

# Copenhagen International Conference The Makings of the Actor – Cisca

## Embodiment in Acting Practice 23, 24 October 2021

### Hosted by CISPA

Thoravej 35, 2400 København, Denmark

*In recognition of both the global reach of this theme and the expansive network of interested practitioners and scholars, as well as the impact of the current pandemic, participants are invited to take part either in person or virtually. Conference proceedings will be live-streamed; papers, and where appropriate workshops and demonstrations, will be presented remotely.*

## Program

### Denmark Time Zone

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### Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October

#### Keynote Speaker

**8.30 Prof. Vladimir Mirodan** FRSA, Emeritus Professor of Theatre

#### Size Matters

#### The influence of Expressionism on modern acting or ‘How far can you go?’

I have been fascinated – it seems for ever – by a question that matters very little to academics but a great deal to actors and directors: ‘How big can I be?’ A question that keeps actors awake in particular when asked to embody characters, that – as Henry James said about Ibsen's – ‘have the brilliant property of becoming when represented at once more abstract and more living’?

How does ‘embodiment’ achieve a shatterproof union between the idea and the body? Are there cognitive processes at work which make this happen? And how does one translate these into the reality of performance.

Struggling with this very question, Antony Sher once wrote:

‘I find the classics difficult to watch and to understand. So I like them done by Brook or Adrian Noble or the Rustaveli Company; I need them to be made vivid, illustrated to some extent.’

Great! But how do you ‘illustrate’? How far does ‘to some extent’ go? When does a gesture meant to be ‘flamboyant’ turn into ‘posturing’?

One of the answers seems to me to reside in what the Russian school of acting calls the ‘amplitude’ of movement; how I deal with ‘amplitude’ in the rehearsal room swings maddeningly between the ‘believable’ and the ‘expressive’. In actor training, much effort is expended on developing a ‘sense of what feels right’ when it comes to amplitude; nowhere more so than in those approaches that have been infiltrated by important Expressionist movement teachers: Laban, Pisk, Malmgren, etc.

My talk will try to unpack this process, trace its roots to the clash, then the marriage of Continental and British acting traditions and ask some questions about the role of ‘talent’ in this area. And there will be pictures!

So that you may get a sense of the direction of travel, until we meet on the 23rd I leave you with this thought from the great American designer Robert Edmund Jones:

‘Realism is something we practice when we aren’t feeling very well. When we don’t feel up to making the extra effort.’

**Vladimir Mirodan** PhD, FRSA is Emeritus Professor of Theatre, University of the Arts London. Trained on the Directors Course at Drama Centre London, he has directed over 50 productions in the UK as well as internationally and has taught and directed in most leading drama schools in the UK. He holds an MA and a PhD from Royal Holloway, University of London - his PhD thesis was concerned with The Laban-Malmgren System of Character Analysis. He was appointed Professor of Theatre in 2010 and Emeritus Professor in 2015. He was Director of the School of Performance at Rose Bruford College, Vice-Principal and Director of Drama at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Principal of Drama Centre London and Director of Development and Research Leader, Drama and Performance, Central Saint Martins.

Throughout his career, Professor Mirodan took a keen interest in director training and formulated a significant number of formal and informal training frameworks. Vladimir Mirodan served for many years as Vice Chair of the Directors Guild of Great Britain, on the Drama Committee of the Scottish Arts Council and on the Board of the Citizens' Theatre. He is a former Chairman of the Conference of Drama Schools, Deputy Chair of the National Council for Drama Training and has chaired the Directors Guild of Great Britain Trust and the Directors Charitable Foundation.

Professor Mirodan’s research interests revolve around issues of acting psychology, in particular as this relates to the neuropsychology of gesture and posture. He is also interested in the history and evolution of actor and director training as well as in defining the ways in which the dramatization and staging of non-dramatic texts may reveal meanings alongside textual and contextual analyses. He has published on these topics and *The Actor and the Character*, his book on the psychology of transformation in acting, was published by Routledge in 2019. Together with neuroscientists from University College London, Professor Mirodan is engaged in a research project on emotional contagion in acting funded by the Leverhulme Foundation. Professor Mirodan is a member of the Editorial Board of the journal *Stanislavski Studies* and Review Editor of the journal *Frontiers in Performance Science*.

**Paper**

**9.30 Elvira Crois** PhD Fellow Theatre and Intermedia & Adult Educational Sciences  
Research Center for Visual Poetics & Brussels Research Centre on Innovation in Learning  
and Diversity University of Antwerp & Vrije Universiteit Brussel  
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### **Holding [a Conversation with] the Situation: The Performer's Tactical Ability in participatory Performance**

This paper inquires into the performer's craft of participatory performance. Understanding the performer's craft as the ability to hold a conversation with the situation, I argue that how a performer attends to an audience and deploys tactics to move and move along with them affects how audience participation is negotiated and moulded into an aesthetic form. As such, I suggest not only the devised strategy, or dramaturgy, is at play. How a performer responds to uncertainty and variabilities has a significant impact on audience participation as an artistic medium. Studying performer training in the participatory practices of Katrien Oosterlinck (BE) and Sarah John (AU/DK), the paper focuses on training outcome, i.e. what a performer trains for. I uncover what it means for a performer to hold a conversation with the situation and expound on the building-block tactics Oosterlinck and John have developed in support of their attendance to an audience in response to a given situation.

