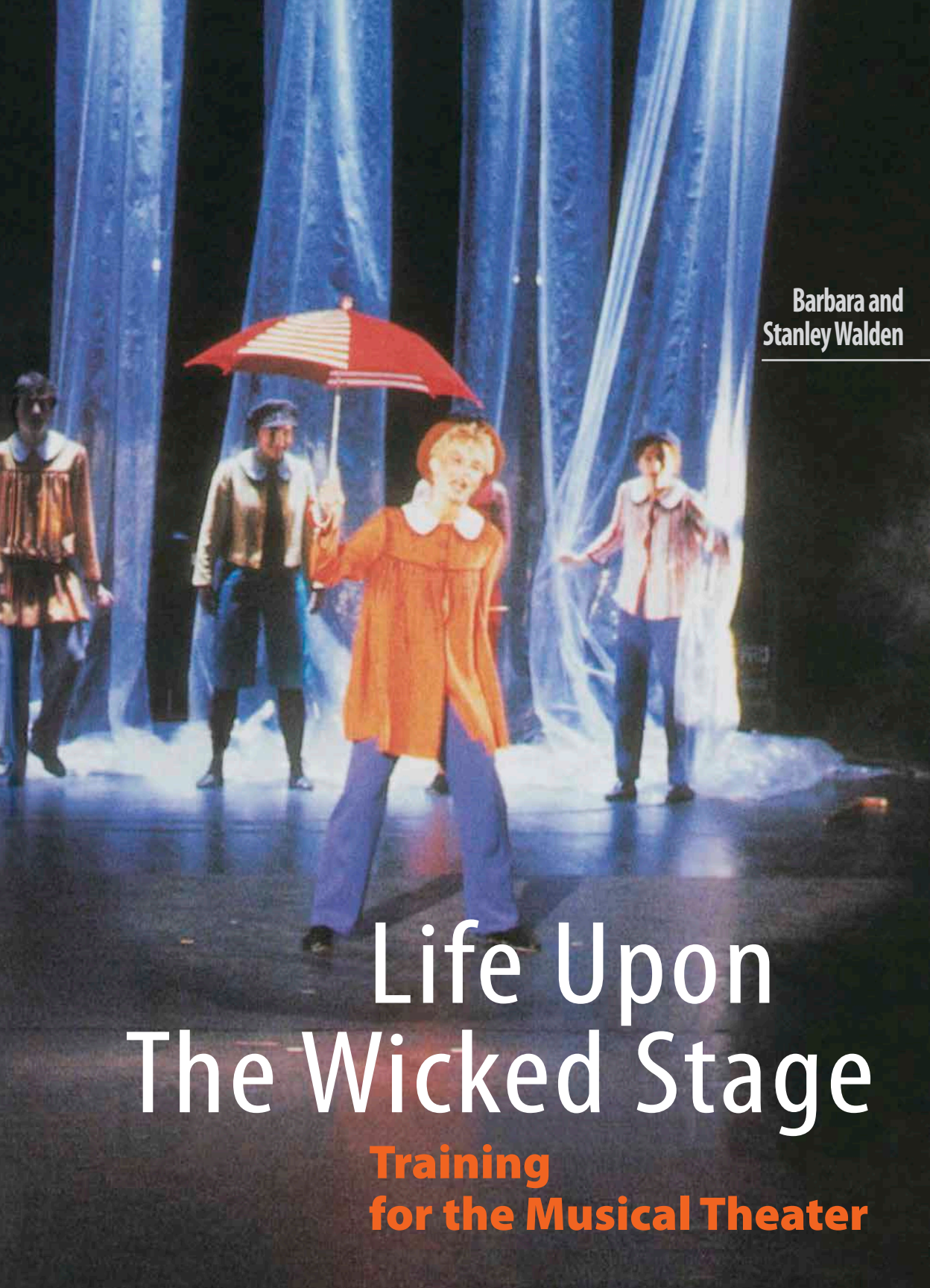
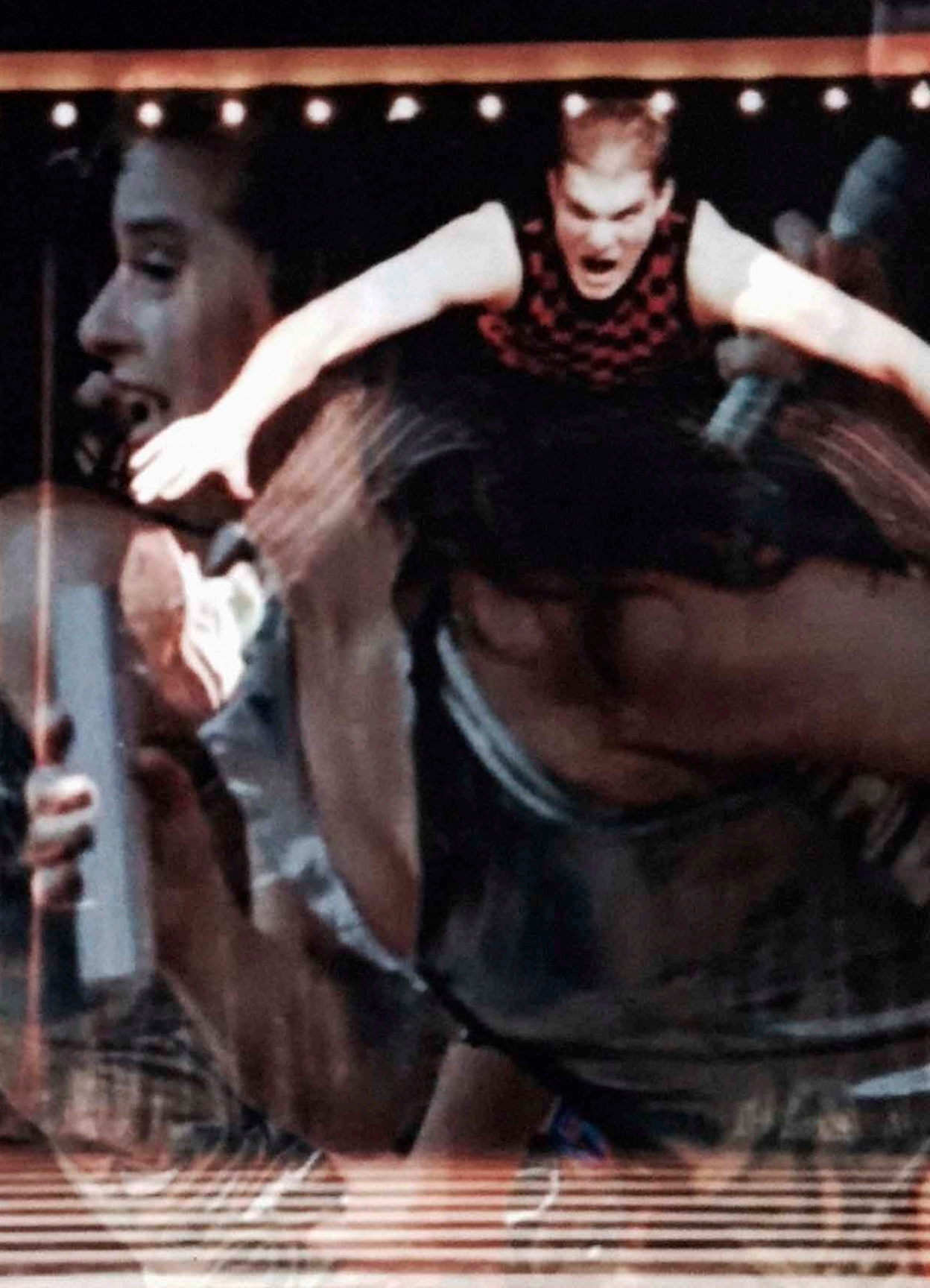


Barbara and
Stanley Walden

Life Upon The Wicked Stage

Training for the Musical Theater



LIFE UPON THE WICKED STAGE:

Training for the Musical Theater

Barbara and Stanley Walden

Front & back cover; "Bahn Frei!"
Paul De Vries, Wendy Kamp, Ulriche Stürzbecher, Andreas Göbel,
Nicola Fütterer, Alexandra Fabelk, Modjgan Goudarzi
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Front End Paper, "Song Revue"
Marc Basiner, Mischa Djavadi, Karim Khawatmi, Asita Djavandi

Back End Paper
Stanley Walden leading an improv at RIAS/BERLIN

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FOR

Helen, Matt, Josh, and Bobbie

and

Aliza, Elijah, Kema, and Casey

"For the first time a book is at hand that concerns itself methodically with all the questions of the métier. The three disciplines--acting, dancing, singing--are not only treated individually but are also brought forward in their complex relationships. The authors place a special stress on their basic principle: the development of the craft must go hand in hand with the encouragement of the character and personality of the performer."

Helmut Baumann, Intendant/Director
Theaer Des Westens, Berlin

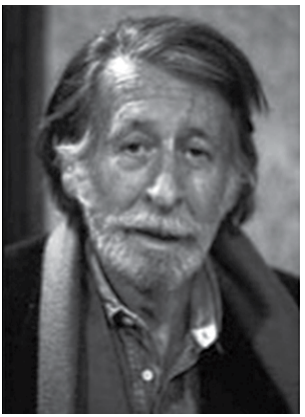
"This book belongs on the Must-List of everybody concerned with the musical education of young people. Many books, from Schiller to Stanislavski, deal with the "truthfulness" of the performer's task of creating a "real" reality on the stage. This book, from Barbara and Stanley Walden, is one more-in my opinion, on of the best."

Infodienst: Kulturpadagogische nachrichten
Arts Education Magazine, Berlin, April 1999

Life upon the wicked stage ain't ever what a girl supposes.

Oscar Hammerstein, Jr./Jerome Kern
Showboat

PREFACE: GEORGE TABORI

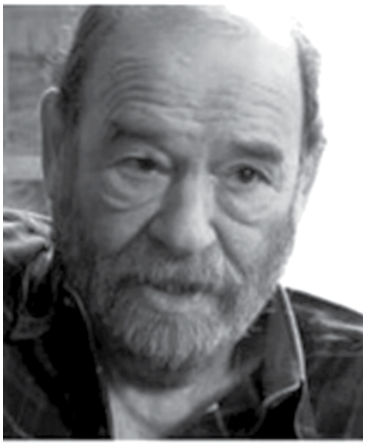


The theater is in a crisis, we are told. This surprises only those who are telling us. They tend to forget that for the past 3000 years the theater has been invariably in a crisis, because what one may call the world has been in it, and the theater, in spite of what we are told, traditionally reflects the crises of the world. This fact is forever grudgingly acknowledged by some, especially the critics, whose job is, of course, to criticize, sometimes forgetting that a play—say, *Faust* or *Hamlet*—no matter how it is done, offers a far more profound critique of the world than the best informed critic can ever do. Now this world of ours is unfortunately never perfect (see, for instance, the Bible); the theater would be untrue to its vocation if it pretended that perfection existed. It is perhaps time to say that the best, i. e. the truest, theatrical experience is a reflection of this imperfection. Even God (see Genesis) has occasionally goofed.

The present symptoms of crisis—several houses closing, the madness of the media, the all persuasive presence of the Idiot Box, the *Sparmassnahmen* (savings strategies), to name only a few— have really not much to do with what, in a dusty rehearsal room, the theater is trying to do. The so-called rehearsal activity is to some of us the creative aspect of theater work, because ONE IS ALONE, to try and fail and succeed in breathing life into the deadliness of text. One is alone the way a painter or a sculptor or an author is. The audience (whoever they are and whatever they may think and feel) is not there. We are alone and, in the best of moments, we are like painters or sculptors, or like lovers. The rehearsal and not the performance is the truest, most creative, most tiresome, most critical moment of our work.

Stanley and Bobbie Walden have collated, brilliantly and uniquely, some of the best, the most useful aspects of what one might call the actor's "training." These exercises define the lovely rehearsal period and exclude the audience and the critics. But those who may be interested in, say, such well-known phenomena that even the best actors are not infrequently bad, would find this Waldensian model of excellence most rewarding.

George Tabori, June 1996



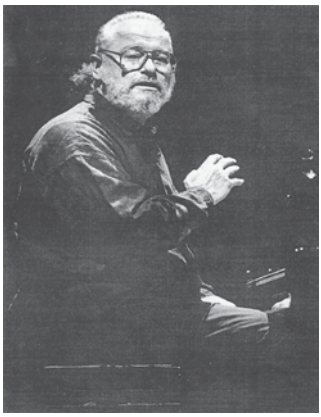
PREFACE: JACQUES LEVY

Life Upon the Wicked Stage, by Barbara and Stanley Walden, is one of the most important books of theater pedagogy that I know of. The authors clearly define their approach to the training for the musical stage, an approach developed in the course of many years at a preeminent conservatory and that has shown to be a solid, dependable way to nourish and further the creativity and technical prowess of the students.

This book clearly shows how a similar course of study can be established and carried through. More important is the fact that they can prove that, through the work outlined in this text, a similar result can be almost guaranteed.

Prof. Jacques Levy
Theater Director
Chair, Theater Department
Colgate University.

Lyricist(with Bob Dylan), *Desire*
Lyricist, *Fame*



INTRODUCTION: STANLEY WALDEN

This book concerns itself with the *life* upon the wicked stage, not with the life upon the *wicked* stage. So if your interest is prurient, I'm sorry to disappoint you. But life—upon either the wicked or the benign stage—is what this work is all about. Life as it is lived and practiced on the specific stage of musical theater: the musical, that rather ill-defined, polymorphous post-Sondheim animal abroad most evenings in any large city on the planet. Popular entertainment in a form that uses mostly the vernacular forms of dance and song to spin its tale—this definition approaches the limits of the subject of this book.

Musical theater is a tough taskmaster. It makes multiple simultaneous demands on its performers, even beyond simultaneous dancing, singing, and acting, and making it all look easy, although this in itself is quite a feat. The courageous, compelling performance of musical theater involves personal risk, generosity, and spontaneity within the structure of the piece. Easier said than done. Much easier.

