLean (observer).

Discussion and Recommendations:

This session was a practical session in which Lionel tested a new approach to Atmosphere.

Goals:

1. To test the efficacy of this new approach
2. To explore a graduated approach to the establishment of Atmosphere

Instructions:

Imagine a small 'bubble' or membrane in the space in front of you. It is clear and hollow. Now begin to play with it, stretching it until it is just taller than you, reaches the ground, is just wider than you. When you are ready, set it down in front of you.

Imagine that it is filled with Ease. Put yourself in a receptive mode; reach in and feel what it is like to have your arm and hand surrounded by ease. Take your arm out. Repeat. Then step in and allow the Ease to surround you. As you inhale, the Ease enters you and fills every pore; as you exhale, you fill the space with greater Ease.

Tell yourself, "In a moment I am going to go for a walk." Radiate the walk forward and then step into it, carrying the membrane of Ease with you. Receive the environment, the space, your colleagues as they pass you.

Now, as you walk along, imagine that the membrane begins to fill with (for example) a sensation of Longing. Allow it to remain outside of you, touching your skin, moving up and down your body. (The coach should be clear that participants do not breathe the atmosphere into their bodies; it remains separate from the actor so that it does not become a Personal Atmosphere.) Walk through the space, experiencing the Atmosphere. Execute an activity, receive the others as they pass you. At some point, step out of the bubble and feel the difference; step back in. Repeat. Continue to play in the Atmosphere.

After the actors have time to solidify the Atmosphere in their bubble, move to the next step.

Now allow your bubble to extend towards another person's bubble to that they connect. After a few moments, allow your larger bubble to connect to another group of two. Continue to join groups together until all the bubbles of Atmosphere are connected.

Now, as an ensemble, allow the bubble to stretch to the outer perimeter of the stage. Begin to move through the Atmosphere of Longing and receive others as you pass them.

Now, allow yourself to come to the world of the play and to the scene where Emily returns to her 12th birthday. Begin to receive that world from this Atmosphere of Longing. Imagine you are standing on the hillside of the graveyard and see the town below. (Allow time between each of the coaching's to follow so that the actors have time to do the work) The town square. The neighbourhood. See the graveyard around you: the trees, the gravestones, your fellow dead, Emily's fresh grave...imagine the funeral attendees are leaving to go down the hill to town. Turn and face out (DS) and see Emily's family at her 12th birthday. See Mrs. Gibb; wave to her to try to catch her attention whilst in the Atmosphere of Longing. Next, add dialogue: your line is "Look at me, Mama." Play. Experiment. Step in and out a number of times so that you can feel the difference between being in the Atmosphere and being outside of it and to reinforce their belief in it. Be clear about crossing in and out.

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(It is important that the actors play the action of trying to get Mrs. Gibb to really look at her; I have found that actors sometimes get trapped into playing the Atmosphere instead of being fed by it. Also, it is important that they play for a positive outcome; they must believe it is possible that they can make Mama look at them. Otherwise, they are playing the status quo and the fact that Mr. Gibb does not look is of no great consequence.)

Now full the atmosphere with desperation. Lionel plays a monologue at that moment sitting at a chair that helps the participants feel the desperation and realize that they are that at that particular moment. Then all the participants sit in a chair. The bubble gets filled with comfort. The dead sitting in the chairs realize and feel the other dead around them.

Eventually, coach the actors to step out and in one more time and then remain outside the Atmosphere. Then physically dispel the Atmosphere by shaking it off as you all move through the space.

The motto: Do not play the end of the play, play the aim of the character at that particular moment.

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Forming Stronger Partnerships

Convener: Paul Gabbard

List of Participants: Joanna Merlin, Bethany Caputo, Megan, Christina Macbeth

Discussion and Recommendations:

Paul began the discussion talking about seeing a need for more collaboration. Collaboration can increase the reach, increase the influence, increase the grant opportunities and increase the legacy of Micha.

Megan talked about the ability to connect and widen the circle as an essential part of artistic growth.

The focus turned to regional theatre conferences, specifically the Southeastern Theatre Conference and the Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Conference. The SETC is attended by many different age demographics. Connecting with these groups could lead to long term partnership projects as well as attending their conferences and doing workshops at their conferences.

Members of this discussion group emphasized the importance of representing Micha as opposed to representing their specific school or studio.

The next step might be distributing an online survey to Micha members or to teachers.

Included in this survey might be questions such as:

- 1) What other theatre organizations are you involved with?
- 2) Are you on advisory boards of any of these groups?
- 3) Are you available to go to conferences and represent Micha?

Dawn's name came up as a good person to travel. John might also be a good person to travel and represent our organization.

We also brainstormed the idea of Artists In Residence at Colleges representing Micha, and maybe somewhere down the road having official staff teachers who are paid staff.

We discussed distributing the DVD to conferences and groups at free and reduced rates. Joanna emphasized the importance of the groups having a relationship and a vested interest instead of just sending DVD's out randomly.

A Micha produced and directed production at ACTF regional conference, SETC or other mainstage events was also brought up. This might be a featured production at one of these conferences. This might take a little bit of relationship building and a little time to codify but it would be worth the effort.

Another group of interest that has brought up was the Educational Theatre Association. This group runs the high school thespian groups. They have huge state festivals and international festivals annually.