Elvira Crois (1992) is a doctoral researcher in theatre studies at University of Antwerp and in educational sciences at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium. Through a participatory approach, Elvira carries out research into performer training for participatory performing arts in order to provide an analysis of an aesthetics of audience participation. The research is affiliated with the practices of Katrien Oosterlinck (BE), Sarah John (AU/DK) and SeppeBaeyens (BE). Before entering academia, Elvira worked as a socio-cultural worker at GC De Kriekelaar in Schaarbeek, Brussels. Since 2012 Elvira has been involved in several international theatre exchanges, most notably through an organising role in Apaya Network, a European network of young artists and researchers exploring the senses and interaction.

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**10.00 Dr. Polly Hudson** Head of Movement Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Birmingham City University.

### **The Breath is our Constant Companion: Skinner Releasing Technique and the embodied Actor**

Skinner Releasing Technique (SRT) is a dance technique that is characterised by its use of imagery, tactile studies with a partner and embodied dancing. It differs from other dance techniques in that it fuses improvisational approaches, image and alignment without the use of set steps, and it could be said to have much in common with somatic approaches. In SRT we are unravelling layers of holding and letting go of preconceptions of who we are in our dancing, and in our very selves, and perhaps therefore in our approach to our creative practice.

In SRT we foster increasing perceptions of innate body knowing and knowledge. As it is a psycho-physical practice in SRT we are cultivating multi-directional awareness's and an

attentiveness to the whole self, alongside the use of image states nurtured by poetic metaphor, which can result in a deepened understanding of self and of our own creativity.

In this moving participatory paper Polly will share some of the ways in which cultivating freedom of the breath in SRT can support the actor, can facilitate increased embodiment, and can allow a connection to our moving and to our performance practices.

**Dr. Polly Hudson** is a certified teacher of Skinner Releasing Technique, the principles of which underpin her approach to teaching, making art and daily activities. Her PhD was the first in dance by publication in the UK, and it considered Skinner Releasing Technique in relationship to creativity in dance performance making.

Polly's research focuses on process within an artistic practice, ethical embodied approaches to teaching and interaction, Skinner Releasing Technique, and eco-somatics. As a gardener, she is curious about at what point a practice or an activity becomes art. She has made performance and screen dance works that have been shown in the UK and internationally to critical acclaim over a twenty-five-year period.

Polly was previously Course Director for Dance at Coventry University, and is currently Head of Movement at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire where she leads on and teaches movement provision for actors, and supervises MA and PhD students.

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## **10.40 Break (Refreshments)**

### **Paper & Teaching demonstration**

**11.00 Inna Kulazhenkova** Psychologist, artist educator and performer

### **Choreography of Personal Space**

Choreography of Personal Space is an interdisciplinary training which appeals to psychological knowledge in understanding of communication processes and to movement art as a form for practical learning of its principles. Methodology is based on a concept of a conscious vary of social distance and utilizing the body sense to anticipate the consequences of this vary and the intentions or reactions produced by the interlocutor. Methodology of training aims for developing abilities to understand, sense and perceive the Other, emphasizing on a Body as main addressor and recipient.

I am a psychologist, artist educator and performer, teaching speechless communication and striving for creating an embodied community. I graduated from Saint-Petersburg State University with psychology as a specialisation. Then traveled internationally participating and organizing dance and performance projects in countries like The Netherlands, India, Denmark, Estonia, etc. Finally landed in the Netherlands in 2018, where obtained a Master degree in Art Education in ArtEZ University of Arts; created one methodology and two courses and became a cultural entrepreneur by opening up a company "Strategic Art Consultancy". Currently I came back to Saint-Petersburg, where I am building up for new opportunities.

Hereby I enclose several photos from the participatory performance "Choreography of Personal Space" and a link to my website, where all materials are structured.

[www.strategicartconsultancy.com](http://www.strategicartconsultancy.com) (*in Russia opens only via VPN*)

### **13.00 Lunch ( Bouffe)**

### **Paper & Teaching Demonstration**

**14.00 Dr. Mostafa Yarmahmoudi** Lecturer at Radio & Television University, Tehran, Iran

#### **Paper**

#### **E-Motion Capture & Spirituality in a technological age and Embodiment**

My paper's argument lies in the field of contemporary multimedia in Western Countries. (United States, Australia and UK). It focuses on spirituality and the use of technology and computer generated imagery embodiment in performance development.

At the turn of this new century, many interests in related fields (film, digital arts, science and technology, design, engineering, medicine, communications, etc.) further our understanding of the complementary thinking processes that drive new interdisciplinary research and conceptual models influenced by the computer's information processing capabilities and the internet's global reach.

This movement has grown from a small, but burgeoning group of choreographers, performers, and media artists who experimented with computer-assisted work linking performance and new technologies. This has now developed into a growing network of collaborative projects spurning internet discussions both enthusiastic and contentious. These are examples: Merce Cunningham (U.S.A) has utilized the computer for the invention and visualization and embodiment of new movement possibilities. Virtual performance installation is derived from generating, optical motion capture a computer hardware and software digital 3-D representation of recorded moving bodies. In recording sessions, cameras surround is fed the performer and track sensors (attached to the body) in time and space; this information to a central workstation for consolidation into a single data file. Motion capture files subsequently drive the movement of simulated figures on the computer, where they can be merged, connected, re-sequenced and mapped onto other anatomies in an animation program called Character Studio. With this tool the animator-director is able to embody and draw out and reconfigure the abstracted motions and trajectories of the

performance, or the ghost of the performance. This is one example of motion capture. I think it is not only a new technology but it is very useful for our country, especially, I will argue in field of spirituality. Similarly, Stelarc in Australia and Drs. Broadhurst and Bowden in UK are doing this type of work using different techniques.