This book shares the authors' experience training singing/dancing actors in the unique four year course of study they instituted at the Hochschule der Künste (Arts Conservatory) in Berlin, Germany. Described here are the methods and exercises borrowed, discovered, and developed into a program that has run successfully since 1990. These exercises help performers unblock their natural gifts

and fantasies, resulting in significant improvement of their performance skills. In all our training, we emphasize the quickening of the eye, ear, and imagination, so that, in the pressure cooker of an audition experience, the performer can immediately pick up dance combinations, sing independent choral lines, and act in "cold readings."

Our graduates have had almost 100% success in attaining professional engagements after their study. In any event, our training is not bad preparation for life after the academy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the initial creation of this book, my wife Bobbie and I were deeply indebted to Muriel Topaz Druckman, Dean of the Dance Division at the Juilliard School, for her encouragement and guidance, to George Tabori and Jacques Levy for their roles in shaping our theatrical sensibilities, and to the students and faculty of the H.d.K./Berlin Musical/Show Department (especially Professor Peter Kock) for their enthusiastic participation in developing this new and challenging program.

We wrote *Life upon the Wicked Stage* in 1996, following the graduation of our first class from the H.D.K. Berlin and the total success of those graduates in finding engagements in the German-speaking theater world. The book was translated into German by Götz Hellriegel, one of our dance instructors, and it became a standard text in the education of musical performers in Europe. Since I retired in 2005, the program has been led successfully by Peter Lund, and the faculty has continued to evolve. Some 20 years later, following the death of my wife, I have decided to return to the original English text and to recast it with the intention of making it available to American students and to my grandchildren.

For the creation of the present edition, I am profoundly grateful to Rhonda Rockwell for her generous dedication in reconceiving this text; her involvement far surpasses that of the usual editor and approaches that of a true collaborator.

Stanley Walden
Palm Springs, California
May 2015

Barbara and Stanley Walden as Mary and Joseph in the ZDF Television production of *Frohes Fest* by George Tabori

Barbara Walden in *Bein' Here Tonight*
Photo © Archie Kent

Barbara Walden teaching
Photo © Archie Kent

Stanley Walden and Ursula Höpfner in
George Tabori's *Jubiläeum*
Photo © Thomas Eichborn

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MUSIC

"Cool & Co."—Andreas Gergen, Anna-Tanya Horn, Tilmann Von Blomberg, Heike Schmitz, Yvonne Bitter, Torsten Schmit, Marie-Laura Müller-Leyh
Photo © Archie Kent

THE VOICE

Each first-year student has two 60-minute or three 40-minute individual voice lessons each week. Unless the student is primarily a singer, voice training gradually tapers off but never completely disappears. These lessons comprise classically grounded vocal technique, which enables the student to accomplish these primary goals:

- To discover the natural vocal placement and work through problems of the break between "chest" and "head" voice
- To establish proper vocal warm-up technique and train conscious control of the breath, support, and intonation
- To form vowels and consonants correctly while singing

While we use some traditional musical literature in voice training (Schubert Lied, 16th century cavatina, etc.), the program's musical theater literature is also employed in the voice curriculum. Phrasing, dynamics and rhythm are all approached in traditional ways, with the aim of building a healthy, controlled, self-aware vocal instrument capable of performing the extreme demands of "belting," "growling," and "shouting" called for in much of contemporary popular musical theater and show work—eight times a week!—without destroying itself and prematurely ending the actor's career.

Although eventually most of the students' vocal performances will be amplified by various microphones (body, standing, boom), a well-trained instrument can always accommodate itself to different acoustic situations. So we teach vocal technique as if microphones didn't exist. And at the same time, we give workshops in microphone technique with a full sound system: body (radio) mics, monitors, hanging/shotgun/mics, and a mixing console in the house.

Basics. Basics concentrates on body placement in order to teach first year students to relax, breathe, support, and place their singing voices. Using the Alexander Technique among others, this work complements the voice lessons and is preparatory in nature; it does not address musical problems. Students meet in small groups for one hour once a week and for an additional weekly individual session.

Theory. As part of the application process, prospective students are required to pass a musicality test of their talent and trainability, not their proficiency. So the ABCs of reading music, hearing and singing written notation, and singing with others all have to be addressed and delivered in the first year. Occasionally, of course, a thoroughly trained musician turns up as a first-year student whose skills are even beyond our advanced level. When this happens, we try to engage the student as a teaching assistant within the same class, so as not to disturb the sense of group.

The hours designated "music" in the daily schedule include instruction in music theory, rhythmic training, ear training, sight-singing, and vocal ensemble. The end result of this musical theater training differs significantly from that of an instrumentalist, composer, conductor or opera singer. The essentials—correct rhythmic reading and performance, true intonation, the ability to maintain a line in part singing, basic diatonic harmonic theory and practice—are identical to the more traditional fields (we use the movable "do" in our solfeggio ear training and sight-singing). But many of our students must start from absolute zero. Some

can't even read music when they begin their first year of study, but it would be self-defeating to deny such students admission. Martha Graham, Ezio Pinza, Irving Berlin and Errol Garner were all notationally illiterate. Where would Western civilization be without them? First-year students may well be intuitively wonderful singers in the popular styles they have heard all their lives, with strong dance talent and captivating personalities, but have no idea what "diatonic" means; they may have not a shred of theoretical knowledge. But everyone beneath this empyrean circle (Graham et al) is expected to read music.

Harmonic study reinforces melodic understanding and enables the student's individual, unsupervised learning and preparation of songs and piano/vocal scores. Harmonic theory extends as far as enhanced secondary dominants, modulation, and simple modal progressions. Species counterpoint, set theory, 18th century forms and orchestration are not taught because we do not follow a prescribed syllabus but teach only that material for which we see a practical application in the profession. The aim of this course is to produce musically eloquent and literate performers who are able to speak intelligently with composers and conductors, do their own preparation, and enhance their enjoyment of the art.

Coaching. Coaching is the guided learning of musical material. Students are guided to learn musical notes, rhythms, and texts as well as style, interpretation and various modes of delivery. Sometimes the functions of voice teacher (who focuses on the instrument) and coach (who focuses on the performance) can overlap and become confused, while the distinction between coach and accompanist is quite clear: the accompanist plays the notes and supports the performance that the coach has helped prepare. In the best of all possible worlds, voice teacher, coach, musical director, and accompanist are in complete agreement.

In the first two years of study, in order to expand their available repertoires, all students are individually coached at least one hour per week. Students are also coached individually for each production in which they appear.

Digital recording has emerged as a central teaching tool and students quickly learn the value of a portable player. This is a mixed blessing. It's a fine way to drill a particular song or "part" in a chorus, but it's dangerous to set down a number in concrete and block out any fresh winds of change in the development of the show. The recorded accompaniment or performance must always be regarded as a starting point, and not as a finished, enshrined event. This also becomes a vexing problem when someone has learned a particular song from a recording and thinks that the "proper" rendition of that number is the reproduction of

what they've heard. Outside of the archival value of audio/video taping, such recordings can be deadly, particularly to the beginning student.

Most performers are incapable of profiting from a taped rehearsal (remember the shock of hearing your own recorded voice for the first time?) not only because their clouded egocentric vision gets in the way, but, contrary to popular belief, the camera does lie. It distorts and flattens dynamics, gives a false sense of space, and may concentrate on details at the expense of the large picture. It cannot be allowed to usurp the role of the director/choreographer. Taped performances can have a certain value when viewed together with a teacher, but the myriad dimensions missing from such archival tapings are famous, and the pale record of what was possibly a thickly-textured event is capable of throwing the most gifted student into the dark slough of despond.

PIANO

First-year students bring to their piano studies an enormous range of proficiency, ranging from suspecting that something alien, black and white, and downright dangerous lurks beneath their fingers, to those who are accomplished pianists. Depending on the student's previous training and level of expertise, four to six semesters of piano instruction are scheduled throughout the course of study, for a minimum of half an hour per week. The goal for all students is eventually to be so comfortable with the instrument that they can approach a new, unknown song, figure out how it goes, and learn it. The final test at the end of the third year requires that each student perform a solo piece and a duet, and that they accompany themselves, or someone else, singing.

MUSIC HISTORY

The musical theater performer who has studied music history has the professional advantage of a clearer understanding of any contemporary practice that can be shown to be a logical development from the past. Music history puts the professional vocabulary in its proper context for the performer, not as if it were arbitrarily created to serve as a secret code amongst the priesthood of powdered wigs. So we require our students to study music history even though we doubt that Ethel Merman knew much about Monteverdi.

MOVEMENT

"A Whole Life" Karen Probst, Torsten Stoll, Ruth Hornemann, Antje Rietz, Kathleen Herzer, Stephanie Martens, Gerald Michel, Anna Tappe, Meylan Chao
Photo © Archie Kent

Our students work through an array of disciplines involving physical motion. Synthesis of all these disciplines occurs in the Musical Lab as described in detail in Part 2.

DANCE IN THE FIRST YEAR

Because each musical theater choreographer uses so many different dance forms, our students are trained in a variety of techniques and styles. By the time they graduate, they will have studied ballet and modern dance; jazz, show and tap; and social dance, fencing and acrobatics. They will have been exposed to the corrective techniques of Matthias Alexander and Moshe Feldenkrais, they will have been coached in how to audition, and they will have worked with several choreographers.

Ballet allows performers to defy gravity, to escape, to fly. With its emphasis on alignment, line and detail, its demands on physical strength, endurance and extension, and its extensive and universal movement vocabulary, ballet is fundamental to successful musical theater performance, so our students study ballet every year. The strains and distortions of jazz, including hip hop and the like, wait until the second semester so students can find their centers before they go off them. And ballet isn't just for dancing, as anyone from an NFL player to John Wayne can attest. Ballet teaches students how to jump correctly and easily, how to turn, how to move sharply and with attack, and how to move lyrically and on the breath. For the first three years, students have daily ballet classes, then three classes a week in their fourth, final year. We reduce class frequency to three times per week, not from any lack of respect for the art but based on our experience of what we can realistically demand of our fourth-year students vis á vis their time and energy.

Modern dance, on the other hand, celebrates gravity; it is also taught from the beginning. Exploring their connections with the floor, students learn to give in to gravity rather than to deny it. Instructors emphasize work on the torso, and our students experience maximal freedom and encouragement toward self-expression. Modern dance helps our students stay loose physically and rhythmically, and encourages openness in their attitudes toward dance and body work generally.

Jazz is added in the second semester. As with modern dance, jazz dance form comes in a great range of styles. Sometimes a style is developed by and named for an individual (for example, Graham or Limon technique in modern dance, Horton or Mattox in jazz) or it emerges as a combination of dance forms (modern jazz, Afro-jazz or hip hop [which uses moves from aerobics]). What is common to all these jazz styles is that they are driven by the music, by the beat. Jazz puts our students in touch with their sensuality and their sexuality. Because most musicals are love stories of one sort or another, jazz dance is especially important to our students as developing musical theater performers, besides giving them a technique and a vocabulary that is widely used in the profession.

At the end of each academic semester, two-week workshops in social dance, Alexander Technique and acrobatics complete the first year's training. Simple versions of ballroom and folk dance are introduced in social dance, and the instructor creates choreographies for solos, duets and groups (or chorus).
Combinations of dance techniques may begin simply in the early class meetings, but later, as more techniques appear in the curriculum, the combinations get more complex and demanding. Vernacular dance is often used in musicals and helps to

establish the place and period of the play (in Spain, say, or in the United States during the Roaring Twenties). The Alexander work is corrective and extremely important in the first year, as it teaches students how to allow their bodies to change. Students learn more about the workings of their own individual bodies, become more aware of the subtleties they contain, and polish their concentration skills.

We use or adapt Alexander and Feldenkreis exercises in lab and in voice basics to help students learn to relax and to correct chronic and acute physical problems. (The Feldenkrais Technique itself, however, is not part of our curriculum.) In acrobatics, they learn to be unafraid while taking frightening risks and to be absolutely alert, agile and accurate. Students also learn the crucial importance of keeping the ensemble aspect of musical theater always in mind—and how dire the consequences can be for anyone who forgets it.

DANCE AFTER THE FIRST YEAR

Students enter the program at different stages of technical development in the three major disciplines (acting, singing, dancing), and in the supporting disciplines as well, but we are committed to training "triple threats" and do not encourage specialization. The program has, then, the very real problem of respecting and improving each student's technical proficiency while fostering a sense of ensemble in each year's class. Our solution has evolved: we now require that all first-year students take their dance training together. After the first year, the dance schedule is divided by level, as well as by year, i.e. beginners or second year, intermediate or third year, and advanced or fourth year. Levels are assigned by each student's dance teacher in the various techniques.

Each student plans an individual dance schedule with the help of a dance teacher/advisor, based on the student's assessed level of proficiency in each technique. A second-year student can be a beginner in ballet, advanced in jazz and show, and intermediate in tap, making scheduling as complicated as it sounds. Students take show with their peer class, which helps individuals maintain their sense of ensemble and lets them use allotted show time for dance rehearsals during preparation for class projects and productions. Because the student plan is so full and elaborate, and dance requires so much exertion, we try to schedule no more than two dance or movement classes a day and to limit the time to two and a half hours.

Our goal is to turn out musical theater professionals. In dance, that means to make them as technically proficient as they can be, and able to pick up any combination quickly by virtue of their ability to recognize and perform separate steps. They

must then be able to mirror and remember the entirety of what they see, while phrasing, making the dance their own, and projecting their joy of movement—even when they're exhausted.

Show. Show is specifically designed to teach musical performance skills such as simultaneous singing and dancing, dancing with props such as top hats and canes or chairs, dancing and walking in high heels (for men and women), and partnering.

And finally, the art of "selling it"—that peculiarly musical practice—is made manifest, not as some mysterious "something," but as a very real skill involving energy level, focus, spacing, and phrasing, as well as technique.

Tap Dance. Tap dancing is a style comprised of motor skills that play with timing. Both tap and jazz allow choreographers to create dances or dance moments rhythmically and physically so challenging and intense that they can bring down any house. Tappers use their feet to create percussive rhythms, striking against the floor with leather soles or metal cleats. Feet and ankles must be very flexible to articulate these rhythms cleanly. Balance is always tricky because tap dancers shift their weight so fast. Recently, tap dancing has regained its former popularity as a much-loved and often-used technique.