Possibilities are endless and might include: a main stage show, workshops, information booths to increase membership, grant partnerships, sending Micha representatives that can't afford to go to these conferences, guest artists represented by MICHA, distribution of DVDs

Introducing this to the little ones

Convener: Paul Gabbard

List of Participants: John Owens, Shawn Farrell

Discussion and Recommendations:

Creative Drama and Chekov seem to work well together. Implementing this into the production process with kids might sometimes be difficult. Anything that bases itself on imagination works well with children. The Archetypes exercise works well too. The sensations work might be harder and the giving and taking of energy might be challenging.

But for the most part, kids really do radiate. Kids naturally possess a lot of the qualities and skills. A lot of this work is taking you back to a place that is not necessary with the kids.

Gesture(s) of Listening

Convener: Uli Meyer-Horsch

List of Participants: 25

Discussion and Recommendations:

Uli comes up with the question of what gestures are lying in LISTENING and what qualities they can have.

He starts with the following sequence:

1. Listen to what is outside your body (include voices from other groups in the same space). Close your eyes.
2. Now attend to your own body – the internal sounds, such as breathing and your heartbeat. Inward focus.
3. Shift attention to outside your body.
4. Find a gesture for this listening. Say, “I listen” and find a gesture and explore it.
5. Open your eyes and work on this gesture. A Beginning, Middle and End.

Did you find a movement?

Participants found: Movements outward and inward. There are different ways of listening and different gestures. Listening was happening from the upper half of the body.

Choose a partner. Talk to each other.

Find a gesture that expresses this.

Has your gesture changed?

Now give it a Quality.

1. “Checked and filed”

Listen with an attitude that is not quite agreement – as if you know what the other person is talking about.

Find a gesture for this, with a beginning, middle and end.

Give it one clear shape.

Can you give it a sound?

Where is your focus? Your eyes?

Questions:

Did your gesture change?

Did the quality of the gesture change?

(The group responded “Yes!”)

There was a lot of discussion about this:

Different cultures listen in different ways.

When do we agree or disagree?

Different tempi of listening

Silent listening vs. grunting and encouraging

The total listening of the yoga instructor ... but was there an underlying gesture of “I’m sucking you in!”

2. “Important information”

Choose a new partner. Your partner explains something to you, something of vital importance!

Find a gesture for this kind of listening

Jump into the gesture!

Now do it without the jump.

3. “Empathy”

Your partner tells you a story, an anecdote or a joke, something which moved him/her.

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Listen with empathy. Imagine you connect from heart to heart.
Make a clear gesture for this listening in space (preparation/beginning/middle/end/radiation).
Repeat the gesture three times. Radiate it into the space.
Close your eyes. Listen to yourself.

4. "Common future"

Make a gesture of listening with the quality of having a common future with your partner.
Breathe an add voice.
Now internalize the gesture and talk to each other.

Uli's observation: both the atmosphere and the quality of listening have changed by the end.
He suggests there are four different ways of listening:

1. Checked and Filed (Agreement/Disagreement)
2. Taking in Information
3. Empathy – which comes from the heart
4. Common Future - a new quality which emerges from the void between people. Synthesis. A newborn baby.
(Someone suggests this is creative listening.)

In the discussion that followed people said:

"There was a lifting when I listened."

"I felt a gathering in."

There was a discussion of empathy. "It's allowing something almost there to come forward."

"Conversation is a kind of collaboration."

("What's the difference between hearing, listening and receiving?") "Listening is both receiving and radiating."

Many participants experienced great commonality and spoke about sharing, finding it a liberating and empowering experience.

Does listening itself have a gesture? Does "intent" affect the way we experience it?

MANIFESTO

Convener: Elsa Valentim

List of Participants: anyone who wanted to add a statement to the posted flip chart.

Discussion and Recommendations:

Together, we promise to ourselves and to one another, to sincerely keep alive the spirit and the technique of Michael Chekhov in our work and through our lives by...

- Truly taking the time to explore deeply and fully
- Breathe and expand, take-in and radiate
- Listen with our whole body/mind
- Making true connection with others
- Remembering we are not alone, we have this family
- To come into the creative space with an open heart, a generous heart, and be prepared to work and “be surprised”
- To keep the channel open and not stifle or block what wants to exist through us and with us
- To go to the source – go to the back space of the play, and find the original impulse of the write/director/devisor for ourselves

Theater and Social Media

Convener: Teresa Langston

List of Participants: Teresa Langston, Kate Bromley

Discussion and Recommendations:

After a brief discussion of current Social Media projects/events that may be construed as theater, we discussed how, if social media could be a useful vehicle for teaching or exercising Michael Chekhov technique. Questions about whether or not current forms are theater were put aside and a discussion of how different strategies are evolving for teaching children. Highly interactive forms/games are being developed that may be interesting to look at.

After a bit, the meeting convened in the commons.

Ideas that came out of the discussion:

- 1) A skype performance of Three Sisters with cast being dispersed around the world and streaming of the event live.
- 2) Screen projection using CGI that interacts with a live audience and is affected by radiating, flowing, sense of form, etc – coming from the viewer.

Michaelchekhovforum.com

Convener: David Haugen

List of Participants:

Scott Burrell
Gretchen Egolf
Dave Schulz
Ragnar Freidank

Discussion and Recommendations: The conversation centered on ways to make the 'forum' website more effective. Our conclusions included were that the site must:

- look good
- be more user friendly
- have a consistent look with the MICHA website

And as MICHA redesigns their own site it may be necessary for their designer and programmer to re-design the 'forum' as they will have much higher skills.