In the different but related field Andrew Newberg, a psychologist in USA, is researching into the effects of meditation on our brain. While the meditator focuses intently on a single image (usually a religious symbol), after about an hour the meditator feels something similar to a loss of boundary and a sense of oneness developing. This signals the researchers to inject a radioactive tracer through an intravenous line into one arm. Within minutes the tracer has bound fast to the brain in greater amounts where the bloods flows, and hence brain activity, had been higher. Later a scanner would measure the distribution of the tracer to yield a snapshot of brain activity (as a radiology picture). Can we animate and generate images from these radiology scanner pictures? Can we pursue other effects of different emotions, for example: different acting or spiritual emotions on our brain and capture the scanner pictures? If yes, can we animate and generate images and approach a new term such as (e)motion capture? These are the questions, which this research is followed.

## **Teaching demonstration**

### **Acting in Theatre, Cinema, Radio's plays and traditional performances**

Does acting need pure natural talent or must one learn the techniques of acting?

Is it possible to teach acting to someone who has no natural talent?

Some academics, theatre, cinema directors and actors believe that acting needs natural talent! Maybe they are right. Also, I draw your attention to this question, too: "how can non-actors (the ordinary people without any actor's training and experiences) act naturally and be believable in theatres, films and traditional performances? So, first of all we have to focus on natural talented trainees who are learning to be a good actor/actress.

Let's start with these important questions: How do actors fuse thoughts, emotions and actions within their creative process? There are plenty of methods, since the ancient Greek dramas up to now. What is the essential toolbox for actors and teachers in the classroom, the rehearsal arena and the workshop? Which exercises were built around the need for simple, achievable techniques that can be applied by actors, teachers and directors to answer the numerous requirements of actor training through the thousands years from ancient Greek till today's Broadway and Hollywood?

The aim which we are looking for is: to produce a continuous level of achievement, addressing: How to rehearse; how to work with a text; how to audition for drama school; and how to access the truth of feelings and actions?

We will explore these areas under discussion in the next steps.

**Dr. Mostafa Yarmahmoudi** was undertaking a PhD in Performing Arts at Brunel University. His research topic is "New technology in Performing Arts". His primary concern is in the emerging motion capture systems that can be used to create enhanced, innovated and interactive dance techniques developed in performance by such practitioners as Merce Cunningham and Stelarc. Having studied both BA in cinema and MA theatre directing at Tehran Arts University and The University of Tehran he has worked as a first assistant director in many feature films and made his own films for Iranian television networks some of which have been presented at international film festivals. He has been a guest lecturer in film and photography at Tehran University, Al-Zahrah University and other universities in

Iran and has been active in running and managing academic and cultural organizations.  
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## Workshops

**16.00- 17.45 Juliet Chambers-Coe:** Lecturer in Movement E15 Acting School; Director of Labanarium; Associate Artistic Director of The Makings of the Actor; Chief Editor of The Journal of Dance, Movement & Spiritualities.

**Juliet Chambers-Coe** has recently been appointed Chief Editor of The Journal of Dance, Movement & Spiritualities, Intellect. She is a PhD researcher at the Guildford School of Acting/University of Surrey. She is a Certified Movement Analyst (Laban/Bartenieff) and Lecturer in Movement at E15 Acting School at the University of Essex. Her research focuses on recuperating the spiritual dimension of Rudolf Laban's movement analysis framework. She is Director and co-founder of the Labanarium Resource & Network Centre ([www.labanarium.com](http://www.labanarium.com)) and is Associate Artistic Director of The Makings of the Actor international practice research centre ([www.themakingsactor.com](http://www.themakingsactor.com)). Juliet is an Authentic Movement practitioner (IBMT) and incorporates the role of the 'witness' in her Laban practice as an agent for individual and social communication. She is interested in how the embodied somatic experience of the mover has real-world value for artists and their creative projects and for personal and community wellbeing. Through her creative and pedagogic movement practices Juliet continues to explore how our experience of the corporeal-spiritual supports creative practice and how an awareness of one's soma-spirituality informs the ways in which we engage with the world - in our relationships to self, other and environment.

### *Subtle energy and Rudolf Laban's Flow effort as 'vibration': the location of the 'impulse' in embodied practice*

This part-paper/part-workshop will explore how Rudolf Laban's concept of Flow Effort can be usefully understood as the location of bodily 'impulse' and as the subtle energy which constitutes it. Reflecting on two of Laban's unpublished drawings, I endeavour to explore the subtle energy of the mover as key to a mover's sense of 'embodiment'.

Taking the idea that Rudolf Laban's Flow Effort is experienced in the body as vibrational currents in and between bodies, we might usefully draw on Polish director Jerzy Grotowski's notion of "Impulse" as a useful way to harness this feature of movement for acting students. Grotowski says,

Before a small physical action there is an impulse. Therein lies the secret of something very difficult to grasp, because the impulse is a reaction that begins inside the body and which is visible only when it has become a small action. The impulse is so complex that one cannot say that it is only of the corporeal domain (Grotowski, cited in Richards, 1995, p. 94).

