

THEORIES OF DIRECTING

Fall 03

H42.1060.001

Monday 7-10 pm

What the Course Is

Although we will consider certain over-arching historical processes and underlying theories, this course is not a survey. Rather, we will concentrate on a few directors, exploring their work through discussion, practice, research, reading, and writing. Obviously, the directors chosen are only a few of those who could have been selected, an enormous band that includes, for example, Lee Breuer, Joan Littlewood, Liz Diamond, Roger Blin, Tadeusz Kantor, Peter Stein, Suzuki Tadashi, Giorgio Strehler, JoAnne Akalaitis, Robert LePage, Pina Bausch, Einar Schleeef, ... and many more. I urge you to write your papers on directors not featured in class. At my office hours, I can help you find resources for these directors.

Scenes

Each student will participate in one or more "directors work group" that will stage scenes modeled on, or in conversation with, core ideas of particular directors under scrutiny in class. These scenes--from existing plays or perhaps original scripts or scenarios must be no longer than 15 minutes. Scenes will serve as jumping off places for discussion.

Papers/Projects

Proposals for final papers &/or projects are due Monday 17 November. The written proposal ought to contain a description of the paper or project and a preliminary reading list and/or dramaturgical plan.

I strongly suggest that you write your papers on the work of one of the key directors we won't have time to consider in detail in the class:

Judith Malina, Joseph Chaikin, Giorgio Strehler, Yury Lyubimov, Peter Brook, Roger Blin, JoAnne Akalaitis, Peter Sellars, Richard Foreman, Julie Taymor, Robert Wilson, Emily Mann, Robert Woodruff, Peter Stein, Reza Abdoh, etc.

Each student has the option of writing a 12-15 page scholarly paper or participating in a final project and writing that up in 6-8 pages. This short paper should address the research and directorial questions that arose during rehearsals.

Papers and projects may be written and/or devised by one person or by more than one person. Everyone taking part in a joint paper or project will receive the same grade. Of course, "single person projects" will involve other people, but only the director will be graded.

The final project will be either a new scene or a revised version of a scene shown earlier. The revision should address problems pointed out and suggestions made when the scene was first shown. The final project may be "in the style of" a director studied in class, of another director whose work you have researched, or in your own style.

Final projects will be shown & discussed during a Director's Festival on Saturday 6 December from noon to 6 p.m. Outsiders may be invited to witness the projects. Free food and beverages will be provided.

Papers are due on or before midnight, Friday, 19 December. I prefer papers as WORD attachments. My email address is:

richard.schechner@nyu.edu

No late papers will be accepted, no incompletes. Don't even ask.

If you do not turn in your work, or submit it late, you will receive a "no credit" for the course.

8 September

What Is Directing?

Readings:

Brook 1968: 98-141

Cole & Chinoy 1963: 11-67

Schneider and Cody 2002: 1-9

15 September

**The Performance Quadrilog
Realization and Interpretation in
Stanislavsky: *Three Sisters* at the MAT**

Readings:

Braun 1982: 59-76

Chekhov: *The Seagull, Three Sisters*

Jones 1986: 15-77

Stanislavsky 1961: 104-13, 145-53, 193-98, 244-51

Schneider and Cody 2002: 40-48

Scenes:

Two short scenes from modern classics playing the
Stanislavskian subtexts rather than the playwrights' texts

22 September

**Adaptation and Deconstruction:
Wooster Group's *Brace Up!*
East Coast Artists' *Three Sisters***

Readings:

Arratia 2002

Fuchs 1996: 21-51

LeCompte 1985

Mee 1992

Schneider and Cody 2002: 319-31, 366-70

Scene:

Deconstruction a la Wooster of a scene from a modern
classic

29 September

Anne Bogart

Readings:

Dixon and Smith, eds. 1995: 3-30, 57-70, 87-101, 151-60

Bogart 2001

Daniels 1996: 45-135

Scene:

Using Viewpoints. You might want to consider a scene from *Small Lives/Big Dreams* 166-99 in Bogart 1995.

6 October**Ariane Mnouchkine/Theatre du Soleil****Readings:**

Kiernander 1993: 1-27, 45-80, 106-34

Schneider and Cody 2002: 258-65

Williams 1999: Introduction, Section 1 (1789), Section 3 (*Richard II*), and Section 5 (*Les Atrides*)

Scene:

In the collaborative style of Mnouchkine - integrating costumes, music, dance to tell a political story in a highly theatrical way. If possible, explore "the Orient."