Fencing. Fencing is taught in the third year. The instructor supplies the equipment (swords, masks, and body armor) and teaches students the basics of dueling so they can be at least fencing-literate: proper etiquette, proper form, and a few elementary sequences of thrusts, parries, and travelings. Ballet skills are helpful in fencing, which requires an almost constant use of the plié, or bent knee, so the fencer's weight is centered and the actor is grounded, i.e., connected to the floor (so modern dance comes in handy, too.). Fencers wield weapons, so they must be focused, both to produce the wonderful clanging sound of crossed swords and to avoid de-sexing or decapitating themselves or anyone else (including the audience). Students learn how to act angry and dangerous, and do it safely.

Acrobatics and Stage Fighting. The program offers workshops in acrobatics in the first two years. Musical theater dance numbers are nearly always acrobatic in nature. Many nonmusical moments—fight scenes, staged accidents (falls), or surrealistic moments (dream sequences)—require acrobatics, too. Unlike the "tricks" in dance numbers (which we watch in awe as the dancer performs incredible, almost unbelievable feats), acrobatics can make the aforementioned

moments seem real. To appear spontaneous, as if they are happening for the first time, acrobatic sequences are absolutely choreographed, timed to the split second. This timing and the acrobatic stunts themselves make the play work.

ACTING

"Cool & Co.": Detlef Leistenschneider, Torsten Schmidt
Photo © Archie Kent

TECHNIQUE

The program teaches "method" acting. This generic term refers to groups of specific techniques actors employ in order to perfect their craft. Stanislavsky, Strasberg, Adler, Meisner—each method is its own combination of prescribed acting strategies; we borrow from them all and add our own perspective. At first, we avoid written texts in favor of structuring exercises and tasks to enable students to work from the inside out—not to show the role, but to be the role.

Relaxation is our first Method stratagem. Students learn to quiet external stimuli in order to focus on their internal universes, those unique reservoirs of feeling and reaction that shape each actor's unique instrument. Deep relaxation frees ideas—and tears—to flow; we ensure students feel safe enough to be comfortable taking and sharing the necessary emotional risks. We then counter this exploration with revitalization exercises that crop up again and again across various courses so the students are never left drained by their intense inner work.

Theater Games then acquaint students with the innate tools of their craft that emerge once the actors relax. They begin by grappling with Stanislavsky's key existential questions: "Who am I?" "Where am I?" and "What am I doing?" to which we add "What do I want?" As students progress, games involve sense memory and relationships. By breaking down the actors' innate resistance and requiring each actor to respond either physically or verbally, games force the actor to make conscious choices. These choices demand that the student think and be clear about what they are feeling by slowing down the action, beat by beat. Students gradually understand that acting is reacting.

Acting Improvisations come next. Students learn to enter into the hypothetical—the "as if"—with such internal conviction that they can convince an audience to suspend its disbelief. In "Inside/Outside," for instance, the program explores the "secret" play—the subtext—so students discover and use the differences between their public and private faces, thereby adding depth and complexity to their performance in any theatrical situation: they make it real. They are it. They may be assigned a character, given a setting, and an activity, but the "what do I want?"—the motive—is their entirely free choice. Though it may sound innocuous enough here, the responsibility of this choice can be terrifying. It can also be exhilarating, when spontaneity, energy, imagination, wit, and intelligence drive it.

All these activities require the students to open themselves to experience, to be vulnerable. They learn a great deal about themselves and about each other; they share real, spontaneous experience. The program respects students' privacy and expects students to honor each other in this way. What takes place in class stays where it belongs, with the students who own it.

Students begin scene work in the second semester. Most sessions are rehearsals that begin with a short relaxation exercise—which, by now, all the students have internalized—and may include a game or improvisation.

In the first year, they learn what kinds of roles each of them plays easily and with whom each prefers to work. Instructors let these affinities stretch and strengthen each student's unique gifts. As the class works together in three Method sessions plus Lab each week, the ensemble is born.

As they progress through their courses, students continue scene work, meeting individually or in small groups two or three times a week. They work with an

array of teachers over the three years, each of whom is actively involved in the professional theater, and students perform their work informally at the end of each course.

During these three years, while they concentrate on roles and scenes, students also study and perform musical repertoires that incorporate all three disciplines (acting, singing, dancing), and students work with a variety of directors.

SCENE STUDY

Our second-semester students develop monologues and dialogues. These monologues are drawn from traditional, classical and contemporary sources, and from a variety of English, European, and American playwrights. Program instructors help students identify the monologues that best fit their gifts. Student also may be asked to bring in and read several monologues in order to identify the most suitable.

Students polish their monologues, and the class is divided into small groups, each of which develops an original scene by combining elements from three or four unrelated monologues. In this way, by bringing characters from different plays together, they create entirely new, unique theatrical events.

For dialogue work, several student pairs prepare the same scene; each pair is directed to bring their own characterizations, relationships and secrets to the existent text. For example, one couple can begin a scene as equals in a congenial, loving relationship. On cue, the next couple can continue playing the scene, picking up the dialogue from where the first couple left off but in a wholly different dramatic style—say, as an English "well made play." The characters are no longer equals, so the relationship is lopsided, even confrontational, with one self-absorbed character condescending towards a bitter, resentful mate. The third couple, in a brutal, adversarial relationship, picks up the scene where the second couple leaves off, and plays it to the bitter end.

By working in this way, by learning texts but performing them in new and unexpected ways, our students continue their improvisational work and remain open to the infinite possibilities of verbal expression rather than being limited in expression by conventional experience.

SPEECH

To form words and articulate them, to place the voice and make it resonate, to project it in order to make oneself heard throughout the house so that one is easily

understood, and to give the words themselves music and meaning (attending to inflection, the rise and fall of the speaking voice and the rhythm and dynamics of what is said)—the program addresses each of these elements in its speech training curriculum. Students meet with their speech teacher(s) in one 90-minute group session and one 45- to 60-minute individual session per week for three years.

Here again, to master what used to be called "elocution," the student's ability to relax is crucial. Relaxation exercises are done lying on the floor or sitting in chairs. The mouth (lips and tongue), cheeks and throat, even the nose, all must be ready to give up bad habits or to overcome obstacles (e.g., lisps). Students learn these muscle groups and gain control over them in order to use them to maximum theatrical effect.

Vocal warm-up exercises stretch and strengthen the speech muscles, including those associated with breathing. Variations of inhalation and exhalation, rubberizing the face and contorting the tongue wake up the body and the mask, preparing the performer's vocal instrument. Individuals and groups free themselves from bad habits and strictures by improvising with sounds or talking in nonsense language. They loosen the psyche and the soma, and greatly expand possibilities for the production of sounds (such as those encountered in accents or dialects) different from those a student habitually makes.

In addition to being able to speak their lines, musical theater performers must be able to sing their lyrics. Unlike opera singers, who have just one voice sound, or two completely different voice sounds (one singing, one speaking), musical theater performers must have a ready supply of vocal identities, the more the better. The game performer may be called upon to sing "Adelaide's Lament" and "The Wizard" in the same season, each requiring a different and unique local character. Percussion instruments help students hear and manipulate the rhythms of speech so they can shift adroitly from speech to song, from speaking to singing and back again, easily and naturally. So some "speech" classes can be quite demanding physically—students may jump rope, for instance, while reciting long monologues.

Poetry of every kind—dramatic, romantic, or historic; funny or sad; classical or modern—is a staple of speech class. Third-year students perform a program created by the speech faculty from prepared texts and poems. Here again, these texts or poems may have been set to music; they may be sung, or even danced. Speech per se is not taught in the fourth year, but speech teachers are present

during rehearsals for the final production to coach and work on individual problems. For many students, this is their last opportunity to "get it right."

THEATER HISTORY

While a performer need not necessarily know Shakespeare in order to perform *Gypsy*, it helps. Art is a constantly changing activity; musical theater students must learn to locate themselves in the continuum of their art, and define themselves, by studying the past. In order to fill in any gaps in their formal literary educations, students have a weekly two-hour class to read and discuss plays with their teacher. In their rare free time, they attend the theater as a group. Because they know Baroque from breakdancing, Monteverdi from Mantovani, *Henry IV* from *Friday the Thirteenth*, our graduates know, understand, and own their unique niches in the profession

AUDITIONING

This weekly class for advanced students concentrates on the specific problems and demands of being convincing and self-assured in the incredibly stressful atmosphere of the audition. The problems of choosing suitable songs (at least one with choreography) and acting repertoire are addressed here. "Auditioners"—a group of teachers, one from each discipline—help each student create a 10 minute audition piece made up of monologues, songs, and dances that show their particular talents and strengths to best advantage. Students rehearse these mini-collages until each of them achieves a seamlessly structured piece and a commanding performance. Although musical theater performers rarely have the opportunity to present an entire 10-minute audition (most times they'll be lucky to get through an entire song), this process is excellent preparation for the harrowing experiences awaiting them. Teachers also work with students in groups in order to work on sightsinging and cold reading skills, on picking up dance combinations quickly, and "selling it" as an ensemble.

PERFORMANCE

"On the Town": Vivian Lüdorf, Katrin Schyns
Photo © Archie Kent

DANCE PRESENTATION

Once each semester, the Dance Department presents an afternoon performance for an internal audience, where all its techniques are represented.

First-Year Presentation. At the end of their first year, in one of the dance studios and for an audience strictly limited to the faculty, the students present a program consisting of their work in all the disciplines they have studied in the previous two semesters. This presentation is their only performance requirement in the first year. The assemblage and rehearsal of this program is left completely up to the students. They may call on faculty for specific help in details, but it really is their production. They tend to want to show everything they can do in these shows, so marathon events result. In order not to eat up valuable rehearsal time, the students are strongly discouraged ("prohibit" is a word without much currency in our treasury) from including new material.

Their desire to show everything they can do, all at once, is understandable. For some, it may be their last opportunity to demonstrate their talents as fully as they can, and perhaps to redeem a negative impression that has arisen during the year. Whatever the motive, the first-year presentation has proven to be a wonderful way to unify the class while they show their teachers what they've retained.

Second-Year Collage. This performance for a larger audience of family, friends, fellow-students, and others takes place in a formal theater space either at the end of the first semester or midway through the second semester of the second year. The second-year collage is a loosely organized "revue" whose various elements can be related to one another only tangentially: an opening number, songs (solo and group), dances, monologues, and scenes from acting scene-study work, often with running gags and all the other paraphernalia of such a show. The production values are minimal, the accompaniment solo piano, which may be enriched by a few other instruments, and the space requirements flexible. Often selections from this show are presented at various galas and events later on in the school year. Students perform this revue a number of times. Depending on the space, the singing voice may be supported by area mics.

At the beginning of the second year, all students, with the aid of their coaches, submit an inventory of their available song repertoires. From these assembled lists, a program begins to evolve. Each of these evenings is unique; their stylistic range is enormous. They are not confined to light, humorous content. For instance, "Bess, You is My Woman Now," from *Porgy and Bess*, choreographed as an abstract dance (including the vocal soloists) easily followed a wrenching monologue from the contemporary or classical theater and led to a Brecht/Eisler song, with the students playing their own accompaniment on oboe, flute and sax. This unpredictability lends much to the headiness of the evening.

Conceived, rehearsed and presented under the supervision and direction of a faculty director and choreographer, these evenings are presented by students who made the cut at the end of their first year of instruction. This second-year collage is their first public performance. Many of them have had their preconceptions of what constitutes singing/acting/dancing performance knocked for a loop. They are concerned only with how much time each of them has on the stage, how many solo numbers each has, and so on. And because the overall organization of these revues is inherently so quirky, at some point during rehearsal, the cast invariably offers up great resistance to direction, confident that they know best how to showcase their talents; all of them are at least a little resentful, are sure that their artistic impulses have been thwarted by the director and/or the

choreographer. Then, they hear the first applause and fill the many curtain-calls. Soon they are complaining about the limited number of performances. This happens every time.

"Heaven": Gudrun Lercher, Carina Sandhaus, Franziska Forster, Marc Basiner, Dennis Spree, Olivier Schierholz
Photo © Archie Kent

Every second-year class goes through this process because, in the course of preparing their performances and being coached and directed, the students have learned that the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle—the act of observation profoundly influences the event—is as alive and well in the musical theater as it is in the physics lab. A performer's ability to surrender their myopic, solipsistic vision to the larger vision of a director is central to the profession, even though that act of surrender can sometimes be exploited (unhappily) by the directors—theatrical and/or musical—in the rehearsal process.

SECOND-YEAR SONG EVENING

Toward the end of each year, we encourage each voice teacher to present a song evening, a mixed bag of "classical" pieces and pop or theater songs performed by second-year students. These evenings are semi-staged events, cabaret-like in their presentation, and represent a significant hurdle for the students, who must rely primarily on their voices to present material. For students whose main strength is dance, this song evening can be particularly harrowing. These evenings are presented in small, intimate surroundings: a recital hall, a cabaret theater, a café—

anywhere that is specifically not a theater. The goal of these musical performances is the direct, intimate communication of singer and audience.

THIRD-YEAR SONG CLASS

Though this class may produce a public performance, its true object is to bring together the interrelated elements of singing and music. Although the voice lessons and the labs address certain of these elements in the first two years, this song class specifically concentrates on the analysis and understanding of the song in every sense:

- The song's formal organization and structure
- Its harmonic structure
- Its rhythms
- The relationships between its lyrics and its music
- Its orchestration
- Its historical context
- Its dramaturgy—i.e., its place and function in the dramatic developments of the play
- Its performance

Each student has at least one hour per week of individual work for 16 weeks. Also, they come together as a bi-weekly class with the voice professor and a musical instructor, performing for and sharing their discoveries with one another. Over several weeks, each song is performed three times, with the emphasis (and the teachers' contributions) beginning with theoretical and historical concerns, then shifting to questions of vocal technique at the second performance, and finally, to the demands of performance.

For many students, singing before their colleagues is more threatening than the somewhat formal presentation of the song evening of the second year. These third-year song classes are students' first bridges to their future, more public performances. Because musical theater demands of its performers a unique type of exposure, students are required to perform increasingly often after their first year. Often the curricula of these third-year song classes overlap or dovetail with those of the repertoire class (described below). By concentrating intensely on one show, even with no intention of producing it, students arrive at profound understanding of the ways the songs work via the detailed investigation afforded by their third-year song class.