For Grotowski, the 'impulses' preceding action are "*profoundly 'inside' the body* and then extend outward" in much the same way we might consider Laban's description of Flow effort which starts in the centre of the body and emanates outwards to the periphery, into dynamic space and as mysterious 'currents' of energy which communicate thought (Laban, 1920, p. 16). Grotowski's 'impulse' indicates to the actor "an essential current of life" (Richards, 1995, p. 95) and is the preconscious movement of the action "already born in the body" and

is “invisible” (Grotowski, cited in Richards, 1995, p. 94). Furthermore, the impulse is not the ‘same’ each time but varies in its “In-tension – intention” (Grotowski cited in Richards, 1995, p. 96) and is highly nuanced, relating to “physical memories, to associations, to wishes, to contact with others, but also to muscular in/tensions” (Grotowski, cited in Richards, 1995, p. 96). The same description of Grotowski’s ‘impulse’ can be applied to Laban’s Flow Effort and internal, invisible impressions made in the mover in Free or Bound tension, coupled with the accompanying factors of Weight, Space and Time which result in action.

When the actor acknowledges herself as a part of a greater structure of life, sharing the vibratory flow quality of the world around her, she expands her awareness beyond her everyday corporeality towards embodiment of the ‘higher consciousness’ of the imaginative and the transpersonal through her ‘subtle energies’ experienced as (Flow) vibration. In this expansion she feels the connection between her own ‘life force’ or vibratory Flow current and that of the wider social and cosmic contexts in which she lives.

The practical element of this workshop invites participants into contact with their subtle body, where Laban’s weight, space, time, and flow efforts reveal layers of consciousness, corporeal and subtle, deeply embedded within what we may term, ‘embodiment’ in the practice studio.

**18.00-20.00 OluTaiwo** Senior lecturer in Physical Theatre, Acting and Movement at the University of Winchester

### **Embodying the Physical Journal**

I will be conducting an online workshop at this conference on Urban Butoh as animal Spirit Dancing. We will look at elements of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, physical theatre, guided visualisation and Butoh. This work will facilitate, in the actor’s sensorium, an understanding of improvisation as means to develop physically, a way to manifest psychophysical processes as well as constructing body-based character development. This introduction will start with the presence, from the perspective of our embodied physical journal. The concept of the physical journal is distinct from the idea of the ‘The embodied self,’ by Merleau-Ponty; as his idea of the ‘lived body’ which he believed to be an important part of what makes up the subjective self. The concept of the ‘lived body’ is the body in the past tense embodied in the present as perceptual experience. So our sensorium oscillates between the future, the present and the past.

Olu Taiwo is a senior lecturer in Physical theatre, Acting and Movement at the University of Winchester. He has a background in Fine art, Street performance art, African percussion and various martial arts. He has performed nationally and internationally in performances and lecture demonstrations promoting concepts surrounding practice as research, including how practice explores relationships between ‘effort’, and ‘performative actions’. He recently had a retrospective of his work in 2020 as part of Wiltshire creatives ‘Artist of the week’ series. <https://www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk/whats-on/wiltshire-creative-connects/olu/#:~:text=Our%20next%20artist%20of%20the,uan%20and%20Animal%20spirit%20movement> He investigates performatively, how as ‘individuals’ we interface with the increasing digital complexity with regards to our experience in twenty-first century, through his technique that he has been developing called ‘Urban Butoh’; which, he developed as part



of his performative involvement in Johannes Birringer's Dap-lab project, Ukiyo. He is Director of Transcultural studied at the institute 'the Making of the Actor' based in Athens. His publications range from, *The Return Beat in Wood* (Ed.): *The Virtual Embodied*. Routledge (1998). *Music, Art and Movement among the Yoruba*: in Harvey (Ed.): *Indigenous Religions* Cassell (2000), *Art as Eudaimonia: Embodied identities and the Return beat* in Susan Broadhurst and Josephine Machon (ed.), *Identity, performance and technology: practices of empowerment, embodiment and technicity*. Palgrave Macmillan (2012), *The Return Beat - Interfacing with Our Interface, A Spiritual Approach to the Golden Triangle*: Peter Lang (2021)

## **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

### **Keynote Speaker**

**9.00 Jake Harders** Visiting Lecturer in Acting Courses, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London

### **Towards a Paratheatre: Grotowski on Holiday**

Jerzy Grotowski is regularly invoked in the same breath as Stanislavski, Meyerhold and Brecht as one of the great innovators of twentieth century theatre, but this is often largely based on the brief period of his career when he was making theatre productions in the 1950s and 60s. A neglected area of his work is the phase that came next in the 1970s when Grotowski and the TeatrLaboratorium exploded all the traditional labels of theatre and tried to forge something utterly new and yet simultaneously connected to something very ancient - paratheatre. <https://www.cssd.ac.uk/staff-profiles/jake-harders>