We also discussed how to bring people into the site as members. One idea was that the site could have two tiers. The first will allow anyone to visit the site and be able to look around and possibly view one or two exercises. Once they wanted to go deeper into the viewing and/or commenting they would need to be an approved member, which is the second tier.

The two tier system came from our discussion of who the target audience is. Is the site just for members and participants of MICHA conferences or can it be used to bring people who are not familiar with the work to MICHA?

There are several current problems with the site, the log in and comment process being most immediate and perplexing. There are things that look like buttons that are not buttons, etc.

Tired or Awake Which is Better & Moving From Inspiration/Abstraction to Specificity

Convener: Megan Callahan & Andrei Preda

List of Participants:

Megan Callahan, Andrei Preda, Mike Hogan, Lionel Walsh, Liz Shipman, John McManus, Mara Radulovic

Discussion and Recommendations:

We discussed ways to be more alive in performance, the ways to stay active and the energies to activate. Here are some of our comments.

There's a polarity between the head and the body. We are often not aware of the continuous activity we are always doing, rather we are aware of the result. But what brought us to the result is the creative energy. That's of key importance. If we can stay aware of that continuous activity we can bring great life to the stage.

There is a difference between being in your head and being mindful. One can be mindful and have a whole body experience. That's often the difference between "thinking about" and "thinking actively." Our minds often go to the thinking about what's supposed to happen, what should have happened rather than what is happening.

That, in turn, goes back to the polarities. The actor must make the conscious switch to go from checking out to being awake.

One of the best ways to stay active is to stay with ease. Sometimes when an actor is tired, he/she gets out of his/her own way. That can be a good clue for the actor that he/she is able to maintain ease. Being tired can focus an actor's energy as well. But being tired is not a goal or a practical tool for actors to strive for of course.

Another place to find freedom is in form. Actors can create a living space for the willing, feeling and thinking centers. Our work is about finding those places and understanding that there is a fluidity of choice. That choice is ineffable. We can't name it, we may not even achieve it but we can be looking for it.

There is also freedom in being aware of movement. It's like a surfer, he thinks and moves at the same time, he doesn't think then move.

From there we started to move:

We started to throw the ball and talk and tell stories the whole time. We brought in a sense of fun, we made dropping the ball, if it happened, part of the experience, not a mistake. We also picked a point to place our attention and we let it grow to encompass each other, the balls, the conversation, the movement and the gestures we began adding to the game.

At the end, we all discussed the experience. We mostly found that the fun we had and willingness to fail bonded us, created an ensemble and interestingly activated our emotional apparatus.

Megan's sequence for the ball exercise:

- Take whatever conversation is happening and then move it to our feet, let your awareness expand as you continue to talk and as a simple toss of the ball begins simultaneously
- After a little while stop and check in, can you pay attention to both? The answer from the group was yes. The awareness was increasing.
- We then picked a specific point to place our awareness, from which it could grow. Breath/imaginary center/ground/ball/whatever. Just one point to return to when attention wanders, and then expand the awareness again.
- We then started adding multiple balls. As time went on ease kept increasing, playfulness organically began, and risk taking with the balls commenced... senses were heightened. Ensemble/fun/heightened perception/activation and awareness.

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- Important to keep checking in from time to time. Where is my attention? What is happening?
- Eventually we broke the circle and started moving through the space.
- We also allowed for an organic ending, rather than stopping it, we *let it end*, as each ball fell to the floor it was out of play.

Nourishment: Creating A Community Project

Convener: Megan Gleeson

List of Participants: Megan Gleeson, Caitlin Goldie, Liz Shipman, John Owens

Discussion and Recommendations:

- We discussed what nourishment is, how we could create work that nourishes, reaches out, and welcomes in. Maybe the work is ensemble based, maybe not.
- By nature, theatre is nourishing. Any and all performative offering has a level of or a need for sharing and/or nourishment.
- What is nourishment? To be held, nurtured, completion or movement toward completion of wholeness, to be challenged, confronted, mirrored...It can be a self journey perhaps.
- "Transforming the Myth"
- "Theatre should be on every street corner, about us! We need to involve everyone!" –John
- Our future (theatre) relies on everyone
- Separation cannot be our future or there will be no future
- We need to re-examine the separation between actor/artist and society that we as artists often implement
- It may be helpful to examine the personal question of "what is my bliss?" "What do I find beautiful?" My high school theater class had a final project of individual "Bliss Projects" where we shared and/or performed something that to us, was our bliss. John taught a class where everyone shared something that was beautiful to them. These performative actions were nourishing.
- Chekhov talks about beauty. Also, there is beauty in sharing.
- Possible forms/structure for this work: Augusto Boal and the theatre of the oppressed
- Possible process: 1) Select a community and an aspect of that community to explore/a question, 2) Interview these people about what nourishment is for them, 3) Really engage those participants in this interview/questionnaire, 4) Create
- Think about: What are the stumbling blocks in this process? Ex: Legal limitations in interviews, etc. Also, who are we doing this for?
- The power of a work that is created in order to bring two or more groups together.
- The lack of structure for this "type" of work gives it potential to be bad and unengaging.
- Performances may just be one-time acts.
- This exploration and performance can be a gathering, reaching out, digesting, transforming, giving form, incorporation, and synthesis.
- "I like being able to move my thoughts." - Liz
- Nourishment: being able to take something in, digest it, transform it, and then grow something new.
- We aspire toward nourishment. Or do we? What is the relationship between nourishment and beauty?
- We spoke about Destiny Learning and the 7-step learning process. Email Liz if you want to view that process.