MUSICAL REPERTOIRE CLASS

Here we direct the students in a scene chosen from the musical repertoire by the voice and drama teachers and involving dialogue and song, choreography or staging. The students can now use the Acting Class experience to sing and dance in character, using song and movement to develop and deepen that character. The repertoire class meets in both semesters of the third year. The first semester curriculum concentrates on scenes from "classical" musical repertoire, e.g., Rodgers & Hart/Hammerstein, Cole Porter, the Gershwins, and Jerome Kern as well as the German tradition of Brecht/Weill, Hollander, Tucholsky, etc. The second semester focuses on the more modern musical theater, with selections from Andrew Lloyd Weber's faux-operas, from Sondheim, from Lin-Manuel Miranda and from Euro-musicals like *Les Miserables* and *Miss Saigon*. We try to cover as wide a spectrum as possible, without allowing our personal tastes to intrude, in order to prepare the students for the realities of the musical stage, where they will have to be ready to perform all sorts of theater. Repertoire classes need not result in public performance; they are primarily workshops. However, if warranted, they are presented to the public with some costume and set elements added.

The classwork itself uses props and costumes, treats problems of projection (both the voice and the character), as well as playing with and through the fourth wall, and pacing a scene. (Pacing is particularly important when dance is involved.) Ideally, each student has the opportunity to play a leading and a supporting role. We invite directors of international stature and experience to lead these classes so students will be exposed to a variety of traditions and expectations. Some of these workshops have been so successful they have led to full-fledged productions.

Most of the accompaniment for these workshop presentations is solo piano, but a small trio or quartet could well be used. The fourth year curriculum directly addresses the problems of singing with live orchestral or band accompaniment, but students can't begin to sample such experiences too early.

SPEECH EVENING

The third year of instruction includes a recital-like event in an intimate setting, prepared and presented by the speech department. This "recital" consists of thematically related texts—for instance, poetry of the 1920s, or satires, love poems, etc.—all performed without amplification. Student-performers are encouraged to regard their voices as communicative instruments, not necessarily (though possibly) the vocal component of a character. This evening is the logical culmination of the three years of speech study outlined previously.

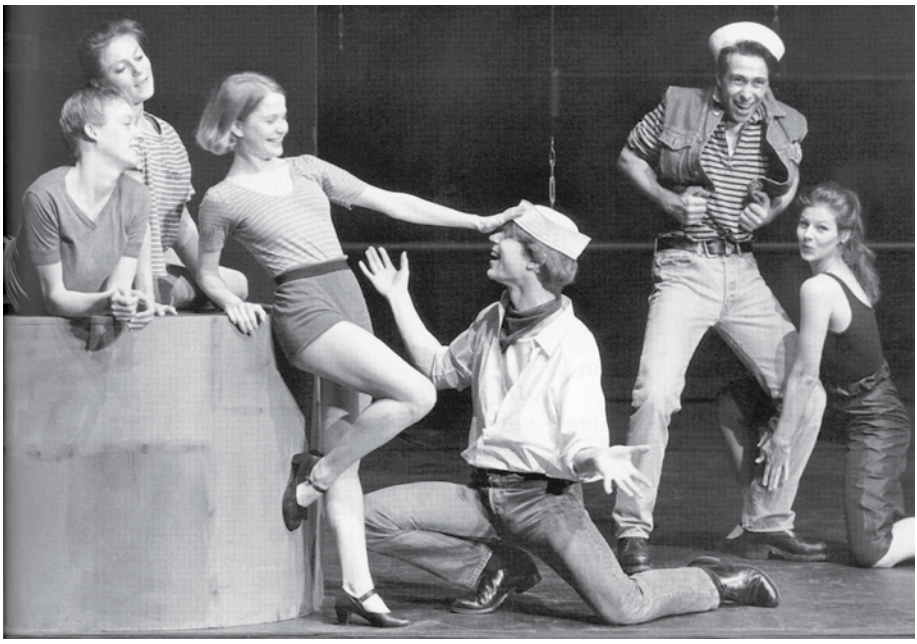
FOURTH-YEAR PRODUCTION

The performing area evolves from the initial experience of a strictly private, for-our-eyes-only presentation in the first year to the somewhat public and more complex, outfitted presentations of the second year, to the beginning scene-work and formal showings of the third year, and, finally, to the fully produced show of the fourth year.

This final year is composed almost entirely of performance: a full musical production, the presentation of the acting work started in the third year with guest directors, the student's own one-person show, and of course, the students' continuous presence at auditions for the coming season. Traditional shows don't cast well for this final production because they consist mostly of starring roles and chorus, and we feel a responsibility to present each student in a leading role. With this precept in mind, a small class can find itself in a quandary, especially if its gender ratio is, for instance, seven women to one man, as was the case with our first graduating class. We have used all three of these ways to approach this stumbling-block:

- Multiple casting of leads. This strategy is possible because the production is presented at least eight times, but it is nevertheless very difficult due to the resulting complicated rehearsal and time schedules. We recommend A and B casts.
- A coherent collage of elements of other shows.
- A new piece created for these specific performers.

As in all academic theater situations, this production must take precedence over all other activities. One can give lip service to such phrases as "We expect you to behave like professionals here" or "That's not the way it is in the real theater," but these performers are still students, so their artistic and creative resources and concentration are finite. They should be pushed to the limit and not coddled, but they need more than the usual four to six weeks' preparation for a musical.



"On the Town": Katrin Schyns, Claire Kremp, Silke Fritsche, Gerald Michel, Adrian Becker, Anna Kube
Photo © Archie Kent

Every student must come to terms with the fundamental attribute of theater performance—stamina—that will exact its price from every musical theater performer. If the students thought they were tired during their previous three years, the fourth year will push them to their capacity for exhaustion (as will the all-too-real theater world they are about to enter). They must learn to fulfill rehearsal demands without doing serious injury to their voices or their bodies. Students should begin to prepare for this production as early as possible—ideally, at the end of the third year, so that songs and texts can be learned early on, they can train gradually, and eventually devote all their energies to the mechanics of production more than to developing their endurance.

ONE-PERSON SELF-CONCEIVED SHOW

As one of the requirements for graduation, the student must create and present an original show of some thirty to forty minutes in length. Optimally, students derive this show from material already within their repertoires but now tailored to a new, internally coherent context, in which they demonstrate their skill in applying principles and techniques learned during their course of study in the program.

"Heaven" Jana Werner
Photo © Archie Kent

Best of all, fourth-year students may well come up with strikingly new and original applications on their own. The faculty is available for consultation, but the show embodies the student's independent thought.

Nothing a student proffers or suggests is rejected a priori. No matter how misguided or cockamamie a notion may seem to us, students learn how to generate and develop material on their own. After the presentation, the faculty critiques and makes suggestion, but we remove ourselves as much as possible from the

creative process of selection and development. Eventually, the most successful of these shows are presented at other venues, in cafes, on YouTube etc. The one-person shows are also excellent preparation for auditions and competitions.

ADVANCED SCENE STUDY

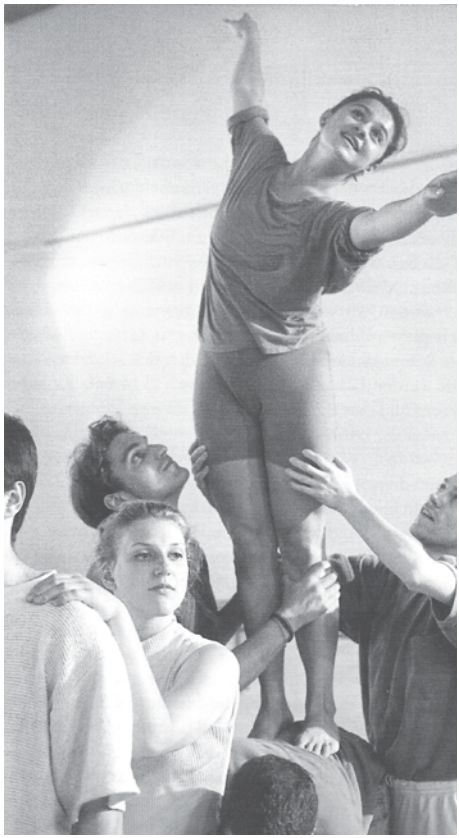
Among many other legitimate and effective programs available to the serious student of musical theater, our course is unique. This requirement demonstrates the program's distinguishing characteristic: its commitment to producing singing/dancing actors.

At some point toward the end of the third year, under the tutelage of a guest director noted for work in "legitimate," nonmusical theater, students start original work on scenes for two or three characters. Most of the material they choose is familiar, from modern masters like Tennessee Williams, Tom Stoppard, Harold Pinter, and George Tabori to cultural icons like Shakespeare, Schiller, and Chekhov. The fully engaged performer, actively invested in the present moment, really listening and reacting to everything occurring onstage as if for the first time—which, of course, it is—dancing, singing and speaking with a finely tuned, exquisitely prepared instrument, is a joy and a privilege to behold. It has ever been so since the first Greek performer donned cothornous, mounted the stage, chanted iambs, danced to a theorbo, and by so doing, uplifted and entertained the polis.

PART 2:

THE MUSICAL LAB

Every first-year student spends at least six hours per week in the musical lab; second-year students spend at least three hours a week working there. These six hours in the first year and three hours in the second are the heart and, perhaps, the spirit of the program.



"Blocks" Mischa Mang, Eva Tharichen, Karim Khawatmi, Markus Dullmann, Asita Djavadi, Michael Chadim
Photo (c) Archie Kent

A laboratory is a place where phenomena—ideas, theories, realities—are placed under a microscope and investigated in all their attributes and functions,

and perhaps revealed in new and surprising lights. It's a place for discovery, for stretching limits, for validating or shedding the past. A musical theater performer who has mastered all three tools—singing, dancing, and acting—is a win/win/win for the performer, for the audience, and for the art form. Given the economics of today's theater, a totally non-singing dancer or a singer with no dance ability has little chance of working.

Acting, singing, dancing—each is so demanding that when a student is naturally talented in one (as many are), that talent can seduce the student away from serious pursuit of the others because it offers the possibility for stardom if the talent is large enough. One of the unique distinctions and joys of the musical theater for everyone involved—performer, audience, composer, director, parent—is the all-around, integrated performance able to break an audience's heart and lift its soul through song, dance and acting. Admittedly, not everyone can be a star; all students, however, must be encouraged to develop all of their gifts to their maximum potential. At the first musical lab meeting, each student must perform a song for the rest of the class. For inexperienced students, this type of work is strange and threatening. It's amazing how reticent some are. None of them are flinty professionals. They are young people taking the biggest risk of their lives; their teachers must win their trust and prove to them that this risk is worth taking, that it will not destroy them as artists or as people. They are about to learn that the readiness to exploit one's personality, to expose one's private self in the public sphere while fulfilling the technical demands of the moment, is an essential component of all great musical theater performance.

Although the faculty has heard each student sing at the auditions, all the students are strangers to one another. Getting up and singing for each other eases them into the habit of always having repertoire available (including music for the pianist) for whatever challenge may arise, whether an exercise in class or, later, a tricky audition demand someone throws at them when everything is on the line. Musical theater students are instructed in proper preparation techniques such as always being ready to move (so always having appropriate dance attire with them), and taping pages of music together and marking repeats for some pianist they've never seen before—all while they keep the instruments of their mind and bodies trained and in tune.

One further word about the pianist: one of the basic principles in the musical lab is that any song can be sung in any context. Because the manner of singing a song may be inimical to the "usual" performance of that song in terms of style, tempo, dynamic, etc.; the pianist must be enormously flexible, capable of meeting

radically different demands on the spur of the moment, providing no more than contextualized scaffolding on which the student performer can explore every possibility of the piece.

The musical lab is open to all faculty members, and they are invited to take part in much of the work. But many of them are myopically focused in on only their specialty and need to be introduced to this kind of cross-fertilization. They are encouraged to use these techniques in their own instruction—for example, the uses of nonsense in a speech class.

Usually, we divide the musical lab into two sections: preparation, which can include a relaxation and/or a warm-up exercise. These exercises may take the form of games selected to prepare the student for the specific lesson itself, which focuses on a particular performance problem and is taught in the form of games and improvisations or more formal tasks or assignments.

The lessons, at least in the first semester, concentrate on opening the student to new and potentially threatening avenues of self-exploration and the shedding of entrenched and limiting work practices. Their first lesson: acting is really reacting. In order to help them feel comfortable and natural in front of an audience, we treat them as actor-people who (re)act with words, song, or dance, or some combination thereof. Faculty members use or devise simple, straightforward exercises that encourage self-knowledge simply and honestly, in order to be the character rather than merely to act the role.

To help students forget they are being watched, we often work with blindfolds in the preparation section. (And, in fact, we often use blindfolds in lab and acting classes.) Students prove capable of amazing work when blindfolds produce in them the "I don't-see you-seeing-me" effect: "I believe you can't see me, so I can drop my public mask. I can stop acting." Students may continue wearing the blindfolds as they go into games and improvisations; when they remove them, we encourage them to retain as much of their newfound sense of "public privacy" as they can. They use their newfound awareness of the change from private to public world, from darkness to light, when asked to sing while blindfolded or just after they remove their blindfolds—i.e., while in a personally authentic, new and discrete physical moment.

Students learn that their bodies are not only physical forms but also the substance of their identities. They learn that their bodies function and move in order to express their state of being.

Lessons that involve dance address its function in space and time, phrasing, dynamics, and its demands on physical strength and endurance. Dance-oriented lessons also treat the following challenges:

- The problems of singing while dancing, and vice versa
- Of speaking and/or singing after a dance number
- Of dancing in character and with emotion
- Of transitioning into and out of a dance
- The differences in dancing as a soloist, in a small group or as a chorus member

Lessons in singing and the role of music in musical theater address these questions, among others:

- How are speech and song the same—and how are they different?
- Where does the voice originate?
- How is the breath involved?
- How is it possible to sing in moments of intense emotion?

The musical lab also helps students accomplish the following:

- Acknowledge and overcome the "artificiality" of the theatrical, projected voice
- Train their ears and free their musical impulses and imaginations
- Sing solo, in ensemble, and as "back-up" accompaniment.

