

Movement and Physical Theatre Meeting Moscow April 2007

Abstract

What is movement for?

Having moved ourselves physically some thousands of kilometres, having jumped time zones, and crossed borders to gather together in Moscow it might be wise to ask this question – what is movement for? On a macro scale there are many answers, often personal; but in micro, what moves us and why? Reasons are multiple, are not fixed and are continually changing. Yet an impulse to touch someone might in practice stem from the same curiosity I had as a child even if now it is moderated by cultural and social conditioning, and I am now adept at rationalising it. And is that impulse and its manifestation in action so different from that of someone in Shakespeare's day, or even 1000 years ago? In the age of Physical theatre, at least in Britain where the formation of this term masks just one of our many complexes, movement for and in the theatre is changing. But perhaps that is only in the way we speak about, rather than do it.

This keynote will reflect briefly on **impulse, spontaneity, and movement**. It will draw largely from **Jerzy Grotowski**, from phenomenological and somatic starting points, and will have to, in Moscow, refer to **Konstantin Stanislavski**. It will also present no answers but hopefully help us consider and practice how **movement is 'a way of 'thinking' about our relationship with the world'**. (Logie, 1995.) A key belief of Grotowski's was that there are no dogmas, no methods, no systems. But how do we work with movement even if or when we have no idea what it is for, when we face such paradoxes of unsystematic systems, of thinking with the body?

I will refer to Grotowski's 'Dialogue with Stanislavski' (unpublished in English), and show a video extract from 'Move like you mean it' from *The Dancer's Body* (BBC, 2002). My talk will also be accompanied by a 2-3 hour workshop (or will the workshop accompany the talk?) based on body techniques of breathing, grounding, partnership, mutuality and dynamic rhythm. This will be derived from my interest in the Suzuki method of actor training, but more from 18 years work in and on Polish theatre, and especially approaches extruded from Gardzienice Theatre Association's practice. Much of this is influenced from cultural encounters in South East Poland, in what has been called Poland B, which the director Staniewski would often say is in many ways already Asia rather than Europe. As geographies and cultures collide and mix, as more and more people move in the world, should we ask what movement is for? Or do we have to just do it and see.....

Paul Allain February 2007