

# Stanislavski- method acting and its importance



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Stanislavski and 'The Method' " To become a successful actor one must erase personal experience and emotions and build their character from nothing. " – Lee Strasburg. Konstantin Sergeevich Alexeyev was born in Moscow, Russia in 1863. He was first seen on stage at the age of seven and at the age of twenty-one he changed his stage name to Konstantin Stanislavski. He was founder of the first acting " system", co-founder of the Moscow Theatre (1897), and a renowned practitioner of the naturalist school of thought. In 1987 he also met Russian playwright, Anton Chekov.

Stanislavski's process of character development, the " Stanislavski Method", was the means for method acting. It was, and still is, the most influential acting system on the modern stage and screen. After enrolling at Moscow's Drama School, he left after three weeks of not being satisfied with the training. Back then, rehearsals were very casual. Actors would walk on stage and deliver their lines with the text in front of them. There was no attempt in making the acting a reality. He felt the need to change theatre and thought that it was important that the actor's skill should involve more than shallow techniques.

The acting needs to have genuine feeling. To give the audience feeling we must first create the feeling for ourselves. This is why personal experiences are important as they possess what we have felt in the past, present and future. We can re-collect emotions such as happiness or sadness and use these to act with feeling and convey a message to the audience. Humans have many emotions that they mask at one time. In class, students are shown experiential learning. Methods and activities such as; Emotional recall

and LadyMacbeth(Act 1, scene 7) can help actors create appropriate actions, thoughts and emotions for certain characters or scenes.

In emotional recall, students were to recall something, where at that moment their lives changed or made them feel something they would never forget. Most were sad, but people tried to hold back tears while trying to speak. Most of the time the tears would just eventually flow and this gave students the sense of method acting. Collecting personal experiences helped them act with a sense of feeling and emotion. When creating a character you may need personal experiences although, you must wipe out idiosyncrasies to create an original character.

Exercises such as; ' slaps' and ' milling and grooving' helped students show a part of their idiosyncrasies. ' Slaps' required all concentration and this established how a student would react throughout the exercise. ' Milling and grooving' was being able to make a connection with the eyes and communicating without speaking a word. These exercises helped maintain control and focus, while showing their idiosyncrasies without realising it. There are many techniques that have been learnt in the Stanislavski system in relation to Lee Strasburg's statement. Stanislavski's method was to encourage actors to become artists in their own right.

Stanislavski had to design a method to inspire his three-part System. This is now known as 'method acting', the mechanisms used to take on a role are varied, but all focus on making an actor put their own experience, imagination and feeling into a role. Strasburg taught Stanislavski's system, but is famous for the " Method" that he developed at the Group Theatre (although the term " method acting" generally refers to the use of

Stanislavski's system in America - "Method" with a capital M refers specifically to Strasberg's approach). The 'Method' was used to create reality within an actor.

Lee Strasberg suggested to the students and theatre film performers to "try not to act, be yourself, use gesture in a manner that you use in private life." Stanislavski wanted acting to feel and be real. Some exercises in class were; 'Circle of attention' and 'beats and thoughts'. Circle of attention was making a connection with the eyes without speaking, where you had to concentrate on a set of eyes and move when the time was right. There was an inner and outer circle. If a student was about to move, the person from the outside circle could tap the student and stop them from moving. This maintained focus. Beats and thoughts' is a skill where the actor breaks down a scene into "beats" or "bits," short sections that end with each change of objective. Take out all your idiosyncrasies and make characterisation for your role. Break up each line and give it meaning, using pauses where necessary. This will give you the effect you need. We do this, because we must make the piece as convincing as possible and make your audience believe what you are saying, or doing is real. You must incorporate lights and shades for the dramatic side to take effect. You need to be able to produce a convincing tone so the actions can flow when you act.

As a student studying drama this made me feel like I could portray or master any character thrown at me. Beats and thoughts created emotion and characterisation that was needed to create and portray any necessary role. Method acting needs to be portrayed in theatre. Without it, the audience wouldn't be moved by the performance. The world is better for it. Actors can

persuade, make people laugh, cry, surprised, frightened, all by using method acting. Lee Strasburg's statement is false although to act correctly you must wipe out idiosyncrasies but keep the truth (personal experiences) of emotions.

This makes method acting the most influential acting system around the world. Bibliography Copyright 2011 Bradley Bishop and Trevor Jones <http://www.kryingsky.com/Stan/Biography/bot.html> (Last accessed 14th March 2012) h2g2 - 2012 <http://h2g2.com/dna/h2g2/A5133151> (Last accessed 14th March 2012) 2008, All rights reserved, Jamactors.com [http://www.jamactors.com/articles/method\\_acting.php](http://www.jamactors.com/articles/method_acting.php) (Last accessed 14th March 2012) Class Drama Notes 2012 (Last accessed 14th March 2012) Shanelle Fairhall