Program curriculum also includes musical theater games designed to develop the courage to perform alone and with others, to sharpen their eyes and ears, to challenge them to improvise, and to encourage them to respond immediately to new stimuli or information.

Program exercises (described below) are designed to instill and foster the feeling of ensemble in each cohort of students. These exercises teach them to rely upon one another, to offer and respond to ideas and actions, to be ready to enter into each other's reality/fantasy, and to work together to fulfill the demands of the performance task. Second-year lessons, for instance, teach students how to repeat something "for the first time," how to face and conquer personal demons, how to reach and win the audience, and to take—and to relinquish—center stage gracefully.

EXERCISES: RELAXATION

The Constructive Rest Position (CRP). In the CRP, first taught at The Juilliard School by Dr. Lulu E. Sweigard in the mid-20th century, students lie on their backs on the floor (on mats or blankets, if so desired), eyes closed, soles of the feet on the floor. They separate their feet and turn their toes in toward each other, letting their knees fall in and rest against each other at a point that aligns with the center of their bodies. They cross their arms over their chests and just let their arms fall, not clasping their shoulders. For better alignment (especially if they must tip their heads back in order to rest them on the floor), they can place small pillows behind their heads so that the backs of their necks lengthen and their chins come down toward their chests. Their heads are centered. If their knees can't stay together, they may use belts or scarves and tie them together just above the knees so they can relax the muscles in their lower torsos and legs. To keep their feet from sliding, they should do this exercise barefoot or wear flat, soft rubber-soled shoes and adjust the space between their feet and between their feet and their buttocks to arrive at a comfortable balance.

Bobbie Walden leading the Constructive Rest Position
Photo © Warner Bethsold

They are instructed to become aware of themselves in the room, of the sounds outside of the room, and then be aware of the sounds in the room. They notice the temperature of the floor and of the air in the room. They begin to focus

their attention inward, to become aware of their breathing as it connects their outer and inner spaces, bridging both worlds. They then feel the coolness of the air as it comes in through their noses and fills their heads, throats, chests, diaphragms, bellies and pelvic areas, and the warmth of it as it leaves through their mouths. Their attention is called to three pressure points: the backs of their heads; the spot between their shoulder blades; and their lower backs; each of them will experience more pressure or discomfort in one of these areas than in the other two. Their bodies are telling them that this is where they hold most of their tension. They should not deny or avoid any discomfort they feel; rather, they should go into it with "the thumbs of their minds"—their concentrated awareness—and learn to send that tension away.

Letting go of deep body tensions is accomplished through the use of imagery. The process takes time. Dr. Sweigard suggests a maximum of 20 minutes, and in the beginning, that is the amount of time we allot. Later on we may reduce it to ten. This exercise benefits from frequent repetition and usage over years.

Imagery. Teachers instruct students to do some or all of the following:

- Imagine that the floor is a big hand that cradles them gently but firmly, keeping them safe.
- Imagine that their spines are telegraph lines. All the information they receive from the outside world, and even from their bodies themselves, enters through nerve endings and travels up the telegraph line to the body part we call the brain. The brain makes sense of the body's sensory input and sends directions to respond down the telegraph line.
- Imagine that their spinal cords are tree trunks with tiny tendrils branching out from both sides all along their lengths (from the middle of the head to the tailbone). At the point along the trunk where they experience the most pressure (or pain or discomfort), instruct them to go into the center of that pressure, and imagine it branching or dissolving, first into the tendril on one side and then into the other.
- Imagine that the pressure is a red dot and, with an eye-dropper full of "relaxation liquid," they release some drops onto the dot, creating space at its center, diffusing it outward and diluting its color until it is barely pink.
- Imagine that the pressure is a ball of ice. They are lying in the sun at the beach or in a meadow. It is wonderfully hot and the sun shines directly on the ball of ice and melts it.
- Imagine that the pressure is a candy-coated gumball. Have them choose their favorite flavor and start sucking it; then, when they want to, bite into it and chew it up.

- Imagine that the pressure is a door. They open that door and go through it into an open field. It is sunny and warm. There is a gentle breeze and the delicate smell of wild flowers wafts toward them. Birds sing out to each other and crickets chirp.
- Imagine their bodies are empty suits of clothing on hangers, blowing in the wind.
- Imagine they are lying on a low, latticed platform and that their bodies are filled with sand. They can make slits in the casing of their "sand-bags" along the ridges of their shoulder blades, and the sand will sift down to the floor. (They can also try this at the ridges of their hip sockets.)
- Imagine that inside each of their bodies is a complex of many rooms and that they themselves are tiny creatures who can walk through all the rooms and see where the tension is. Have them take a "relaxation broom" or feather duster and sweep it out, or take a deep breath and blow it away.

Students can apply these images from Matthias Alexander's technique (which trains people to correct the improper everyday usage of their bodies) to the CRP, as follows:

- Let their necks release so that they feel space between the tops of their necks (at the level of their ear canals) and their heads, and their heads are not affixed to their necks, so energy can flow up through the tops of their heads.
- Let their torsos lengthen and widen as they imagine air between their vertebrae and between their ribs.
- Let their shoulders drift out to the sides so that their backs can expand.
- Let their legs be free in their hip sockets, releasing away from their pelvises as they imagine air or space in the sockets.

Note: For the first month or so, instructors give image suggestions aloud; thereafter, the students do CRP in silence with the lights dimmed. We encourage them to use whichever images help them give in to gravity and let go, or to experiment and create their own images to suit the purpose.

Uses of the CRP:

- To become quiet and focus the attention
- To increase awareness and knowledge of the body and its various tensions
- To become centered physically and mentally
- To get in touch with and release feelings locked in the muscles and soft tissues
- To sleep, to cry, to shake, to rest, to prepare for work

Leaving the CRP. Still on the floor as they conclude their CRP sessions, students should stretch their arms up over their heads, keeping their fingertips in contact with the floor. Breathe deeply. Let their knees move to a parallel position, so that they are on a line with their hipbones. They remove any bindings they may have used to help them assume the positions so they can then bring their knees up to their chests, and roll over onto their right sides in a fetal position and rest there comfortably for a while. Slowly, using their hands to help them, they come to a sitting position. When their heads are clear, they should slowly stand up.
Note: It is important that students take their time in going from lying down to standing up, to allow their bodies to adjust to their new centers of gravity. If they stand up too quickly, they may become lightheaded or even faint.

Chair Relaxation. Although it is easier to give in to gravity lying down, musical theater performers will usually be either sitting or standing on stage, so students must learn to relax in these positions. Lee Strasberg created this exercise as part of the curriculum of The Actors Studio.

Students place chairs wherever they feel comfortable in the room, facing a direction that gives them a sense of privacy (i.e., not too close to/facing another student). They sit with their eyes closed and let themselves into their chairs, giving in to gravity and allowing the chairs to support them while seated, as they conform to their chair's shape and become so comfortable that they could fall asleep. They should become aware of the different parts of their bodies and, in this relaxed state, move each part: their heads, necks, shoulders, right and left hands and fingers, arms, chests, diaphragms, bellies, hips, genitals, buttocks, backs (lower, middle and upper), right legs/feet and toes, left legs/feet and toes. They can use different levels of energy and move in different directions.

The students work on different facial muscles, freeing them from tension. At first, this is best accomplished by actually touching the muscles. Then, later, purely through concentration, in this order: the area of the blue veins of the temples; the muscles on either side of the nose where the eyes and nose meet; the long muscles on either side of the nose (extending down to the chin); the chin itself and the muscles of the mouth, cheeks, jaw and tongue. Next the spine, from head to coccyx. They massage their muscles along both sides of the vertebrae (as far as their reach permits); with practice, they will be able to relax all those areas through concentration alone.

They should release any feelings that arise during this exercise through making the sound "ah." If this syllable (repeated as often as needed) does not provide a strong enough conduit for these feelings, they can use the sound "hah" in a percussive manner connected to the gut. The teacher explains that they use these sounds not to lessen these feelings, but to expel them. They can also use the chair to help get rid of persistent tensions, getting into whatever positions they need to in order that the pressure of body parts against the chair or floor can assist in locating and releasing these tensions. They complete the exercise by returning to a "normal" seated position.

Variation on Chair Relaxation. The exercise can be done in pairs, with one person doing the relaxing and the other person helping by pressing the relaxer on the points Strasberg designates. Touch should be firm but gentle; this isn't shiatsu. After this "pressure massage," the relaxer sings to the toucher, and the toucher then sings their own song in response, from their present physical and emotional condition.

Uses of Chair Relaxation:

- To learn to relax while seated
- To learn to locate and release tensions without the benefit of touch
- To begin to be aware of the relationship between tension and unexpressed emotion
- To free emotions through sound and so release tension
- To discover new body postiions and movement possibilities
- To be able to focus on one's own work while hearing the work of others
- To learn to express strong emotions in front of others, and to accept strong emotions from others without being selfconscious or judgmental

Stroking. This exercise introduces students to the physical realities of discarding shyness and accepting someone else into their personal space, which they will have to do often and without notice in their professional lives.

Sitting comfortably on the floor, the student pairs take turns cradling each other in their laps and, for five minutes, gently stroking the relaxer. The toucher should use long, smoothing, soothing strokes on the relaxer's head, face, neck, torso, arms, hands, legs, and feet— i.e., on as much of their bodies as they can reach without violating the relaxer's comfort zone (i.e., nonsexually), giving the relaxer full attention.

After five minutes, direct the pairs gradually to change places, so the relaxer becomes the toucher, and the exercise is repeated for another five minutes. After time is called, the students spend a few more minutes talking together about the experience, then find a way to separate.

Uses of Stroking:

- To establish a close and trusting relationship
- To break down physical selfconsciousness and the fear of being physically close
- To prepare for scene work
- To relax

Opening. Here is another exercise to do in pairs. It came to us from George Tabori.

One student closes up physically, curls up as tightly as possible. Then, the partner tries to get them to relax and let their defenses down, or to force, cajole, sweet talk or tickle them—in any way imaginable, to get them to open up physically. When the opener has succeeded (or the teacher has called time), each pair talks about the experience, then switches roles and repeats the process.

Uses of Opening:

- To conquer shyness about physical contact in a variety of emotional states
- To get to know each other and themselves better
- To stretch their vocabularies about making people open and be receptive to them
- To get strong enough to say "no" or "not yet" and stay closed as long as they like, resisting coercion

EXERCISES: SENSORY AWARENESS

Self-Inventory. This is another Strasberg exercise. It can be done in any position and in any situation, with eyes open or closed.

We instruct students to talk to themselves sotto voce, describing their present physical state of being. They should be as precise as they can in identifying and describing each sensation they experience from moment to moment. Sensations may arise in response to environmental as well as to internal stimuli. We remind them to keep this flow of information continuous and non-judgmental. They

should include their whole bodies in their inventories. It is as important to note, for example, that they cannot feel their diaphragms or middle backs as it is for them to note that their temples are pounding, they have a burning sensation between their shoulder blades, and that their palms are getting wet. They should be urged to avoid judgmental words like "good" or "bad", and "angry" or "happy"—i.e., words that refer to their emotions or values. They should concentrate on what is physically going on in their unique physical beings.

Variation on Self-Inventory. The class separates into groups of three. Each person in the trio has the opportunity to do the exercise while being closely observed by the other two. These observers are there not to judge or to challenge, but to help the subjects "inventory-taker" get more in touch with exactly what is going on in their bodies by asking specific questions. For example, if a subject reports, "My legs are tired," the observer might ask, "What does this 'tired' feel like?" or, "Where exactly do you feel the tiredness?" or "Is there any connection between this tiredness and the fact that your hands are clenched?" By being this precise in their questioning, the observers can bring the reporter to an increased awareness of their physical and emotional state.

Uses of Self-Inventory:

- To become aware of the connections between their physical sensations and their emotions and to be able to locate and describe emotions as particular sensations in particular body parts
- To be able to recreate emotions through this awareness
- To be able to concentrate on the here and now, and to use this presence in the moment, in performance
- To be able to be objective about what is going on in their bodies and not be overwhelmed by it
- To become aware of their environment and the ways it affects them

Honey-Seltzer. This exercise can be done alone or alone in a group. Sitting on chairs, their eyes closed and their feet flat on the floor, students imagine that the outer layers of their bodies—their skin—is made of glass. At the tops of their heads are openings into which warm honey is poured. The honey flows downwards slowly, coating the insides of their glass exteriors without disturbing their nostrils or throats, their breathing or swallowing, or any of the other natural functions of their bodies.

They take their time, really see and feel the temperature, texture and level of the honey as it inches its way down the insides of their heads, faces, necks, torsos and limbs. Any excess honey flows out through their toes and fingers. They should feel free to move, stand, or give in to gravity if they get an impulse to do so. They are free to breathe deeply, sigh, or express feelings nonverbally if doing so feels organic to them. When they have completed this part of the exercise, they stay with the warm, heavy, honey-coated feeling for a short while, and then indicate their readiness to continue by opening their eyes. (If they do this on their own, they can keep their eyes closed and just go on.)

In the position where they now find themselves, and with their eyes closed, they should imagine that they have openings at their insteps where cool seltzer (carbonated water) has begun to bubble up, filling their feet, gushing up through their ankles and calves, continuing up through their entire bodies and exiting out the openings in the tops of their heads. Make sure they know that the temperature of the water, the degree of effervescence, and the speed and strength of its journey are all up to them. As in the first half of this exercise, have them try to send the imagined substance into every part of their bodies, and let themselves respond to the experience, moving or making sounds as needed.

Uses of Honey-Seltzer:

- As an autogenous exercise, to heighten awareness of the inner body and its sensations
- To relax by giving in to gravity
- To become enlivened—it can be used as an energizing exercise
- To be able to control their energy
- To experience the connection between thinking, feeling, and moving
- To be able to imagine temperature and how it affects them
- To enjoy a wide range of tactile sensations in their bodies

Resonating into Body Parts. This is another exercise meant for pairs, but students can also do it in groups of three.