13 October**Schechner not present. Read. Rehearse.****20 October****Meyerhold****Readings:**

Braun 1979: 163-223

Braun 1982: 109-44

Crommelynck: *The Magnanimous Cuckold*

Gogol: *The Government Inspector*

Meyerhold 1969: 49-58, 167-73, 197-206

Schneider and Cody: 60-72, 303-07

Zarrilli 2002: 106-38

27 October**Grotowski****Readings:**

Grotowski 1968: 27-53, 127-73, 243-62

Schechner and Wolford 1997: 1-204, 462-94

3 November

Meyerhold and Grotowski

Scenes:

1. Using biomechanics and constructivism
2. Text and scenic montage a la Grotowski

10 November

Environmental Theatre

Readings:

Brecht: *Mother Courage and Her Children*
Genet: *The Balcony*
Sainer 1997: 31-46, 127-65
Schechner 1994: xix-li, 243-319
Schechner 1985: 261-94

17 November

Environmental Theatre

Scenes:

1. Environmental theatre in the Studio
2. Site specific - somewhere else

24 November

Brecht

Readings

Brecht 1964: 121-29, 179-205, 215-30, 236-38
Jones 1986: 78-137
Schneider and Cody 2002: 84-89

PROPOSALS FOR FINAL PAPERS/PROJECTS DUE

1 December

Brecht

Scenes:

1. Brecht emphasizing "verfremdung-effekt" and "gestus"

3. "New" or "Postmodern" Brecht: combining Brechtian techniques with those of, say, LeCompte or Wilson or Foreman....

8 December

Final Projects

Final Thoughts

19 December

ALL PAPERS DUE

Readings

***=at bookstore, required text**

All others in the reading packet.

Reading packets available at Advanced Copy Center, La Guardia Place just south of W. 3rd Street (across the street from the Kimmel Center).

Readings are divided into two sections: "Assigned" and "Resource". The "resource" readings may help you in preparing your scenes and final projects or papers.

Assigned

***Bogart, Anne**

2001 *A Director Prepares*. London and New York:
Routledge

Braun, Edward

1979 *The Theatre of Meyerhold*. New York: Drama Books
Specialists

1982 *The Director and the Stage*. London: Methuen

- Brecht, Bertolt
1964 *Brecht on Theatre*. New York: Hill & Wang
- Cole, Toby and Helen Krich Chinoy, eds.
1963 *Directors on Directing*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill
- Daniels, Rebecca
1996 *Women Stage Directors Speak*. Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland
- Dixon, Michael Bigelow and Joel A. Smith
1995 *Viewpoints*. Lyme, NH: Smith and Kraus
- Jones, David Richard
1986 *Great Directors at Work*. Berkeley: University of California Press
- Fuchs, Elinor
1996 *The Death of Character*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- *Grotowski, Jerzy
2002 *Towards a Poor Theatre*. London and New York: Routledge
- Jones, David Richard
1986 *Great Directors at Work: Stanislavsky, Brecht, Kazan, Brook*
- Kiernander, Adrian
1993 *Ariane Mnouchkine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Meyerhold, Vsevolod
1969 *Meyerhold on Theatre*. New York: Hill & Wang
- Sainer, Arthur
1997 *The New Radical Theatre Notebook*. New York: Applause Books
- Schechner, Richard
*1994 *Environmental Theater*. New York: Applause Books
1985 *Between Theater and Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press
- *Schechner, Richard and Lisa Wolford
1997 *The Grotowski Sourcebook*. London and New York: Routledge
- *Schneider, Rebecca and Gabrielle Cody
2002 *Re:Direction*. London and New York: Routledge
- *Williams, David
1999 *Collaborative Theatre: The Theatre du Soleil Sourcebook*. London and New York: Routledge
- Zarrilli, Phillip
2002 *Acting (Re)Considered*. London and New York: Routledge

Resource

- Aronson, Arnold
2000 *American Avant-Garde Theatre*. London and New York: Routledge
1981 *The History and Theory of Environmental Scenography*
- Aslan, Odette
1988 *Roger Blin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Baer, William
2000 *Elia Kazan Interviews*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi
- Beumers, Birgit
1997 *Yury Lyubimov at the Taganka Theatre 1964-1994*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers
- Blumenthal, Eileen
1984 *Joseph Chaikin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Brook, Peter
1968 *The Empty Space*. New York: Atheneum
- Cole, Susan Letzler
1992 *Directors in Rehearsal*. London and New York: Routledge
- Delgado, Maria M. and Paul Heritage
1996 *In Contact with the Gods: Directors Talk Theatre*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press
- Green, Amy S.
1994 *The Revisionist Stage: American Directors Reinvent the Classics*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Hirsch, Foster
1989 *Harold Prince*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Hirst, David L.
1993 *Giorgio Strehler*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Hodge, Alison, ed.
2000 *Twentieth Century Actor Training*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Holmberg, Arthur
1996 *The Theatre of Robert Wilson*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Hunt, Albert and Geoffrey Reeves
1995 *Peter Brook*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Leach, Robert

- 1989 *Vsevelod Meyerhold*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Mitter, Shomit
1992 *Systems of Rehearsal: Stanislavsky, Brecht, Grotowski, and Brook*. London and New York: Routledge
- Mufson, Daniel, ed.
1999 *Reza Abdoh*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press
- Osinski, Zbigniew
1986 *Grotowski and His Laboratory*. New York: PAJ Publications
- Patterson, Michael
1981 *Peter Stein*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Rabkin, Gerald, ed.
1999 *Richard Foreman*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press
- Richards, Thomas
1995 *At Work with Grotowski on Physical Actions*
- Rudnitsky, Konstantin
1981 *Meyerhold the Director*. Ann Arbor: Ardis