

Storytelling Through Honest Expression

Greater NY-NJ Region 15 Vocalfest 2020

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This is a space for play and exploration.

Let go of the need to be right.

Embrace the weird and unknown.

**By living and playing in new ways
you can find what is right for you!**

Face!

- Make it small
- Make it big
- Bring it all to one side, the other, up, and down
- Show Me:
 - Happy
 - Sad
 - Angry
 - Flirty
 - Confused
 - Scared
 - Brave
 - Excited
- Cover your mouth and story tell with your eyes
- Sudden shifts in facial emotions can be used to great comical effect

Waist-up Physicality!

- Alignment -
- Flexibility - don't lock up
- Whether you're standing or sitting, you have a lot of expressive movement available to you

Explorations of Honest Expression

- As a soloist
 - Analyze the text and music and determine the emotional arc of your story
 - Who are you talking to
 - Is it one person or many people?
 - Is it different during different parts of the song?
 - Why are you telling them tis
 - Do you need them to know
 - Do you need them to change
 - Do you need them to do something
 - What are the ways you can communicate to get your desired result
- As a quartet member
 - Similar to the above, but there may be more point of differentiation
- As a chorus member
 - You may be able to identify with everything a song has to say and the message/story your director wants to tell with this music - hooray!
 - You may not. So what do you do now?
 - Look for truth within what you have been asked to do
 - Ex: love song - doesn't have to be about someone, can be about something, or finding your love of your self, or a pet
 - Ex: super sassy character song - step into someone else's shoes and how they would feel/respond, think of a time when you wish you had been that brash, or how you might defend a friend

Bottom Line

- Music is an amazing way to tell stories
- There is beauty and power in doing that in a group
- There can still be honesty in your performance even if something you're singing isn't something you would have chosen to perform as a soloist
- You get to flex your creative muscles and find a way to infuse those stories with your truths!

Acting Techniques

Stanislavski

- Constantin Stanislavski created the acting technique called Classical Acting. Areas of study include concentration, voice, physical skills, emotion memory, observation, and dramatic analysis. Stanislavsky's goal was to find a universally applicable approach that could be of service to all actors. He said of his system: "*Create your method. Don't depend slavishly on mine. Makeup something that will work for you! However, keep breaking traditions, I beg you.*"
- In Stanislavski's system, also known as the Stanislavski's method, uses an actor's feelings and experiences to connect with the character they are portraying. The actor puts himself or herself in the mindset of the characters finding things in common to give a more accurate portrayal of the character.

Chekhov

- Michael Chekhov was a student of Stanislavski, and he would later add to the Stanislavski's system. Chekhov was a Russian-American actor and author.
- In this technique, the actor focuses on the internal problem the character is facing and then expresses the issue in the form of movements.
- "Central to his method is an image of the Ideal Actor who, as a human being, is himself a two-fold instrument. As an embodied being, he has corporeality: "I have a body." As a conscious being with thoughts, feelings, and will impulse, he has an inner self (psyche/soul): "I have an inner life." In Chekhov's vocabulary, the term "psycho-physical" is shorthand to indicate the actor's whole instrument, which by its essential parts, is both physical and psychological. Understandably then, the first goal of the method is for the two parts of the actor's whole to develop together in the direction of their highest potential."
- In this technique, the actor physicalizes a character's need or internal dynamic in the form of an external gesture. Subsequently, the outward gesture is suppressed and incorporated internally, allowing the physical memory to inform the performance on an unconscious level. The Chekhov Technique is a psycho-social approach to acting. The Chekhov Technique focuses on transformation, working with impulse, imagination, and inner and outer movements.