The singing partners lie back on the floor comfortably. Working from head to toe, the others touch the singers somewhere on their bodies (the top of the head, for example). The students being touched send a tone to that body part, either humming or singing, so that the toucher feels a vibration (or resonance) in the touching hand and keeps it there while the hummer/singer sends the tone at least one more time. The toucher lets the hummer/singer know whether the vibration

is present; the one being touched can try to vary the pitch, placement, or volume (intensity) in order to accomplish the task. When they have done so, the touchers move their hands to other body parts (perhaps the forehead), and the two repeat the process. Of course, some body parts may not transmit vibration, but the attempt to focus and send the voice to as many resonating areas as possible is important, and there are often surprises, as the students experience vibrations where they never expected to or thought they could. When they've completed the task, they discuss their experiences, then switch roles and repeat.

Uses of Resonating into Body Parts:

- To focus the attention
- To relax—this use of the voice is akin to the "OM" in meditation
- To warm up the voice
- To be able to touch and be touched without reluctance or discomfort
- To discover and exploit new resonant areas of the body

First Steps: Coming to Standing. This three-person exercise begins as a duet. One student lies on the floor, their head cradled in another student's lap, eyes closed, in an attitude of total passivity. The third partner watches closely.

The seated partner places one hand on the chest of the reclining one in order to feel the rise and fall of the breath. The partners breathe together, mirroring the rhythm and intensity of the respiration, and the third partner joins them in their coordinated breathing. In this rhythm, gradually and smoothly, gently but firmly, the seated partner begins to raise the recumbent one to a sitting position. With every rise, there will be a slight falling back, rhythmically determined by the inhalation and exhalation of the breath. Because recumbent partners remain passive during this entire exercise, they will be quite heavy.

The third member of the trio is a helpmate who joins the pair in this task whenever they indicate that they are ready to share this responsibility. When the two active members begin working together, they become partners in the task of lifting until they are standing, pushing until they are standing, pulling until they are standing, and supporting the reclining member until they are standing.

This transition from sitting to standing should be a continuation of the rhythmic change from reclining to sitting and should have the same feeling of ebb and flow in the breath. When the passive member is standing, the active pair may have to adjust the passive member's pelvis and head to make sure that they are in alignment and really balanced on their legs.

"First Steps" Mischa Mang, Birge Funke, Karim Khawatmi
Photo © Archie Kent

Trying One's Wings. The next task prepares the dependent to walk away from the active pair. The student who has just stood up should take a moment to feel centered while remaining passive, eyes closed, but less passive than before because, as they will discover, they must work against gravity to remain upright and aligned. The active pair stands on either side of the dependent, their inside hands under the armpits and their outside hands holding the hands on each side (see photo).

The active pair gently raise the fledgling's arms out a little forward of the shoulder and away from their sides three times: first, about six inches up, then lower them to their starting point at the sides; the second time about waist-high, then lower them again; finally, almost to shoulder level and hold them there. It is important that the partners mirror each other and move together so their charge feels balanced. The raising and lowering of arms should be rhythmic and should have the same feeling of synchronous breathing as the first part of the exercise. The student whose arms are being raised must remember not to "help" lift them but, rather, to give in to gravity from shoulders to fingertips.

Taking First Steps. Without removing their hands, the two partners again work in synchrony, moving their charge's weight forward so the passive student must take a step to keep from falling. The pair continues to support and encourage these first steps for a moment or two, then let go and watch as the person separates from them and walks away. This is a strong moment for all three participants. When ready, the passive ones will open their eyes; then, they can turn and relate to the other two as they wish. All three should take about five or ten minutes to discuss their experience, then change roles. They repeat the exercise until each of them has taken all three roles.

Note: Students should take their initial positions with the end of the exercise (this "blind walk") in mind so that, once standing and walking forward with eyes closed, the dependent will have a clear path.

Also: no student with back trouble should do this exercise. All participating students should take care to lift with bent knees, using their leg muscles as well as their backs.

Uses of Taking First Steps:
For the Lifters:
- To learn to mirror-breathe
- To use tender feelings and empathy
- To ask for and to give help when it is needed
- To work in synchrony as partners

For the Lifted:
- To learn to relax by giving in to gravity
- To learn to trust others and themselves
- To re-experience the developmental process from birth to first steps and, thereby, a new appreciation for "standing on one's own two feet"

Guided Imagery. Lying in the CRP or in any other comfortable position, students close their eyes and go through the process of coming to a quiet, concentrated state. We then guide them as they take this (or any other) imaginary trip:

- Imagine you can fly and go through walls. Fly up and out of this room, up into the sky. Feel the breeze against your body as you sail above the treetops. Think of, or remember a place where you have been—or could be—contented and at peace.

- See this place below you and gently float down. Use your senses to really be there. Touch, smell, taste, see and hear, and be aware of the pleasure you are experiencing.
- Now be aware that you are not alone. Approaching you is an animal or creature, a being you can trust absolutely and who understands you completely. Take some time to communicate with this being, confiding your hopes and your fears. Take five or ten minutes to do this.
- It is now time to part. Your "friend" gives you a small gift to take back with you as a memento of this place and of your time together. Find a way to say goodbye and take your leave, knowing that you can always return and that your "friend" will be here waiting for you.
- Fly back up into the sky and over the trees, water and buildings again until you come through the walls of this room and return to your place on this floor. Feel your body against the floor and sense the sounds and smells in the room. Slowly open your eyes and be here.

Note: The guide should be sensitive to the time required for the imaginers to realize the task, and be careful not to rush them.

Uses of Guided Imagery:
- To let go and relax
- To master the magical "as if"
- To heighten the senses

EXERCISES: ENERGIZING

Humming as a Group. In the CRP, with eyes closed or blindfolded, we ask our students to breathe quietly. As they do so, with their lips closed, they emit a small sound when exhaling, perhaps a sigh. They should identify the place in their chest from which the sigh emanates, and of the way the sigh can become a small, quiet, private hum vibrating gently against their breastbones in a low register. Students should not sing or try to make pretty sounds; they should just let the hum happen.

When the hum's pitch and placement are well-established, students can omit the sigh and continue just humming, letting the sound grow in volume until they feel the vibration fill their heads and involve even more of their torsos. They should experiment with different pitches. As they do this, they should listen to the musical chords being created in the room, and place their tones between any pitches they hear, creating chords of their own choosing. They should let their

lips open and send their sounds into the room. Gradually (still with eyes closed), they let their tones bring them up to a sitting position, then to standing.

The students should let the tones they hear guide them to one other person, then hum and sing their tones while they make body contact with their partners, vibrating together head-to-head, head-to-chest, chest-to-chest, chest-to-back, etc. Each pair seeks out another pair, continues humming or singing, making body contact and becoming a vibrating foursome. Each foursome seeks out another foursome and so on until the entire class has come together as one group, making body contact and letting the chords swell and vibrate, filling the room. On the teacher's signal, the sound gradually subsides into silence, and the students open their eyes, look around, and make eye contact with each other. Gradually, they will have to find ways to separate so each is alone again.

Variation on Humming as a Group. After humming and walking through the room, the individual students should stop and make themselves aware of the space immediately surrounding their bodies—their kinespheres. They should imagine this space to be encapsulated, as if each student were in a bubble. They should fill their "bubbles" with sound, then let the sound move their bubbles in the room, and be aware of the other spheres in the room. They should fit their tones between the pitches that the others are singing in order to create chords. These chords will be in a constant state of change as new pitches are added and subtracted. The students should respect the kinespheres of the others as they move about. On a signal from their teacher, they use their sounds to burst their bubbles.

Uses of Variation on Humming as a Group:

- To experience singing in near and middle space
- To play with plosives and fricatives
- To be spatially aware of others on stage while performing a task

Sound and Movement. This variation on an Open Theater exercise can be performed with the group in a circle or divided into two lines facing one another about three or four body lengths apart. The first student begins by improvising an abstract sound and movement. This should be a non-planned, non mimetic movement or very short movement phrase that can travel in space as it is repeated over and over again, accompanied by its simultaneously and similarly produced sound or short sound phrase. Neither the sound nor the movement can have any literal content—i.e., neither one should be "real" in the sense that it represents an actual activity or language.

The student takes the sounds and movements into the neutral space within the circle or between the two lines while establishing and maintaining eye contact with one group member across the room. They convey the sound and movement in space toward this group member, who knows that they are the intended recipient by the fact that the eye contact has been maintained. The chosen partner responds by mirroring the sender exactly (right hand is other's left hand, etc.). They assume the movement and sound, tempo and rhythm, pitch and dynamics, and facial and body expression of the choosing partner.

When the chooser feels that they have been heard and understood, and that the "chosen" has mastered the task of exactly replicating the offered sound and movement, the chooser takes the partner's place in the line or circle and stops. The "chosen" then takes the assumed sound and movement into the "neutral" space and gradually and organically lets it change, without stopping, into a sound and movement of their own. It is important to "let" it change, and not to direct its course. When their creation is fully developed, they will do as the original partner did: establish and maintain eye contact with another group member and take the new sound and movement to them. Then the process repeats itself with the new person. This experience of pairing and authentically communicating is extremely important.

After everyone has had at least one turn, the group may be ready for a variation. This time, they stand in the line or circle, and when they create their sounds and movements, they establish eye contact with not one but two people who are standing next to one another. The three of them continue doing the first student's sound and movement as a trio until the first student feels that they have taken over the offering, at which point they withdraw, as above. The two then continue doing the original sound and movement together as a duet while moving toward the neutral space. When they have reached that point in the exercise at which they would transform their sounds and movements organically into new ones, they do so as a duet, each doing their own variation on the transformation, so that what emerges is a duet, each part of which is based on the original material yet is distinctly different.

The duo then delivers their duet to two other members. Four people are thus involved until the original duo rejoins the line or circle, and this next duo continues. The range of variation is much broader here, because each member of the duet will have their own variation to deliver and can further develop the effects of the exercise by seeking out two people in their turn, thereby creating, for a very short

time, a sextet, which will become a quartet when the duo members return to the line or circle.

This development can be extended until the entire group is involved, with each person doing their own sound and movement and relating to all the others. When this activity reaches a climax, the group is instructed to freeze. Students now call out to each other by name, or sing, or collapse in heaps.

Uses of Sound and Movement Exercise:

- To sharpen the eye and ear
- To lose inhibition and give free rein to impulses that have no basis in diurnal activity
- To join in mutual creation and improvisation
- To force the body and voice into new and unusual shapes and forms

A Walk through the Woods. In this group exercise, all but two or three people take the part of trees in the woods. The "trees" stand planted in one place, in contrast to the people who are walking through the woods. This is a variation on sound and movement taught to us by Lenore Ickstadt (Tanz Tangente, Berlin). The "trees" produce sounds to which the walkers respond with either abstract or realistic movement.

Each walker in these "woods" soon comes into a "tree's" space (or into the imaginary network of roots emanating from the tree's base). The tree will begin to make sounds, perhaps repeating a clucking over and over, then changing to a low moan. As long as a walking student is in a tree's space, the student's movement should somehow reflect the tree's sounds, but the walking student may move out of this space at will and continue until they enter the next tree's space, at which point the same process occurs. If a moving student finds that they have activated more than one tree, they should experiment with responding physically to both of them. More than one walker may find themselves in the same tree's space at the same time. They can decide whether to respond to the tree independently or join together in a duet.

When the walkers want to change to trees, they need only get behind a tree, push the "tree" gently out of place and say "Person!" then take their place. They will then become trees, making sounds when they are activated by a person or persons, and ceasing when the person leaves their space.

"A Walk through the Woods" Falk Berghofer, Asita Djavadi
Photo © Archie Kent

Uses of A Walk through the Woods:

- To free the imagination and put ideas into immediate action
- To free the performer's instrument—the body—and make the performer more responsive to stimuli
- To create an ensemble by providing a structure in which group members can play together
- To expand the performer's vocal and movement vocabulary
- To underscore the importance of nonverbal work in creating relationships, actions, and scenes

The Swedish Circle. This exercise from the Opernschule in Göteborg, Sweden, takes the same form as the Mask Exercise, in which a movement travels sequentially around a circle of students. It is done to music that has a strong, even beat (not faster than mm=72), and each movement has a duration of one beat. One student initiates a movement on the first beat and stays in the position achieved through this movement; the next person imitates that movement on the second beat, and stays so; the next person mirrors it on three; and so on around the circle, one person after another, moving on each subsequent beat.

The tricky part is that after the movement has travelled around the circle (which happens amazingly fast), that brave first student does not repeat it or initiate a new movement; rather, that student now remains in the position they initiated, as the process skips over them.

The person who followed their lead in the first circuit now initiates a new movement, which travels around the circle in turn. This time, the movement ends with the first brave student, and the second sequence skips over its initiator. The person who was number three on the first go-around now starts something new, until the circle has been completed.

Uses of The Swedish Circle:

- To energize the group
- To increase students' alertness and readiness
- To teach students to think on their feet
- To learn to move on the beat and stay in a condition of readiness

THE VOICE: MUSIC

The Endless Melody. This exercise trains the ear to listen with acuity. The group stands in a circle, and someone starts by singing an interval—any interval, either ascending or descending. The next person in the circle immediately picks up the second pitch of the previous pair so that no pause ensues; when the next person has taken on the second of the two pitches, the first person stops singing. The second person then creates a new interval by choosing a new second pitch, and so on around the circle as many times as desired. It is most important for each student to join in the melody as it arrives without undue consideration, i.e., without great "artistic" deliberation. Otherwise, the person already singing will run out of breath, and the melody will end prematurely.

Note: This type of exercise is calming due to the concentration required to fulfill its purely technical demands. The resultant "melody" has no real rhythmic component; it is merely a succession of pitches, with each participant contributing one new pitch in turn.

Collage: "Chaosline" Katrin Schyns, Adrian Becker, Gerald Michel, Siklke Fritsche, Anna Kube
© Thomas Kube

Ear Training (Harmonic Context). The group settles on a pitch. The task is to have the pitch sound continuously by staggering the breath pauses of each singer. This must be intuited or signaled by the singers among themselves. While this pitch is being sung, the pianist plays a series of chords with a fermata on each one and pauses in between. The sung pitch has a different function in each chord, e.g., as the third, root, augmented fifth, suspended fourth, etc. The task, aside from sustaining the pitch, is for the singers to experience the feel of the various functions of this common pitch as its harmonic context changes. The aim is that, in the performance of a song, this experience will then translate into a more "musical" phrasing of the melodic line, one in which the harmonic direction and "meaning" of the phrase will be reflected.