### **Paper**

**9.30 Josephine Gray** Artistic director Iraqi Bodies, Independent Scholar

### **The Monstrosity of Acting**

The perplexity of the actor and the ontological status of her *métier*—her simultaneous being and not-being who she appears to be—has rarely been so wittily dissected as in Diderot’s *Paradoxe sur le comédien*. Although the dialogue is seminal in its dissemination of acting as a noble endeavour to be taken seriously, it nevertheless poses questions of methodology and style of acting. The very paradox of the art of acting is one that the majority of theatre practitioners would agree exists, yet it remains far from obvious exactly how that paradox seems to operate, especially in Diderot. The paradox that he describes, in spite of its lucidity, is put forward by a theorist/dramatist: the outer signs of the actor form the foundation of the argument overriding the internal movements of the actor herself. The conjuring up of a spectre which is part-actor, part-character seems to become an odd hybrid of the corporeality of the actor’s body fused with her imagination and observations of “real” life. It is my intention to place the idea of an otherworldly “spectre”, severed from Diderot’s own thesis on acting, within a grotesque genealogy of acting that reveals a (perhaps) surprising assimilation of that which is play-acting with that which is monstrous. As such I propose that the (grotesque) “spectre,” is intimately tied to the theatrical tool of the mask as both material object which transforms the actor’s body but more importantly as the experiential method whereby the actor manages to simulate the distance between herself and the character.

Artistic director of Iraqi Bodies together with Anmar Taha. She is a graduate of L’École Internationale de Théâtre de Jacques Lecoq and has a Masters Degree in Philosophy from Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, for which she wrote a thesis on the philosophy of comic performance in the work of Henri Bergson and Jacques Lecoq. She has a Masters Degree in English from the University of Sheffield for which she wrote a thesis on the grotesque figure in the re-writings of Shakespeare’s plays by Eugène Ionesco and Carmelo Bene. She is currently co-editing the book *Second Nature: Comic Performance and Philosophy* together with Dr Lisa Trahair (UNSW, Australia) forthcoming 2022 with Rowman and Littlefield International, London, UK. [www.iraqibodies.com](http://www.iraqibodies.com)

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## **Paper**

**10.00 Lavinia Hollands** MA Actor Training and Coaching, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Institution Affiliation: Yat Bentley Centre for Performance  
[yatbentley.com](http://yatbentley.com) [laviniahollands@gmail.com](mailto:laviniahollands@gmail.com)

### **Bringing the actor back to the imagination: Thinking as Space**

Laban’s concept of ‘space’ is associated with thinking and movement through thought. The actor connects movement with intentionality in the body, for example the human ability to easily swing a leg or drop an arm is intentional, but its motivating factor is more interesting than the action itself. The actor must be trained physically to lead that mechanical action, for example reaching and dropping an arm, but the discovery that Laban was interested in, is why that arm reached up in the first place, what was the thinking or motivation behind it? It is the job of the actor to explore the many ways an arm can reach up and fall.

What conscious action was repeated so many times that the human dropped their arm in a different way to their neighbour or avoided a sharp object because of prior experiences: both

habit and intentional movement. Laban discussed 'Space' and in 'space' we think of movement. Every tiny movement is because of a thought, and the actor must find that.

Lavinia currently teaches at the YatBentley Centre for Performance based in California. She specialises in teaching the Laban/Malmgren technique of Movement Psychology and has an MA in Actor Training and Coaching from Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. She has trained and taught at Drama Centre London and various other UK drama schools. She has directed and taught Internationally (London, Barcelona, Vancouver, San Francisco) and co-founded Constructive Interference theatre company (London) in 2010 to tell the stories of people living with disability. She is passionate about new writing and has a degree in playwrighting from the University of Victoria, Canada. [www.laviniahollands.com](http://www.laviniahollands.com)

#### **10.40 Break (Refreshments)**

#### **Paper**

**11.00 Svetlana Rifaat (Malinina)** Profession dancer, choreographer and movement director  
Degree MA Dance Anthropology, Department of Dance, University of Roehampton, London.  
Graduated in 2020 with distinction Email [smalinina@aol.com](mailto:smalinina@aol.com)

#### **Actors dance and movement training. The necessity or luxury? The impact on their professional career.**

'The actor, the dancer, the singer has to work through his own muscles, his own body, his own emotions: often there is no one to teach or to guide him. He is his own instrument.'

In this paper I present my research on the state of actor-movement training in British and Russian contemporary theatres scenes, comparing the dances and movement techniques taught to actors in BA level, and the impact of movement training on actors' professional career. The Russian theatrical traditions place immense emphasis on movement, the plastique solution of the play [plasticheskoereshenieotdelhihobrazov] and on the plastique education of actors [plasticheskoevospitanieaktera]. These traditions in Russian theatre have played a vital role in the process of staging a play for many decades, compared to the British theatre where the evolution of physical movement and dance within the contemporary British theatre productions only happened recently. This is largely due to the rise of physical theatre in the United Kingdom and the growing collaboration between the theatre director and choreographer/movement directors.

Therefore, if physicality and body awareness for the actor is highly demanded nowadays, should that be reflected in actors training in Britain? Are the extensive movement and dance training for actors truly beneficial or is it still a luxury? This study is based on months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted amongst actors, movement directors, choreographers and theatre directors in the United Kingdom and Russia. The study aims to determine the number of hours devoted to dance and movement training at BA Acting Course in four chosen drama institutions in Russia and UK, followed by the analysis of the necessity of dance and movement training for actors and how that shapes their future career.