Out of the Classroom, Into the Open - Towards a Chekhov Performance Festival

Convener: Scott Mendelsohn

List of Participants:

Alicia Hall-Flesh, Anne Brady, Burcu Halacogly Yesil, Christa Macbeth, Elsa Valentim, Janice Orlandi, John Owens, Lionel Walsh, Liz Shipman, Megan Callahan, Peggy Coffey, Roberto Colosimo, Suzanne Bennett

Discussion and Recommendations: Brainstorming about the possibility of a Chekhov-based performance festival. The wish was that it be turned outward, to reach out as actor-citizens to a broader audience of non-MICHA artists, and non-artist theater-goers. How to do this? After much discussion, this suggestion: could we conceive of a process that would begin with choosing a broad theme or leitmotiv ('unemployment' or 'work' for example). Everyone would be invited to contribute in whatever form they choose: devised piece, improvisation bringing in non-professionals, an existing script (Death of a Salesman, for example).

The process would begin with work at the 'seed' level being presented at the first (internal) meeting, which would be presented the first year. Work could continue and be presented again the next year, with the 'seeds' now heading toward 'fruit'. If/when ripe, these pieces could be presented publicly, and voila – our festival. The process could continue from year to year, with any given piece going through different stages.

Possible timeline:

- 6 months from now – send out a request for proposals to the MICHA communities, including the theme, date and location
- 1 year from now – One week gathering – workshop submitted pieces, and open space for individuals to play and seek collaborators. At end of session or thereafter, community decides which ideas “have legs” – might stand on their own for presentation to the public
- From 1 year – 2 years from now: groups continue to develop pieces, perhaps hosted in various locations by members who have theater spaces / resources to contribute. (Peggy Coffey mentioned her SpringWorks Festival in Stratford as a possibility)
- 2 years from now: present performances in a hub city, including marketing to the public, inviting reviewers, etc.

Problems arising: venues? We will need more than one. Funding? (go for portable productions).

Advantages: the strength of synchronicity many people working on the same theme.

Danger: taking away from the established MICHA conference.

An invitation follows. Comments, questions, suggestions and complaints welcome!

The Path of the Actor – our personal journey as an artist, and 12 archetypes that accompany us (based on Joseph Campbell's Hero of a Thousand Faces).

Convener: Scott Mendelsohn

List of Participants: Suzanne Bennett, Suzanne Bronson, Gretchen Egolf, Anne Brady, Alisha Hall-Fleish, Mike Hogan, Roberto Colossimo, Alexandria Moorman, Naomi Bailis, Pablo Rodriguez, Kenny Chung, Christa Macbeth

Second session convene after dinner with Megan Gleeson, Taso Paloukos, Kenny Chung, Janice Orlandi, Mara Radulovic, Deb Keller

Discussion and Recommendations:

The session focused on our own journey – our own drama – as artists. We discussed some of the challenges we face in being artists – navigating the artistic, spiritual realm, where our gifts are given freely, and the market realm, where we must exchange to have our material needs met.

Scott introduced a short psychological questionnaire, based on Jungian psychology, that outlined how active 12 archetypes might be in a person's life. It is called the Pearson-Marr Archetype Indicator, published by the Center for the Application of Type (www.capt.org). Once participants completed the exercise, Scott walked through descriptions of the archetypes in their positive and negative aspects, and described how they trace a path along the hero's journey:

1. Innocent
2. Orphan
3. Warrior
4. Caregiver
5. Seeker
6. Destroyer
7. Creator
8. Lover
9. Ruler
10. Magician
11. Sage
12. Fool

We discussed how these archetypes serve as our companions in life, and serve as polarities to each other – Innocent / Orphan, Warrior / Caregiver, Seeker / Lover, Destroyer / Creator, Ruler / Magician, Sage / Fool. There are other relationships as well.

Books on the subject include *Awakening the Heroes Within* by Carol Pearson.

We also discussed the *The Gift* by Lewis Hyde, which is about the life of the creative artist, and how he or she supports her creative spirit in a market economy. (Beautiful, brilliant – great book)

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Setting up a different kind of contract with our audiences

Convener: Liz Shipman

List of Participants: Elsa Valentim, Victor Melnikov, Andrei Preda, Douglas Davidson, Meghan Callaghan, Paul Boothroyd, John McManus,

Discussion and Recommendations:

Our meeting happened in an alcove in the house in Greene – we definitely felt like we were in “the audience,” compared to the group that was meeting on the stage.

There is a line – a threshold – between the audience and the stage. The contract – the agreement is about negotiating that gulf.

Examples of different contracts:

Liz Shipman attended a performance in London called *The Servant of Two Guv'nors*, a modern British version of the classic commedia play “Servant of Two Masters.” The atmosphere entering the room was full of joy – music, performers in the audience – a very particular contract was made with the audience. She wants to know what tools, what is involved in negotiating such a contract for every show.

Our Town – Peggy Coffey’s exercise from class yesterday. She took a phrase from Wilder’s introduction (the back space of the play) that spoke to his impulse for the play. It led to a deep feeling of the whole for the play that helped bring the play to life for performers and observers in new ways.