Singing with a Task. In this exercise, students are given a task, such as counting the number of window frames in the room, or rearranging the furniture in a complicated way, etc., while singing (accompanied) a previously selected song. Another example might be to have someone read a newspaper item aloud, the singer's task being to give an accurate report on the content of what was read after the song is finished. If the task is longer than the song, then da capo is in order. The main thing is that the task must be completed.

This exercise seduces the student's concentration away from the "task" of singing, and allows the "act" of singing to simply take place. Obviously, this exercise can only be done with songs that are completely ingrained, that can be counted on to run on automatic pilot. Such bifurcation of the concentration often results in a totally relaxed vocal sound, with a resultant ease and beauty of phrasing. The practice being evoked here is akin to that described in Zen and the Art of Archery, i.e., the greatest result is achieved by freeing the mind from its task rather than increasing concentration on that task.

Uses of Singing with a Task:

- To sing while doing
- To do while singing
- To split concentration
- To broaden concentration and perception

Singing Out. We call this the Ethel Merman Exercise. Students should stand comfortably in a secure stance—feet apart, facing the audience—and imagine a powerful spotlight on them in a large theatrical space. They should sing out (whether chest or head) as if to fill up this theater, and try to reach the last row of the farthest balcony. They should do this not by screaming (which would

harm the voice) but by supporting and projecting. They should not employ the intimate mode ("near space") even if the song they've chosen seems to call for it, but should move freely, with overlarge gestures, in support of their performance.

In the same way that isometrics can develop physical muscles by exaggerating the flexing of specific body parts, this exercise develops the "performance muscle" by concentrating on that mode of brash, frontal, "selling it" singing so often called for on the musical stage. This method should be applied to all sorts of songs, even when it seems inappropriate: as the quiet bodily movement profits from the excessive demands of isometrics, so even the touching ballad profits from its exposure to the hot glare of Mermanism. This is an important exercise despite the fact that all songs in the contemporary musical theater will be mic'd, so this sort of singing is rarely demanded.

Uses of Singing Out:

- To explore and celebrate the "public" act of performance
- To enlarge the voice
- To isolate and encourage the elements of focus and presence in the voice
- To be aware of "far space"

Jamming. Jamming is a musical exercise rooted in jazz. Students should avoid mimicking actual instrumental sounds; instead, they should use their voices as voices, and employ "scat" or abstract vocalizations or deconstruct a word or phrase into its sound components.

This exercise introduces the group to the joys of spontaneously making music together. There will undoubtedly be a significant disparity in the backgrounds and ability of various group members and the degree of comfort they feel in this kind of singing. This kind of work is a great leveler, and truly creative members will open the doors of possibility for neophytes. Most important, it's always fun, so don't approach this as a test of anything. Afterwards, talk about why certain solos were more exciting/interesting than others.

The pianist plays a repeatable eight- or twelve-bar blues structure, and the leader indicates who is to take a solo and for how long. The non-soloing voices can be tacit or can join in an accompaniment or create a riff. All jazz practices can be used: duets; trading eights, fours or twos; parallel improvisations, etc. From time to time the group should also reverse the order and vocally accompany the piano solos. Dynamics, sequence and texture are all indicated by the leader. Jamming

can also be done to a "standard" or, when the class is far enough along, to an original piece that they are hearing for the first time.

Uses of Jamming:

- To be spontaneous and to explore new vocal territory
- To listen and to be influenced by others
- To create accompanying ("comping") textures and phrases with others in the moment
- To experience soloing
- To train the ear

Singing from Different Areas of the Face. Students choose a song; then, without thinking about it, they place their voices in different areas of their face, and sing from them. A student might sing the verse through his left eye, the first half of the chorus through his nose, and the rest of the song through various other facial parts. Of course, no one can really sing through their left eye or ear, but when students concentrate on placing their voices as if they can do so, the results will surprise them.

Uses of Singing from Different Areas of the Face:

- To discover new and different vocal sounds for the same melody, i.e., to sing a song as though the voice were emanating from different sources or apertures
- To learn how important imagery is in vocal production and technique
- To relax facial muscles

Speaking and Singing Simultaneously. This paired exercise quickens the art and sense of listening. One partner speaks—tells an anecdote, gives a speech, whatever—and the other tries to speak the same text as simultaneously as possible. At times the first partner purposely stops before the end of a sentence or phrase, and the other tries to guess what they were going to say, and to finish the thought for them. Students can also do this exercise with musical material, either with improvised songs or songs that one partner knows but the other doesn't; nevertheless, they must also be sensitive to the musical logic and direction of the phrase, as they try to finish the interrupted line.

Uses of Speaking and Singing Simultaneously:

- To be entirely focused on a task while reserving some awareness for the logic and content of what the performer is mirroring, i.e., to follow the logic of the spoken or sung phrase, not just mechanically following the thought or the song
- To discover how to drive someone crazy

MOVEMENT: DANCE

Mirroring. To mirror is to reflect back. In this exercise, it is a movement or dance duet. Two partners stand facing one another. One mirrors (copies) every movement the other makes, at exactly the same time and pace, with the same "reflected" body part, and with the same intensity and emotion. After a while, at a signal from the teacher, the partners switch roles, initiating and copying. The copier is their partner's mirror image, meaning that when one moves their right arm, the other moves their left arm. The initiator is looking into a mirror and seeing their reflection.

Remind the students that if they move at a moderate to slow pace with gradual changes, their partners will be able to mirror them more easily. When moving at a faster pace, and/or with sudden changes, they should use repetition in order to establish a predictable rhythmic movement pattern.

Note: This is another of our basic exercises and has many variations, either alone or as an element in another exercise.

Uses of Mirroring:

- To learn to see movement and repeat it without intellectualizing, thus with out delaying response time
- To learn to empathize by "dancing in another person's shoes"

The Double Mirror. This is a form or technique created by Marian Chace, one of the founders of dance/movement therapy in the United States. It makes possible the development of an ever-changing, always-different, group dance. It is called a Double Mirror because at the same time the leader mirrors a group member, the whole group mirrors the leader.The dance can begin in silence or with music reflective of the group's mood. It can begin from any positioning

of the participants, or in the more formal structure of the circle. Beginning at too high a level of energy can discourage or cause resentment in those whose energy level is at first much lower; and beginning at the very lowest level can be deadening or boring for everyone else.

The leader looks around the circle and chooses to mirror any movement or gesture which emerges in response to the music or which occurs randomly. They choose that movement which is second to the lowest in energy and repeat it several times; the group mirrors them. The leader continues to watch participants for small but significant movement variations, and takes these ideas and gives them to the group. Because each movement is only slightly different from the one before, and is repeated several times, the group dance is experienced as one continuous, flowing outpouring of energy, with dynamics determined by the group's endurance.

What can be mirrored: a movement, a posture, a facial expression, a mood or dynamic—or all of these simultaneously. The leader can also offer ideas that allow for more and different uses of the body in space, e.g., doing a movement with the right and then the left hand, or to the left and then to the right, or moving the circle, or leaving the circle entirely. The exercise can be done non-verbally, or the leader can elect to direct verbally by speaking, clarifying in which direction or with which hand the group is to move. The leader may name the movement's source or encourage singing, elicit individual or group verbal responses by asking what memories are called up by particular gestures, or support the emergence of a group movement/acting improvisation. The group does not mirror the leader's verbal instructions or questions. It often happens that the dance takes on a life of its own and becomes a free group improvisation. Then, the leader's task is to find an opportunity and a way to bring the exercise to a close or to segue into the next exercise.

Note: When dancing in the circle, all move on the same side and in the same direction.

"The Double Mirror" in groups of three: Marc Basiner, Eva Thänchen, Markus Düllmann, Asita Djavadi. Photo © Archie Kent

EMBLEMS

Self-Portrait. Using pencils, crayons, cray-pas, magic markers or paint, students draw self-portraits as they experience themselves, either realistically or expressionistically. If their portraits are realistic, they draw their whole bodies. When everyone has finished this task, the students form a circle and take turns showing and describing their drawings in minute detail; each student explains what the depicted elements mean to them. The group can ask questions about the portrait but must avoid making judgments or analyses. One person acts as a scribe by writing down what each member says about their portrait. This is then read back to the "artist," and from this full protocol, the artist picks out the one sentence or thought that best expresses their gestalt of the experience.

Creating an Emblem. In subsequent sessions, each student (with the help of the pianist) sets their kernel-sentence or thought to music. They create a musical phrase for these words—a phrase, complete with harmonies and accompaniment, that can be repeated over and over, i.e., looped. To this sung phrase, a dance phrase is then choreographed by the student. The phrase should be one that can

be repeated over and over in a travelling pattern. This sung and danced phrase is called the student's "emblem."

Each student teaches their emblem to the entire class. The class then performs the emblem, coming singly across the floor on the diagonal, singing and dancing, accompanied by the pianist. The student teacher observes this performance and makes corrections as needed both in their own choreography and in the proper performance of their material.

Variations on Emblems, and Their Uses.
1. Students create five dance variations on the emblem theme. They vary direction, tempo, level, body part or dynamics, and make a turning or jumping variation or use effort factors or shaping (see Laban Effort/Shape, below).

2. The group performs an improvisation based on what happened the day that they auditioned for acceptance into the program: meeting one another in the dressing rooms for the first time and waiting to be called in to perform. The pianist plays a continuous free improvisation, but somewhere along the way, buried in this musical improvisation, the music of each student's emblem is played, each one at least twice in a row in order to ensure that the students hear their cues. When the student hears it, they perform their emblem several times with accompaniment, using the original emblem and as many of its variations (see above) as they choose. The effect is that of a private, unrealistic moment (or "inside"—see #10 in Performance Exercises). The other students do not enter into or acknowledge it but continue in the conventional outside world. After performing the emblem, the student returns to the outside world and rejoins the class as the pianist goes on with the free musical improvisation.

3. After all the students have serially entered into their emblematic moments, the group is called in to the audition. Each student states their name and performs their emblem as if it were a real audition piece, moving on the diagonal. At the end of this variation, it's fun to tell them that they have all been accepted into the program—which, of course, is true.

4. The group performs an improvisation consisting of all the emblems and variations simultaneously, in relation to one another. Physical contact and dancing with one another are encouraged.

Uses of Emblems:

- To make overt each student's body image and experience of self to the group, to the teachers, and to the student her/himself
- To arrive at a better understanding and appreciation of one another
- To continue creating the ensemble
- To learn—by doing— how one writes, composes and choreographs a meaningful musical moment
- To be able to analyze the moment (and, by extension, other moments) so that it can be taught and/or learned
- To be able to see and hear accurately in order to mirror what is given, and helps others to do so
- To give and take constructive criticism
- To create a form in which to express oneself and to give and get support for being just who one is

Authentic Movement. Another paired exercise; the term "authentic movement" was coined and the technique originated by Mary Whitehouse, an American dance/movement therapist who worked in California. In authentic movement, there is the witness and there is the mover. The witness sees and the mover is seen. The mover moves and the witness is moved. The mover's movement is authentic when it is simple, inevitable and unlearned, when it rises from an inner impulse and is the genuine expression of the thoughts, images, emotions and body sensations of that person.

The group is divided into pairs of movers and witnesses. All of the movers move simultaneously for about twenty minutes, each mover working blindfolded or with eyes closed while being witnessed by their partner. Movers do not plan or choreograph their movements or think of the exercise as dancing. It is the spontaneous expression of their state of being. They may find themselves working alone or in some way acknowledging those who are moving with them by making bodily contact with them. At the end of the twenty minutes, the teacher asks them to bring this part of the exercise to an end, and the pairs will spend about ten minutes talking about the experience; movers speak first. After witnesses speak, the pair switches roles.

Note: It is important for both mover and witness to be accepting and non-judgmental in their attitudes toward self and other, and to avoid judgmental comments such as "should" "good" or "bad." If the witness feels compelled to offer an interpretation or to relate a subjective response as though it were an

objective "truth," they might first ask the mover whether the mover wants to hear it, or couch the telling of it in the form of a question.

Uses of Authentic Movement:
For movers:

- To be free from the need to please another
- To relax and give in to impulses without censoring them
- To discover a friendly audience who will accept you no matter what, and to learn that you don't have to fear it

For witnesses:

- To be able to see and be moved by another
- To learn to be objective without being critical, and/or to be subjective and responsible for your own reactions
- To be able to focus on one's partner and remember what you have seen

Variation on Authentic Movement: All move simultaneously with eyes open.

Slow Motion and Break-Out. This warm-up exercise begins with everyone dancing a solo, moving simultaneously in slow motion. To dance continuously only in slow motion involves denying the normal ebb and flow of energy that occurs when dancers breathe. Moving in slow motion for an extended period of time is like holding one's breath: it may be quieting at first, but it gets uncomfortable after a while.

Students doing this exercise improvise in slow motion, eyes open, in silence, until they feel the need to discharge the energy that has been building up inside of them. They should let it break out, and move freely until they feel they are ready to return to their controlled, slow-motion dance. They can also expel their energy vocally in the break-out. They should repeat the process, moving in slow motion and breaking out in their own time.
When their teacher directs them to do so, the students find partners and make physical contact. They continue the exercise, each always keeping some body part in contact with the other while moving in slow motion. For example, if one touches a partner's shoulder, the toucher may continue by placing a cheek against the partner's back and then turning to connect back-to-back, etc., all very slowly.

Students should break out and away from their partners when they must, and then return—here again, this will be in their own time. Students should continue their duets until their teacher tells them to bring the exercise to a close.

Note: Students should be reminded to travel in space while maintaining body contact with their partners. (Incidentally, we have discovered that for some people, moving in slow motion is very pleasurable, so they have no need to break out!)

Uses of Slow Motion and Breakout:

- To have the luxury of discovering one's own body in space by moving slowly
- To discover the importance of breath as the basis of phrasing and dynamics
- To feel the give and take of weight when moving slowly with intention
- To have the time and feeling of safety to perform a relationship that may become sexual
- To play an intimate love scene

EXERCISES FROM OTHER SOURCES

Alexander Technique. Matthias Alexander was an actor who discovered a technique for keeping himself and then others from losing their voices as the result of improper body placement and stress.