In conclusion, one can summarise that extensive movement and dance training for actors is hugely beneficial as it enables an actor to learn about his own body, explore, train and discipline this instrument, preparing it for becoming other bodies. But it is also important to learn how to access the 'physical heritage' it carries and skilfully embody a new movement vocabulary in a creative process. It is not about moving well or ill, it is, perhaps, about moving truthfully.

Svetlana is a professional dancer, teacher and choreographer. Her field of work mostly comprises working with London theatre companies as a choreographer and movement director (Royal Court Theatre, Tricycle Theatre, Xamelion Theatre). She is a former dancer at Moiseyev Ballet/Moiseyev Ensemble, Moscow; Riverdance The Show, worldwide; The Kosh Physical Theatre Company, London. Svetlana holds an MA in Dance Anthropology with Distinction from the University of Roehampton, London, as well as a Performing Arts four-year diploma from Moiseyev Dance Academy. [www.svetlanamalinina.com](http://www.svetlanamalinina.com)

## Teaching Demonstration

**11.30 Liana Norton** International Acting and Movement Teacher Drama and Performance programme, Central St-Martins, UAL, London

## GEOMETRY IN REAL LIFE: THE THIRD FOCUS

My proposal is a continuation on the ideas explored in my previous statement of "Geometry with its Human Touch" presented at the conference in Athens in 2019, focusing on the Triangular space and how the environment, architecture and inanimate objects play their part in the characters psychology and their relationship with the "others" in the play. WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF TRAINING AND EDUCATION OF AN ACTOR Drama in the modern conservatoire training of a student actor has hitherto concentrated on the parallel relationship between the character and the relationship with others. What can be observed, and appears to be the most important, is how the actor, through the point of view of the character, places action and activities on the "other". This often has taken an upper hand as to how to interpret the play itself. The lines of conversation passing between the characters are therefore dominated by the parallel space, as in the geometric figure of rectangle. The spacial pattern of the lines of the play and the characters creating a parallel function, leading the actors to appear as if they were moving on train tracks.

What is therefore not considered/observed and at times even ignored is the role of the environment, which we recognise as Laban's theory and analysis of the four Motion Factors - Weight, Space, Time and Flow, and it's resonance with the environment, characters and relationships. These elements play a fundamental role in understanding the complexity of characters inner and expressed outer psychological patterns put forward in each given situation of the play. I would like to draw to the conferences attention the short documentary on the Swedish artist Miriam Bäckström, where she states: "Everything external, all actions, how we position things, what we choose to do or not do are manifestations of the inner self." "What we call theatre or film sets is more like a model for our options in the real theatre, which is life." - (<https://channel.louisiana.dk/video/miriam-backstrom-life-is-the-real-theatre>)

THE AFFECT OF OBJECTS As an extension of the environment the actor will be affected by the objects populating the space. The qualities and characteristics associated with the

objects and materials will help the actor access certain emotions and thoughts through external triggers, affecting the body on a sub-conscious level. The actor will then endeavour to harness this to externalise thoughts and feelings felt by a character in a moment, to create an abstract and externalised version of the speech through movement to inform a later performance.

**THE DIGITAL SPACE: AN ALIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY** This work has been inspired by the online term of “Movement Psychology” within the skillset of Movement created with students at Drama Centre in the spring 2020. Whereas normally the training would take place in the physical space of the studio, the move to online teaching required the physical and analytical work to transform into gaining a deeper understanding of the movement principles, studied normally in class and face'face teaching. The Movement Principles were now physically and analytically created and produced on screen within the space of their homes. By using a familiar environment and the limitations of the UK lockdown, the actor becomes an artist, transforming the familiar into a different and separate reality from the one that was known before. The work the students created was then turned into an **ALIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY**, giving the possibility for the students to revisit, add to and collaborate with each other in their future work as actors and as artists. “Your limitation becomes your creative freedom” - Liana

**EXAMPLE NINA** of “**THE SEAGULL**” by Chekhov In interacting with this third focus, mainly represented within the environment, we can reveal the psychology. Relating to the monologue spoken by Nina in Act Four of Anton Chekhov’s “The Seagull”, the absence of the “other”, Trigorin, is the lead character. Therefore, in this situation itself, the third focus is an absence which will dominate the scene. The environment, within the space itself, will do more than simply affect the characters emotion. At times it will lead the characters action within the scene. In interacting with this third focus, mainly represented within the environment, we can reveal the psychology. Relating to the monologue spoken by Nina in Act Four of Anton Chekhov’s “The Seagull”, the absence of the “other”, Trigorin, is the lead character. Therefore, in this situation itself, the third focus is an absence which will dominate the scene. The environment, within the space itself, will do more than simply affect the characters emotion. At times it will lead the characters action within the scene. As both director, actor and coach we can explore how we create a set within the spatial environment to reveal the psychology of how through presence/absence of objects we can drive an understanding of the complex feelings the character. Three female visual artists/filmmakers have inspired my continuous research of geometry within the communication and debate of the conference title “The Embodiment in Acting Practice” - Chantal Akerman (Filmmaker), Miriam Bäckström (Artist) and Paula Rego (Artist).