Medea starring Fiona Shaw. An audience member didn’t like her performance, because the sound she made when she saw she had killed her children was exactly the same sound as he had made when he heard his daughter had died. It was too close, too personal for him – he could not accept her offering.

Cloverfield – movie that used handheld camera, which made some audience members ill. Theaters offered patrons their money back if they left in the first 20 minutes.

Footed Elbows – Spanish Company that creates an atmosphere of huge fear and risk. This expectation before coming into the theater is a huge part of the experience of the show. Entering this atmosphere without knowing in advance could be overwhelming to the spectator. But if the audience member DOESN’T experience risk, then the show has failed.

Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark – a whole variety of expectations surrounding the accidents, pop nature due to the involvement of U2, money involved in the production

Also – the American assumption of giving a standing ovation, where Europeans do not share that.

Follies at Paper Mill Playhouse. Ann Miller performing “I’m Still Here.” Perfect alignment between the content of the play (a nostalgic but unsentimental look at 30s Broadway and Vaudeville), audience (suburban New Jersey who appreciate that era of popular theatre), of character (an aging ex Follies star who has survived and is “still here”) and performer (Anne Miller, whose personal history as an MGM star and ability as a performer to fulfill everyone’s expectation). It’s the only time that Scott genuinely felt lifted to his feet for an ovation – the contract was absolutely fulfilled.

Questions raised in the session, with a few possible answers

What do I do to create the specific contract for the show that I made?

How do we negotiate that contract for every show?

When is the contract for the show clear for both people?

What is the threshold when the agreement becomes clear for both artists and audience?

How long does it take for an audience to consent?

What happens when they don’t consent?

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Who is the audience? That night, for each show, for each theater, for each style of theater (Broadway vs. off-Broadway, classical vs. avant garde vs. musical theater)

Why do people go to the theater?

Are there elements we can begin to create as a director, producer, production team that I can use to help set/ negotiate a new contract with the audience at a performance?

What does the audience want to hear?

- 1) They want to be brought into an experience, an emotional experience – the atmosphere is the expression. Sandy Meisner said “no emotion, no life.”
- 2) I want to see something new that I *recognize as true*.
- 3) To be reminded of who I am and where I come from – of the source of us all
- 4) To feel more alive, to personalize things that are not personal – example: horror films
- 5) Different people need different things to personalize their experience

If the contract is an invitation, how do we get there? What is in the bond?

Definitions

Contract: a set of rules, a *written* agreement, that is agreed to, consented and agreed

The contract is an invitation.

Success or failure of the contract

We are cheating the audience if we're not moving them. Part of the movement comes from the story. Emotion, story, tell it together.

If there is no atmosphere, the contract is violated.

If the actors aren't connected, the audience cannot connect.

If there is a problem, a gulf between the performers and the audience, then it starts on the stage.

Example: Douglas talked about an English National Theatre production where actors their words like javelins – their expectation was that the audience were not open to their offerings, so they hurled their words, instead of inviting the audience to join them.

A contract is successful when both parties are happy, emotionally connected, giving.

Joy has to be in everything.

Going beyond the self – all artists – directors / designers / actors

Tools

Archetypal elements:

- back space (access to the creative source for the play, the work)
- heart – openness and sharing with the audience, not using will to impose our “contract” on the audience
- Atmosphere – brings the work to life, brings everyone into the experience. When we are open, the actor and the space are one.

Divided consciousness - the audience has this too.

The threshold

The actors

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Show selection and marketing – letting people know what they're interested in.

Trained performers go behind the story – they inhabit a different dimension of the story than the audience, and provide them a window.

Actors and performers must become a window onto the source of the play, to go into the backspace and invite the audience to join them.

The final bow – possibility of closing the contract, option of not having a final bow, which is upsetting to both actors and audience. (The audience wants to see the actor out of character – out of respect for the actors).

The first appearance of the actors: example, Moscow Art Theater, actors came on stage out of character, looked at the audience, and used that interaction that audience as they slowly embodied their characters before them. The cast waited until the moment, let the audience help them move into character, into the world of the play.

Two things that can make an audience quiet: 1) Sink down into the earth. 2) Listen to every sound the audience makes. (The audience has something they want to say – they want to dialogues with the actors – usually intangibly, but dialogue nonetheless).

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Michael Chekhov: The Student MOVEMENT

Convener: Christina Bryson

List of Participants: Joanna Merlin, Paul Gabbard, John Owens, Ragnar Friedank, Paul Boothroyd, Lionel Walsh, Timothy Joya, Tosa,

Discussion and Recommendations:

Christina: As a student in theatre school who has already been exposed to the Michael Chekhov work, I was shocked to find out how rare this is. I took it for granted that Lionel has worked this work into our curriculum, and I hope to spread this work to other students of theatre. In a constantly evolving technological world, our focus becomes very internal and superficial (living our lives through screens right in front of our faces), I think this is the precise time when we need to be introduced to this work, to reintroduce us to the potential our bodies hold, learn how to open and radiate, to truly connect with others. As we ARE the theatre of the future, I wish to integrate this work into our lives, work, and play as early as possible, so that it can continue to grow and evolve with the upcoming generation of young theatre artists. Let's get moving!

Teach it as you know it

Sometimes difficult in such rigid programming (Universities, etc.) to work in such open work . . . how can we introduce students to this work?

