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Topics in Theater: Lab

TOOLBOX:

**A COURSE IN DIRECTING & PHYSICAL ACTING TOOLS FOR
PERFORMANCE MAKERS OF ALL KINDS**

6/28 - 8/7, 2010 Saturday Mornings, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm Theater t-6 and 7
/UWM/PSOA #490-451

Course Description:

This is a course in the conception and construction or direction of original, adapted group, and solo performance works, plays or dances- whatever their media or style. Each class will begin with an exercise typical to Viewpoints, Grotowski, Elevated Text, and Action Based Text based, or Site Specific rehearsal processes. Discussion will follow on problems and opportunities presented by integrating these techniques with other media or practices, classical or modern dance, meditation, puppets, realistic acting, and other diverse performance elements. Questions addressed include how is a rehearsal process planned for a multi media or cross discipline work? What are the points of connection between techniques and what are points of divergence? In effect how do you make a plan for a work that sits outside the "box.?"

Individual Lab time for each participant will be scheduled to plan, discuss and trouble shoot and dream up projects. The Class can be used to research and refine plans, map out performances or proposals, and practice rehearsal techniques and prepare material. The workshop is perfect to directors gearing up for new work, actors wanting to self-script or visual artists who want to make performance part of their work.

This lab, based in acting and directing techniques, considers performance broadly and includes all aspects of the traditional performing arts, film/digital media and visual art. The lab defines any place where a relationship between performer and audience exists, as a performance. Dispensing with conventional boundaries, and seeking a new form, Artists can find themselves casting about for rehearsal techniques that fit their vision. Or they may find that integration of modes of performance is difficult and not successful. This lab looks at those problems by looking at core rehearsal and compositional techniques by relating task to tool, simultaneous with examining the working mind of different techniques and how they affect outcome.

Each Lab Meeting will have three sections: Practical exercises of techniques, interrogation of the core of the techniques and its possible uses, and group discussion or research on individual projects.

Course Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze and articulate classical ideas and contemporary compositional theory across conventional disciplinary or framework boundaries.
2. Apply classical and contemporary compositional ideas and theory as adventurous performance makers of their own new work.
3. Define and develop tools to critique and assess the lab participants' creative application of compositional ideas through weekly creative exercises.

The course is organized into a series of self-contained exercises each departing from and interrogating ideas from Aristotle's Poetics.

Required Reading:

Aristotle, on poetry and Style: (ed. and Translated with introduction G.M.A Grebe)

Isbn:0-87220-072-8, Hackett Indianapolis. " The poetics "

One of the Following for discussion in Class:

Wangh, "Acrobat of the Heart."

M. Chekhov, " On the Technique of Acting"

M. Chekhov " To the Director and Playwright"

D. R. Jones " Great Directors at Work"

M. Chekhov "To the director and playwright"

K. Linkelater "Freeing Shakespeare's Voice"

Kantor, and editor M. Kobialka " A Journey Through Other Spaces" (final Critical Study)

Brook, The Open Space

E.G Craig, " On the Art of the Theater

Kandinsky, " On (or concerning) the Spiritual in Art"

Stanislavsky (anything)

Grading Policy:

This is considered an advanced seminar course. Grading will reflect perfect attendance and class work, a well thought out, original and complete final project as agreed between professor and participant.

Class 1:

Acting: Mindfulness, preoccupation and playing an action.

I feel....

Given circumstances, Preoccupation and action in text (I want)

Directing: The floor plan for actors

Class 2:

The Neutral scene, the preoccupation and task, movement and stakes.

Directing: cutting the channel through action (container and contents)

Class 3

Dropping in, embodied text and “ the jump”

Elevated Text Shakespeare

Directing the non-represented setting and the actor’s dilemma.

Class 4

Inside out/outside in: Image and physicality and text

The Cat, The Rope and the Plastiques river, Body masks and text.

Directing the Physiological gesture and impulse.

Class 5:

One thing at a time:

Drop and pick up, entering and exiting, objects (or architecture) and status.

Just stand. What complicates the Journey?

Class 6

Objects, task action and content. The Journey Study or Scenes.

Journey Study:

Entrance, exit, surprise or other unexpected event that changes the protagonist, necessity of the simplest kind, task with reveal of character, clear sense of actor/audience relationship and the real. Clear beginning with entrance and end with exit.

Objects: Suitcase, paper shopping bags, chairs, shoes etc. emblematic and of the lowest order.

Other class meetings are in the rehearsals, work sessions and in critique of each participants request.

Excellence of Structure:

- Beginning, middle, end
- Length/Unity of plot as necessary; no excess (unity of plot)
- Action driven
- All plot developments should be probable or inevitable, and develop out of the dramatic actions
- Dramatic actions vs. presentation (although presentation should be well done also)
- Surprise -unexpected connections between unrelated elements/events
- Act n relation to the signified other
- Act with knowledge; act before it, or gain it through action or and decide not to act
- Complex plot, with simultaneous reversal and recognition
- Recognition emerging from the plot
- Economy of content
- Characters: worthy of interest, consistent, identifiable to viewer, the active character flaw, integral to plot.
- Catharsis

C. University Policies

1. *Students with disabilities*. Verification of disability, class standards, the policy on the Use of alternate materials and test accommodations can be found at the following:
<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/DSAD/SAC/SACltr.pdf>
2. *Religious observances*. Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to Religious observance are found at the following:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S1.5.htm
3. *Students called to active military duty*. Accommodations for absences due to call-up of Reserves to active military duty should be noted.
<http://www3.uwm.edu/des/web/registration/militarycallup.cfm>
4. *Incompletes*. The conditions for awarding an incomplete to graduate and undergraduate Students can be found at the following:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S31.pdf
5. *Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment)*. Definitions of discrimination. Harassment, abuse of power, and the reporting requirements of discriminatory conduct Are found at the following:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S47.pdf
6. *Academic misconduct*. Policies for addressing students cheating on exams or plagiarism Can be found at the following:
<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/DOS/conduct.html>
7. *Complaint procedures*. Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic Unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a Specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic Unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible For enforcing the policy.
8. *Grade appeal procedures*. Procedures for student grade appeal appear at the following:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S28.htm
9. *Final examination policy*. Policies regarding final examinations can be found at the Following:
http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/acad%2Badmin_policies/S22.htm