Liana is a professional acting coach and movement specialist with a wide array of clientele in the professional acting field. Born in Sweden, Liana studied at the Drama Centre and later assisted the founder of the Drama Centre, Dr Yat Malmgren, in his method of character analysis and movement psychology. She studied classical ballet at the Royal Academy of Sweden and the Martha Graham technique at the London School of Contemporary Dance. She is a vanguard figure of physical theatre, having performed with various dance theatre and physical theatre companies all over Europe and Brazil, where she was a performing member of Brazil's leading dance company, Cisne Negro. Liana has extensive experience working as a movement director and acting coach. Her film and stage credits include: Clash of the Titans (2010), Immortal (2011), Spartacus (2011), X-Men: First Class (2011), Sennentuntschi (2010), The Missus Massacre I (2012), Chess - the Musical at the Opera House, Sweden (2012-2013), Der Minister (2012-2013), Tiger Girl (2017) and Guardians (2017). She has trained some of the biggest names in British and world cinema and television: notably,

Michael Fassbender (12 Years a Slave, Shame, Inglorious Bastards, Hunger and Fish Tank); Paul Bettany (Master and Commander: the Far Side of the World, Dogville and A Beautiful Mind); Tom Hardy (The Dark Knight Rises, Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy and Warrior); Emilia Clarke (Game of Thrones); Anne-Marie Duff (Shameless and Nowhere Boy); Russell Brand (Forgetting Sarah Marshall); Gwendoline Christie (Game of Thrones and Star Wars) and Christopher Obi (American Gods). She founded FlipCoin, a film and production company, which aims to creatively engage emerging young professional actors.

The Teaching –Demonstration will take place on Zoom. Jessica Walker will be present in Copenhagen to set up the zoom link with Liana Norton. Institutional affiliations:

### **13.30 Lunch ( Bouffe)**

#### **Paper**

**14.30 Presenter & Concept:** *Vicky Spanovangelis* (Architect/Choreographer/Performer, UK & Greece). **Collaborators:** *AlejandraDeza* (Aerial Artist & Performer, Spain), *Margarita Germanos* (Architect & Curator, Sweden), *Evangelos Papadakis* (Architect & Actor, Greece).

#### **SOMATOPIO (Σωματοποιώ) / SOMATOPIA**

The presentation shares creative practices of somatic architectures and performance. In a dialogue between a collaboration of artists we explore the experiential world of spaces, the sensorium, sensory movement, and mark marking, togetherwith structures that score the city, paper and body captured in a multi-media documentation. The devising performance methods are shared in a short film exposing the relations between movement, narrative and architecture. We ask how can an experiential ‘making’ with the bodyofperformer agency bring forth an understanding of how we inhabit our bodies? Can somatic practices in this interdisciplinary approach reveal more about actor/performer/dancer agency? Can we use this a tool for developing understanding of embodiment in creative and spatial practice? Our questions are starting points for a conversation which will take place as a creative arts residency for students and practitioners between 8<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> October 2021 hosted by *Nomads & Urban Dwellers*, an interdisciplinary collective working across movement, film, architecture, performance, and space.

A 10-minute video will be presented.

A 10-minute discussion of artist collaboration and research process.

#### **Paper**

**15.00 Kelly Arnsby** BFA, MA, CMA-SP, RSME Instructor in the acting program at Ryerson University, Canada

#### **Reflections on Embodiment Through Online Movement and Dance for Actors Training During a Global Pandemic**

This past year, as I began to prepare to teach movement and dance to actors in the middle of a global pandemic, I was reminded of the title of a book by Mark Epstein that I read some years ago: *Going To Pieces Without Falling Apart*. As the summer of 2020 progressed, in the city where I live it became obvious that actor training as I knew it was in the process of going to pieces, as we would probably be training actors remotely for the whole school year – which is what ended up happening.

As I reflect on teaching embodiment online through movement and dance for actors during a global pandemic, despite the many challenges, I am left most of all with the feeling of it having been a meaningful experience.

In this paper I reflect on my experience of embodying the role of a movement and dance for actors educator through online learning within a BFA conservatory program. I describe my process of gathering the falling pieces of movement and dance for actors training, containing them in courses framed by the embodying practices of Laban and Somatics, and how the qualities of support, connectedness, and communication helped to transform this challenging situation.

**Kelly Arnsby BFA, MA, CMA-SP, RSME** is an instructor in the acting program at Ryerson University where she has created dances and coached movement on numerous productions. She has worked for many years as a movement and dance instructor for actors, a movement coach, and a choreographer, including five seasons at the Stratford Festival (Canada) and at the Banff Centre in Theatre and in Contemporary Opera.

[karnsby@ryerson.ca](mailto:karnsby@ryerson.ca)

## **Paper & Teaching Demonstration**

**15.30 Dr. Roger Smart** Freelance Director & Actor Trainer; Independent Researcher

### **Paper**

**How might the blocks and influences that occlude an actor's manifestation of the lived experience during training and performance be best understood, and how might such an understanding inform pedagogical practice.**

Grotowski (1969), argued that optimal levels of creativity and authenticity could not be achieved by teaching an actor “a predetermined set of skills or [giving an actor] a ‘bag of tricks’” (Grotowski, 1969:16), instead proposing a process of freeing an actor through the “eradication of blocks” (ibid.); for his part, Stanislavsky recognized physical tension as one of those blocks, paralyzing and distorting the bodymind (Carnicke, 2010:8).

In the absence of an extensive psychology of actors and acting, in this paper I will endeavor to parse from a number of psychological theories some suggestions as to the nature and genesis of these blocks and influences. In the course of the paper I will pay particular attention to the role of habitual patterns of muscular tension or, in Wilhelm Reich's lexicon, armoring, in addition to addressing the voice pedagogy inspired by Reich's work, Fitzmaurice Voicework.