Youth Theatre festivals – networking, advertising, set up some booths, etc → Make MICHA a presence amongst younger generation

Is a student workshop possible?

- Spread through a younger demographic
- Feeling of community among students
- Connection across boundaries (often an innate and unspoken sense of competition amongst theatre schools, how can we eliminate this, and get students to connect on a truly artistic level? Begin the networking process as early as possible)

Travelling teachers? Do a circuit to offer workshops at various schools? Use our MICHA community to our advantage!

- Have Universities sponsor events (therefore no travel or accommodation costs for students) to that students get a taste of the work, get them excited and wanting more
- Is there a way to offer a University CREDIT?
→ Set up through interested universities, transfer credits that can count toward Undergrad degrees

Social marketing

- Youtube
- Online testimonials
- Physical videos
- Discussion forums
- Promote DVD series

FUNDING

- Grants?
- Subsidize workshops
- A way to offer scholarships (?)

Ask participants from Teacher Training Group: who might be interested in spreading their seed, teaching around?

→ FORUM??

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MICHA as facilitator

- Where is the MICHA faculty spread throughout the country
- How to make the MICHA bonds stronger, get the word out about MICHA

Several channels to spread through

- Capitalizing on energy that is already present → keep personal energy flowing
- Marketing the REAL, opening the channels (yes, social media is helpful, but need to create practical sessions for students to connect on a personal, physical level)
- Create a time and space to bring them together!

Are there other possible structures?

- Festival (presentations?)
- Music
- Open Space
- Multi-media
- Workshops
- Cross-university meetings

Connecting IMPULSE with PRACTICALITY

- Creating time and space to introduce students to Chekhov work
- Facilitate the human experience
- Re-awaken the sensation!

Keeping impulse alive once we all go home → Keep energy rolling!

Create a contact list of interested students to begin conversations

→ Begin a Student Movement event committee (already a network of students at this workshop that would be more than willing to be involved)

OUTDOOR EVENT???

- Might help with some costs
- Don't have to go through the red tape of Universities
- Interesting to students
- Going right back to nature (the very opposite of the technology that's pulling us so far away from the sensorial world of connection)
- Campfire nights, sense of community, no distractions, complete submersion in this work/play
- Ragnar mentioned a farm between Ottawa and Toronto
- Maybe call other camps? See what is possible in terms of renting it for a weekend/week?

The Landscape of our Lives

Convener: Tim Joya

List of Participants: Tim and 5 others

Discussion and Recommendations:

We started with sharing memory descriptions of the house and/or neighborhood and/or landscape where we grew up. Was it warm or cold? Open or divided into separate spaces? Flat or mountainous? Contained or expansive? Urban or suburban or country? Old or modern? This led to questions about how our movements were affected. Were we taught to be seen but not heard? Did we have space to explore as children? Did we learn to present ourselves with a self-possessed swagger? Do we love stairs because we ran up and down hillsides? Do we want everything to be in its place because every activity had its separate space in our homes? How does a culture effect movement and gesture? What about language and speaking? How does this all look in our changing world, where landscape, culture and language are no longer closely bound together, and instead one language may link many cultures or one landscape may become home to the most varied of peoples? Lots of questions. Answers glimpsed. Food for thought.

Training and Creating in a DIY Present and Future

Convener: Nick Mangano

List of Participants:

These notes contributed by Caitlin Goldie

Discussion and Recommendations:

What am I looking for in an education in this world of DIY theater? I am looking for a community/support system that is larger than just actors. Encouragement not to wait for specific conditions to create. An international mindset/exposure to art being created in other countries. Michael Chekhov technique or some other type of training that encourages imagination while giving practical tools and exercises for developing my body as an instrument. A program that re-examines or allows for re-examination of the concept of what it means to be an actor. Business of the business too. A curriculum that changes (or parts of it that change).

Using Music for Chekhov Technique

Convener: Mary McPartlan

List of Participants: Jessica Cerullo, Fern Sloan, Gretchen Egolf, Caitlin Goldie, Thomas Schuster, Pablo Rodriguez, Megan Gleeson, Elsa Valentin, Scott Mendelsohn, Victor Melnikov, Theresa Langston

Discussion and Recommendations:

Music the way to embody Chekhov gesture

I have carried out exploratory work with first year drama students in Galway using new lyrics from Duke Special and featuring Fiona Shaw in Mother Courage and her Children.

We structured the workshop Beginning middle and end.

Beginning;

Singing together to communicate and to listen to all the sounds of each other and as an ensemble

Exploration of multiple instruments, chord structure, composition, archetypes, music as a way into rehearsal.

The sounds and the listening

Creating vibrating sounds in group session using images from the text, allowing consonants and vowels to radar

Sensibility.

Using a tuning fork we listened to the spaces between the notes and the sustaining creating a tangible atmosphere.

We explored the rhythms the major, the minor, the tangible vibrations giving access to immediate an active listening.

What do the sounds then evoke, the consonants , the vowels, the archetypes of sound in text and the archetypes of movement, the beat and shapes of a scene using rhythm.

Music has a character all of its own in the text, find it and play with it to find Chekhov gestures.

End:

Using the new lyrics of Duke Special "Mother Courage Finale"

We explored the lyrics together with gestures

We explored the melody together with gestures

We explored the melody and gestures as one.