Method Acting

- Method acting is credited to Lee Strasberg and the members of his Theater Group. Stanislavski's system of acting as the foundation of Strasberg's technique. Followers of Strasberg's technology are now commonly referred to as "method actors."
- Strasberg's teaching emphasized the practice of connecting to a character by drawing on personal emotions and memories, aided by a set of exercises and practices, including sense memory and affective memory.
- "If one listens to either its critics or supporters. Method Acting is described as a form of acting where the actor mystically 'becomes' the character or tries to live the role in life somehow literally. Like all clichés, both explanations are false. When Lee Strasberg defined what is popularly known as Method Acting, he used a simple declarative sentence: "Method acting is what all actors have always done whenever they acted well."
- The method acting technique has different varieties. Overall, method techniques used by actors force actors to imagine themselves with the thoughts and emotions of their characters to develop lifelike performances.

Meisner

- The Meisner Acting technique is closely related to the Method Acting technique. It requires the actor to focus not on themselves but entirely on the other actor as though he or she is real and only exists at the moment. This type of acting method makes the actor's scene seem more authentic to the audience.
- The essential exercise that Meisner invented to train actors' responses is called the Repetition Exercise. Here's an example of the activity: "In this exercise, two actors sit across from each other and

respond to each other through a repeated phrase. The phrase is about each other's behavior, and reflects what is going on between them at the moment, such as "You look unhappy with me right now." The way this phrase is said as it is repeated changes in meaning, tone, and intensity to correspond with the behavior that each actor produces towards the other. Through this device, the actor stops thinking of what to say and do, and responds more freely and spontaneously, both physically and vocally. The exercise also eliminates line readings, since the way the actor speaks becomes coordinated with his behavioral response."

- Followers of the Meisner acting technique learn principles that help them find their expression in other people's responses.

Practical Aesthetics

- If the method acting was an apple, then Practical Aesthetics is oranges. Practical Aesthetics is an acting technique created by David Mamet and William H. Macy, based on the teachings of Stanislavsky, Sanford Meisner, and stoic philosopher Epictetus.
- Practical Aesthetics is based on the practice of breaking down a scene using a four-step analysis that entails the following:
 1. **Literal** – The most basic description of what is happening
 2. **Want** – What does one character ultimately want the other actor to say or do
 3. **Essential Action** – What the actor wants within the scene. It is necessary to understand that what the character is doing and what the actor is doing are separate.
 4. **As If** – As if relates to the "essential action" to the actor's own life. For instance:
 5. **"Essential Action"** – To retrieve what is mine. "As If" – It's as if my mom has taken away my favorite piece of candy that I was going to give as a gift. I need to retrieve it because it is mine. This step is a memory device, a spark to involve the actor in the scene. It helps the actor escape the fiction, find the truth, and apply it elsewhere.

Session Questions

SESSION 1:

- What do you do when you see that your face is not doing what you had hoped?
 - Mirror. Use the emotions list, play and see what you can do. Cover your mouth and repeat! We need to warm up and practice our faces as much as our voices so they can work together to tell great stories!
 - Video record. Make sure you can't see yourself on screen so you can get a more accurate representation of what you are actually doing. Watch it back and look for places you can improve your expression. Look for places you love what you're doing!

SESSION 2:

- Colors, Images - ways to play with your face. Use different prompts/visuals to see how they make you or make your group react. Ex: My quartet. Red makes me feel luscious and empowered. It makes my lead feel anxious.
- Improv <3 Improvisation helps you work on being present in the moment, how to listen to you fellow artists and the creative prompts they are sharing with you, and how to
- The expression is L'ESPRIT DE L'ESCALIER !!! Definition: wit of the staircase; repartee though only too late, on the way home. But we will aim: to catch it in the moment!

SESSION 3:

- How to focus on vocal technique and things the firecor asks you for while also working on bringing your honest expression through
 - Be patient with yourself. Sometimes one skill may drop while we focus on another. Be kind to yourself and just pick it back up.
 - Change your mindset. Instead of saying "I'm not good at that" say "I'm not good at that YET" or "That is something I am working on." Putting yourself in a positive mindset and using positive words can really have a great effect on how we improve.