I undertake this endeavor in the belief that a better understanding of the nature and genesis of these forces, that press upon the bodymind of the actor during training, makes it possible to develop a more specifically targeted pedagogy. Such a pedagogy, I propose, needs must privilege actor-centered, individuated, experiential, holistic and psychophysical learning, over more didactic instructor-centered modes of teaching.

**Dr. Roger Smart Freelance** Director & Actor Trainer; Independent Researcher

## **Teaching demonstration**

### **“Breathing is Meaning”: an experiential introduction to Fitzmaurice Voicework©**

Drawing upon the Western tradition, Fitzmaurice Voicework© is rooted in the work of Reich, a renegade student of Freud, and two of Reich’s followers, Lowen and Pierrakos both of whom continued to develop Reich’s work in Bioenergetics. From Eastern traditions, in addition to yoga, Fitzmaurice Voicework© draws practically upon Shiatsu massage and Taoist/Buddhist conceptions of energy in the body, as exemplified by the Chakra system. Also of significance to the development of Fitzmaurice Voicework is Fitzmaurice’s own training in “the traditional European breathing techniques taught to actors in London at the Central School of Speech and Drama by Elsie Fogerty, Gwyneth Thurnburn, J. Clifford Turner, and Cicely Berry.” (Fitzmaurice, 1997).

Reich’s work is derived from the psychophysical tendency to repress the experience and expression of unwelcome emotion, through controlling the depth of inhalation and the fullness of the exhalation by means of habituated patterns of muscular constriction. The suppression of emotion is further evident in muscular tension in the throat, jaw and muscles of the face. These habitual patterns of muscular holding have the effect of diminishing vocal resonance, range and presence, while reducing the range of emotional expression of which an actor's voice (and body) is capable.

For Fitzmaurice, “breathing is meaning” (1997:249), and the initial destructuring phase of Fitzmaurice Voicework©

...affects not only the vocal performance and the daily breathing (and vocal) habits of the actor, but can also radically alter muscle tone and body organization, allowing sound vibrations to extend beyond the conventional resonators of chest and head throughout the body, adding harmonic range and natural volume to the voice.

(Fitzmaurice, 1997:249)

While originally conceived of to address an actor’s vocal performance, my experience, over many years, suggests that the initial destructuring phase of the work is equally important in freeing an actor through the “eradication of [psychophysical] blocks” (Grotowski, 1969:16) and in fostering the performative manifestation of their lived experience.

As a Certified Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework© (2004), I will introduce the destructuring phase of the work through a number of exercises, based on adapted yoga positions.

Requirements:

The participants should wear comfortable clothing and have a yoga mat or blanket and a zafu or firm cushion or pillow. They should also have a short piece of text (in any language) with which to work during the session.

I will also need a sound system for music.

Originally from the UK, Roger has worked for the past 30 years as a director and trainer of actors, primarily in the USA, working with both collegiate and professional actors. Roger has



an undergraduate degree in Education, specializing in curriculum design and development; an MFA in Directing from the University of California, Irvine; and a PhD from Goldsmiths College, University of London. Roger is currently completing a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (PGCLTHE) at Rose Bruford College.

Roger's approach to rehearsal and the training of actors draws extensively upon the work of Stanislavsky, especially his seminal work in Active Analysis; Contact Improvisation; Viewpoints and Suzuki Training. He trained in Viewpoints and Suzuki with Anne Bogart and the SITI company in the States. In addition, his work is influenced by the pedagogies of Michael Chekhov and Jerzy Grotowski. He is a certified Associate Teacher of Fitzmaurice Voicework©, with 15 years experience.

A particular focus of Roger's practice-based research is the examination and development of the pedagogical underpinnings of actor training. A keystone of his practice is the personcentered philosophy of Carl Rogers; Paulo Freire's model of dialogical education; and the concepts of transformative learning. and learning through relationships.

In addition to university appointments, Roger served as Director of Education and Training at Court Theatre, Chicago and Artistic Director of Shattered Globe Theatre, Chicago. He currently works primarily in the UK as a freelance director, trainer and independent researcher. Most recently Roger was a guest speaker and workshop leader at the Psychology and Performing Arts International Congress, convened by the Faculty of Psychology of the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Madrid.

## **Workshop**

**18.00-20.00 Kasper Ravnhoj** Dancer, Choreographer, Artistic Director Mute comp. physical theatre

This workshop is challenging the participants to take risks and exploring their own physicality, confronted to find a full bodied expression in solo work and with each other. I will be focusing on strong physical and dynamic phrases with the use of gravity and floor work. Trying to find your own flow and expressive movements true improvisation and movements from Mute Comp.'s Physical Theatres repertoire.

<https://www.mute-comp.com/choreographer-kasper-ravnhoej>

## **Conference Fees:**

Attendants: 100€      Student & unwaged: 50 €

## **Workshops Registration Fees**

Participants: 150 €      Student & unwaged: 100€

Attendants : 100 €      Student & unwaged: 50€

**For booking your place please send to: [kiki.selioni@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:kiki.selioni@cssd.ac.uk)**

[info@themakingsactor.com](mailto:info@themakingsactor.com) [kikiselioni@yahoo.gr](mailto:kikiselioni@yahoo.gr)

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