We internalized the gestures and sang the music and lyrics

We set the chorus to a rhythm and sang and did the gestures

We sang the chorus in a rhythm and internalized the gesture.

We played all the time with the qualities and the shift with the movement of the melody from high middle and low in the molding flowing flying and radiating exercise.

Working with the Camera

Convener: Tom Kingdon

List of Participants: 12

Discussion and Recommendations:

Why do actors feel disempowered in front of the camera?

New miniature camera technology allows us to place the camera in the hand.

We can break the wall between camera operator and performer.

We started with finding our centers.

We added a quality.

We vocalized and found a character.

We improvised scenarios in groups of three.

Person #3 in the group became the unrestrained enquirer able to look where and at whatever he/she wanted.

That person was then given a small camera and recorded the improvisation between the other two ... but kept in character.

We tried to follow movements of the hands, arms, feet, etc. Being responsive to every micro movement.

The camera went wherever the camera-person's curiosity took it.

The camera was given to one of the two people in an improv, working in synch with the actions of that character. If the character looked away or looked down, the camera did so too.

We did a group improv (a convention of Bible salespersons) and passed the camera from one character to another.

Finally, we did a follower/followed improv where the person with the camera could not point it at the other improviser when he/she looked at him. (Kind of grandmother's footsteps!)

The group appreciated the ease with which they were able to work with the camera, and felt it offered creative possibilities for their future work.

The Closing Circle

I'd like to thank everyone in the space. It has been a great opportunity. I'm so young. Only 20. And bring in a room withal different ages and opportunities and begin able to have a space and having a feeling of ease. Exploring. Being heard. To listen. To have this opportunity in the space to listen.

I'm freshly out of this college. And it is so nice to realize what a community there is. This work has helped me recognize what confidence really looks like. And community. Thank you.

I want to speak but I would like to be free and then I like to use a translator to speak in Spanish. For me it is interesting to be, in addition to the experience I have learned a lot but the most important thing is getting to know all these people. Everyone is so distinct and the way people are in North America is different. People feel differently and move in a distinct way. When we are doing exercises with Chekhov each thing is so distinct and special that it brings in a whole new experience for the way I have worked. Chekhov is Russian, then the technique goes to Europe. One can probe or almost taste it. Other cultures can learn and it is 'phew!'.

I am irreverent by nature and I so appreciated this entire week.

It is wonderful and incredible this week to be amongst this community of actors who are here and working out of love instead of working out of fear. It is so rewarding to play and play with those fellow actors that are right there to play. This has been an incredible experience that I want to thank you all for playing.

Thank you for an inspired way to live and work. Crystals can be charged with vibrations. So we are planting our intentions in here for this gift.

This is the right place to be and the right time. Thank you and thank you Jessica especially.

I am charged to go back and explore.

As someone just beginning my journey with this work, I don't know how much I contributed but just listening was so wonderful.

It is wonderful to be part of a family that we can choose.

I want to thank Max. Who was a tremendous support for us. For the Collaborative Stew. And I will not forget it. Thank you.

I have received a gift from each person here. Some gifts were very large and some gifts were quiet. So thank you.

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Thank you.

What a joy it is to be back in the circle! It has been a few years and I didn't realize. I knew it made a difference but I didn't realize how much. Thank you Jessica – this weekend made it possible for me to come back.

In this moment if we all remember what it is like to be a small child who has cried and then sucks in the air after crying so hard and you feel so full with emotions. And I had a lot of crazy crap in my life before coming and right now—after this week – without having to cry, I have this feeling of the kid who is not emotionally drained by emotionally activated.

I want to thank everyone for creating a space in which I was able to be free with you and share with you and share with you as you shared with me and to risk sounding sentimental--- save my life. It really did. I have opened my eyes to many different people from all around the world. Truly wonderful and life changing. Thank you.

It is wonderful to come someplace you have never come before and to belong almost immediately. As we say in southern Arizona, "Happy Trails"

Thank you to the interns for making everything work. And thank you Jessica.

Well guys, I think I am expanding.

I'm coming back to MICHA after many years away. 3.5 years working in corporate job 70 hours a week. I'm recovering and learning the difference between resources and the market economy. And what makes us fearful. They are resources, an echo of the real source. The imagination, that thing that we come here and access and in the market world we exchange things. Things have value for what we get and when we give it away it is gone. In the gift economy in the Chekhov world. We give things away and then we both have it. I give it away. That is true of artists and business. This is the real world.

A dance in the space.

I could feel the weight of the crystal coming so thank you for making it lighter. I want to thank – the teachers. The MICHA teachers and the teachers in my group – I'm crying. As I step forward to teach I am humbled in the true sense and profoundly moved by your generosity, the care that you want to teach, always wanting to be better wanting to respect. A great thing to aim for. Thank you for all that. It is great.

A bow to the group.

I want to thank my teachers this week. And thank you to Joanna for being my teacher. That I can say. Joanna Merlin was my teacher and I am very proud of that. Thank you to the teacher group. What a gift to be with you. I thank you very much for all of that.

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I have an urge to be intellectual about things. I will let it go and just say I think there is a lot of thanking but I think everyone in this room should be proud of what we have done here. And Victor, and the Russians introduced to us, if we have time, that before you go on a trip all you do is sit. We put so much weight on words, it is good just to be here together. Can we take a minute before we go just to sit?

I would like to thank everyone that has opened themselves up and allowed me in. Especially the people in the 'lake of pleasure'.

Thank you for joy, for safety, for new beginning, for hope.

A song – the Scarlet Tide

I feel grateful and moved by this experience and most inspiring part of this experience - and I felt the same thing in Amherst - is that there is a lack of competitive atmosphere and fearful atmosphere. And there is a playfulness that inspires me. I am grateful and happy to have an opportunity to be here.

Thank you. I remember sitting - not like you - but as you are, Theresa, a few years ago. That is when I met Ragnar and Jessica and it is amazing to come back time and again and lose touch and it only takes one day and I feel like I am home. And it is nice to be in the room with both of you. So thank you Jessica, thank you Ragnar.

Shimmers in the light. A Thank you to everyone for sharing your light.

I feel better now. Thank you all.

It is always so wonderful to come back from afar and to drink from the well spring of the Michael Chekhov impulse so I come home to family. I deepen all relationships and make new ones. Thank you all.

I would not presume to speak for the other so-called teachers. But I don't think any of them will disagree with me if I remind us all that, yes I suppose in the structure some have to be designated teachers and others students. But the students teach the teachers. Please everyone. Let's, yes, just that.

I have experienced a lot in life but never like this weekend. It is because of you so thank you. You are warm, open and playful. Thank you.

I am not here for precisely the same reason as most of you. I'm here to help with the open space these last 2 days but I have learned just as much as all of you. Thank you for the passion you have brought and the inspiration it has brought me. It is a valuable experience that I plan to take out into my future. Thanks.

I have had a very extremely powerful week. I have felt vulnerable and safe. So thank you everyone. Thank you.

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I want to thank each of you. For welcoming me so whole heartedly. Fuck! (tears) I feel awakened. I feel inspired to be more than just an actor. To be an artist. And I know that is something that I not only *want* to do but *can* and fucking *will*.

Very special thank you to Jessica. And also to Joanna. Both of them made it possible for me to come, otherwise I would not have been able. And thank you for you all. I love to play and this week was full of playing and I think we all could play so that was great and I hope we will have more of these weeks or processes where we can all play. I want to welcome you to come to Europe. You who are not from Europe. There are many brothers and sisters that you have there but at least I can say for my little studio in Hamburg you are welcome to be there. I mean it materially – you have a bed there, a studio. You don't have to study, you can just do something. Use the shower or whatever. You are welcome in Hamburg and everywhere.

I don't think I can grow alone. And I think you are very important. There is someone that crossed my path and I want to thank him. It is Scott. Thanks to Scott – not technique – I don't know what I'm talking about. I am able to come here. And here I am and you have all touched me. You have all touched me and I am changed because of you. So I want to thank you all.

Each year this festival, workshop, is the charge that I need to get through the rest of the year so thank you very much for being my charger and my creative spirit. Thank you all.

Thank you for coming.

Thank you Craig. Thank you Jessica. Thank you MICHA. It is a truly inspirational experience for me. Thank you Michael Chekhov.

I woke up Thursday morning and noticed and noticed an amazing weight had been lifted from me. I attribute that to you all. I want to thank Anne and Bob for letting me into that space with you. For treating me with tremendous respect and as an equal. I'd like to thank the Therasas and Alex. We all go to school together. It is so wonderful to be able to work with you outside of school. Finally, thank you to Mara and Craig. My first acting teachers at Emerson. People I respect tremendously. It has impacted my work and my life. It is so wonderful to work with you in the classroom setting and here. Thank you.

I feel like there is so much to say and that I can't sum it up. But I can let you know that I love you all, you have changed my life, given me confidence and I don't feel as alone in the world any more.

Thank you to those who came before us. All of you here. And those who will come after us. And just Jessica. Your elegant leadership.

When I was a little boy growing up in a poor neighborhood in Toronto, I didn't know it was possible. It has been possible for 14 years. I have perfect attendance. Michael

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Chekhov said every artist seeks transformation. And that is what has happened yet again. I hope for each artist, I know for me. And Joanna – know every time you touch this crystal it is full of ease, form, beauty and the whole.

I want to say if I can, it is an amazing experience for me to be in a room full of - and a conference full of - interaction with theater people in which I feel I can be completely myself. That I can reveal all of that and it is ok. And I want to thank also Jessica and Craig and Joanna and all the teachers and the interns for making this the best conference that I have ever been to.

I said this earlier but I made a proclamation in the New Year that 2011 was going to be the best year of my life. And through the Michael Chekhov work and classes at Emerson and I just spent a summer in LA...I have found a new empowerment to do this work. I feel blessed to do this work. I have a new appreciation of this work. It is living deeper within me and it is beautiful to be able to wake up and play. It is really nice...not everyone gets to know what we know...to really listen to people. When I look at people I can see their souls...very few people choose this and are selected for this. This week reminded me why I chose this...this is my calling. I can now officially call myself an artist.

I created the invitation for the Theatre of the Future in a small apartment in Seattle. I had to twist my husband's arm to do the graphic design for it. I feared that no one would come, so thank you all for coming.

I wrote something in my notebook from Michael Chekhov that I would like to read. In his autobiography Michael Chekhov said of the Theatre of the Future that it would be *“created by people who will be capable of serving rather than being servile, of working rather than earning a living, of loving the living organism of the theater rather than a dead organization. They will be people who understand that it is a possible to create everywhere and always, and that a living, creative organism cannot be shackled by the dead forms of a rational technique.”*