In addition to teaching the relationship between the Constructive Rest Position and Alexander's guidelines for allowing correct alignment, we also use an exercise from Deborah Caplan's book *Back Trouble*. The exercise consists of a series of movements, as follows:

- From standing, go into a first position deep plié (knee bend), back straight, tilted forward, fingertips on the floor in front of you.
- Move forward onto all fours, still with a straight back (on hands and knees).
- Crawl forward six steps (on knees) and backward six steps (on knees).
- Go into Child's Pose (kneeling, sitting back toward heels, foreheads to the floor, arms straightening, knees and hands remaining on the floor where they were after the last crawl). Take five deep breaths, filling your lower back.
- Roll onto your back, knees remaining at your chest. Put your hands on your knees and guide them in small circles, five times away from each other and five times towards each other.
- Go into the CRP (see #1 in Relaxation Exercises) and remain there for five to ten minutes.
- Roll on to all fours (on to hands and knees).
- Sit back into Child's Pose.
- Separate knees, curl toes under and use hands to push against the floor and return to a deep plié in first position (deep knee bend).
- Rise to standing and walk around the room.

After learning the sequence, hum and sing long chest and head tones, and vocalize while moving through the exercise.

Feldenkreis Technique. Moshe Feldenkreis was an Israeli physician whose gentle exercises have helped many accident victims, as well as performers, retrain the brain circuitry responsible for their movement patterns and the habitual use of their muscles. Descriptions of these exercises can be found in his book, *Awareness through Movement*.

We have used one of his breathing exercises and added our own variation to make our singers aware of the resonance chambers of the head and chest, and to help them learn to place their voices so that they activate these chambers and produce rich tones. In the Feldenkreis exercise, the student is instructed to seesaw one inhaled breath from belly to chest and back to belly, twice, before exhaling. This is repeated four or five times. The student is then instructed to use the same sequence and to seesaw their inhaled breath diagonally, from left hip to right shoulder and from right hip to left shoulder, four or five times. By isolating the belly and the chest and controlling the flow of the breath between them, the student learns to support from the diaphragm, to inhale fully and to sustain a tone, and is better able to differentiate between chest and head when placing the voice.

Bioenergetics. Alexander Lowen, an American psychiatrist, is the creator of this form of psychotherapy, which uses as part of its approach direct work on the body through exercises he describes in his book, *Bioenergetics*.

We have used just one exercise, Grounding, to free the flow of energy in the body, thereby releasing tensions and energizing the performer. Letting energy flow down through the belly and pelvis, through the legs and into the floor, is particularly important for singers. The grounder stands in a turned-in plié, toes aligned under the armpits, and assumes the position of a bow, arching from the center of the feet to the shoulders, shoulders aligned over the heels. The chin is down, eyes open and the gaze directed forward at eye level. The jaw is relaxed and the mouth dropped open for fuller respiration. Hands are balled into fists and pressed against the lower back to widen and open the chest for fuller breathing. The person breathes deeply, filling the body with air, and exhales, sensing the increasing excitement surging through their body and consciously directing it down toward the floor. When the energy is flowing, the whole body vibrates by itself, like a finely tuned engine. The student does nothing but allow it to happen.

The positive feelings and focused vitality engendered by this exercise make it useful for converting pre performance jitters into positive energy.

Polish Lab Theater (Grotowski): The Cat. The Cat is both an exercise on its own and the first of a series called The Cat, brought to the Open Theater by the Polish theater director Jerzy Grotowski. The series consists of The Cat; the Shoulder Stand; the High Tower; the Candle; the Low Tower; the Head Stand; the Slow Motion Walk in Space, with somersaults forward and back; and the Full-Body Tense-Up and Release.

The exercise taps into the performer's more aggressive impulses and animal instincts. It is a full-body warmup, requiring strength, stamina, balance, agility and courage. If these are in short supply, work on the exercise can help develop them.

Note: A description of this series can be found in *A Book on the Open Theater* by Robert Pasolli.

The Open Theater. We first learned the Shake-Out, along with several other exercises mentioned in this book, through our work in the Open Theater and The Winter Project with Joseph Chaiken, Lee Worley and Jacques Levy.

The Shake-Out is a paired exercise that takes from an hour to an hour and a half for both participants to complete. One partner lies back, flat and inert, on the floor, eyes closed, arms at sides, letting the other student do all the work, letting their own body be heavy. The standing partner should be positioned so that they can pick up the right hand of the student on the floor with their own right hand and, holding it perpendicular to their right shoulder, shake out the right arm, freeing the shoulder joint. Using both hands as needed to free the elbow and wrist joints and all of the smaller finger joints of the student lying down, the standing student should massage and shake out one arm and then the other.

Next, the standing student should move to the head and neck, massaging the neck muscles, then take the full weight of the head in their hands and move it slowly forward and back, side to side and in a circle, then gently return it to the floor. Then, working from the feet up, the standing partner should massage and shake out the partner's lower limbs, working on muscles and joints, then on the torso, including twisting at the waist.
Once the front of the body has been completely shaken out, the standing partner should turn the other over and work on their back from head to toe. To complete the shake out, they should use the flats of both hands and tap lightly

but vigorously over the length of the body. The partner on the floor should rest for a few moments before the two trade places.

Note: Once one partner has begun working on the other, they should maintain physical contact until the exercise is completed, even if it is only through the touch of a fingertip. Students should feel free to experiment and use their own techniques when doing this exercise. A description of this exercise can be found in the *Open Theater* book.

A Physical Warmup" Falk Berghofer (Exercise 2), Marc Basiner (Exercise 4)
Photo © Archie Kent

A Physical Warmup is a series of gentle stretch exercises for the lower back.

- Lie back flat, knees bent and parallel, soles of the feet on the floor, arms overhead and resting on the floor. Press the small of the back against the floor, lengthening the lower back and contracting the pelvis slightly, so that the stomach hollows out rather than knotting up and protruding. Hold the position for a slow count of five and then release. Repeat twenty times.
- Press the small of the back against the floor and hold it there. Swing the right knee up toward the chest. Let it turn out slightly into a relaxed attitude position. Feel the looseness in the hip socket as the leg swings up and then returns to its original bent knee, foot on the floor position. Push off through

the foot, toes pointed in attitude and return through the foot as it flattens onto the floor, as if jumping. Repeat twenty times with each leg. Bring both knees up to the chest and hug them. Relax head, neck, and shoulders. Feel the length of the spine and the width of the torso against the floor. Hold the position for a slow count of five then release. Repeat ten times, inhaling on the release and exhaling on the hug.

- Hug right knee to chest with both arms. Hold it there, as high up and tight as possible. Développé the left leg and lower it, extended, to the floor. Depending upon the stretch in the psoas muscle, the leg will either lower to the floor easily, or the student will be aware of a tightness at the top of the leg that will prevent it from doing so. Do not bend the left knee so that only the left heel touches the floor. Do not relax and loosen the grip on the bent right knee. Do let gravity stretch the psoas muscle so that the whole left leg remains extended and slowly lowers to the floor by itself. The student will be aware of the stretch between the stationary and extending legs. Then, grasp the right ankle with both hands and raise the lower part of the right leg so that the right ankle is above the right knee. Flex the foot and increase the bend in the knee and, keeping the knee where it is, point the toes and straighten them as much as possible. Repeat (flex and bend, point and straighten) for a total of twenty times, increasing the stretch each time. After completing the last point and straighten, stretch the right leg out, extend, and lower it to the floor. Bring both knees up to chest again, hug left knee and repeat the exercise on the left side.
- Bring both knees to chest. Extend arms out to sides at shoulder level, palms down on the floor. Keeping both knees together, let them fall slowly to the right until the right thigh rests on the floor. Keep both shoulders on the floor. Feel the twist at the waist and a stretch between the left shoulder and left knee. Return knees to chest and repeat to the left. Repeat the exercise to both sides.
- Lie down with back flat, soles of feet on the floor, hands behind head, elbows bent and out to each side, chin slightly up. Gaze at the ceiling. Press the small of the back against the floor and lift the upper body about three to four inches off the floor; hold it there for a slow two counts. Release the back and lower the upper body down toward the floor but not all the way down. Repeat thirty times.
- From the above starting position, rapidly alternate touching left knee and right elbow, then right knee and left elbow. Repeat twenty times without relaxing abdominal tension. Return to starting position. Press the small of the back against the floor and bring right elbow to meet left knee. Release the back and let the upper body and left foot return to the floor. Repeat on the

other side, left elbow and right knee meeting. Alternate for a total of twenty times.

- Balance on tailbone, torso tipped back, arms in second position, knees bent, toes pointed and touching the floor. Bring knees to chest. Développé and bend them twenty times.
- After touching toes to the floor for the twentieth time, let body weight fall forward and open legs to second position. Bend forward, reaching the chest toward the floor. Let gravity bring the chest as close to the floor as possible. Do not bounce, but let gravity do its work to improve the stretch. Reach toward left foot, chest to knee, and return to center; then, stretch over right leg and return to center. All students do any stretches that work for them, and do them slowly, talking to their muscles, telling them to melt and let go. Bend right knee, bringing heel in toward crotch. Lean forward to increase the break in the right hip joint; let the bent knee turn out and fall to the floor. Next, lean back on hands to flatten the crease at the hip joint. Repeat on the left side.
- From a seated fourth position, with the right knee forward, let the outside of right foot and leg rest on the floor. Lean forward, back straight, elbows bent, hands on the floor on either side of right knee, weight on right buttock. Keeping the weight off the left heel on the floor, extend the left leg back into an arabesque. Keeping the left hip forward, alternate relaxing and straightening the left knee twenty times. Change sides and repeat.
- From standing, go into a very low lunge position, right leg in front, left behind, weight divided among the sole of the right foot (right knee bent), the top or bunion area of the left foot (left leg extended, knee straight, foot extended, rather than flexed), and the two hands, which are placed on the floor in line with hips, on both sides of right foot. Keeping the pelvis forward, deepen the lunge by lifting the right heel very slightly, then lowering it. Repeat twenty times, then change sides and repeat.

Collage: "6M3F"
Photo Archie Kent

MUSICAL THEATER GAMES AND EXERCISES

Finding the Song (1). The task here is to discover when and how music plays a role in plot. We give pairs of students a context within which to improvise, seeking the moment when a song would be appropriate or inevitable. This might be at that place in the improvisation when feelings become so intense that they can be expressed only through music. Or conversely, they might employ the Brechtian mode: step out of character and sing directly to the audience, commenting on what is going on dramatically.

An example: two lovers who have shared an apartment for about a year have different views of how the relationship should continue. Over dinner one evening, one raises the idea of marriage; the other responds negatively, wanting the relationship to remain as it is. The pair of students improvise further in the scene, all the while sniffing for the moment of song. When they think they have found it, they simply start singing; the pianist enters into their musical improvisation, and together the three make a song, not worrying too much about such niceties as rhyme. The partners may join in a duet, or one might wait until the other's song is finished before responding, either in their own improvised song or in dialogue.

Uses of Finding the Song (1):

- To understand how a song functions in a scene
- To be on the *qui vive* for the musical moment
- To use music in the dramatic flow, going seamlessly from speech to song
- To learn to respect--or to violate--the fourth wall while singing

Finding the Song (2). This is one of those exercises that sounds more complicated than it is. It is also very instructive in its "failures" because it clearly shows the problems in scene construction and song placement. The amount of energy required to propel these scenes will immediately become evident: they won't work without being driven. Students should avoid falling into opera parody, a real danger here.

In this paired improvisation, one partner, then the other, is whirled around by a third party, and let go. As a result of this toss, the pair finds themselves in surprising, unprepared physical positions, where they "freeze" (as in the game of "Statues"). Based purely on their immediate response to this position, they make certain assumptions about who they are, where they are, and what they're doing. The first one to speak begins defining the place, the activity, and the relationship between the two partners. The one who does not speak first must go along with the articulated definitions and assumptions, immediately changing/modifying their own impulses in order to agree with those of the first speaker.

For example, as a result of landing in a crouch from being spun and let go, one may decide to be a hunter, tracking a bear. The partner, however, having landed supine on the floor, has decided that they are doing repair work in a garage, lying under a truck. If the latter speaks first and says, "Hey, buddy—hand me that quarter-inch wrench, willya?" the other may not respond with, "Quiet! You'll scare the bear away. Anyway, there's no wrench here in the forest." Rather, the bear-hunter must immediately alter their assumptions, forget about the forest, and respond, "Hold your horses! I'm looking for it, I left it right here on the floor." Building on one another's responses, the scene will gradually evolve, and any tensions inherent in the situation will develop and grow. At this point, the exercise's real search begins: finding the song(s) in the scene. The pair does this by seeking, probing, and testing the dramatic bones of the scene in order to locate the moment when song must out, perhaps leading to the climax, or prolonging the high point, or as commentary after the resolution or denouement. Whichever of these possibilities emerges, it will be done as follows: one partner starts singing an improvisation, not an existent song; the pianist follows that lead as together

the pair creates and develops their song. This improvisation can consist of solos and/or duets. The pair must decide whether or not the song closes the scene.

Uses of Finding the Song (2):

- To let one's body suggest character and activity in an improvisation
- To accept another's "givens"
- To appreciate the placement and function of song in a scene
- To sing out of an impulse, without consideration of "artistic" dimensions of the song
- To serve two masters simultaneously: the dramaturgical and the musical

Variations

- Before they begin, each partner chooses a published song, then uses it in the improvisation as their sung material. The exercise is performed as above but without piano accompaniment.
- Another variation involves three improvisers. When one begins to sing a familiar song, the other two join in, the group singing a trio, improvising their own arrangement, either a capella or accompanied by a pianist or other musician.

The Scene as Duet. This paired exercise explores singing as a way of imparting information and/or an attitude to another actor or directly to the audience.

Each partner independently chooses a song. The teacher assigns a setting—a bar, a laundromat, an operating room—and the pair decides who will sing first, making as few a priori decisions concerning character/action/motive as possible. Each partner then sings their song all the way through, with accompaniment, directly to the other. Each concentrates intently on the song lyric as information, allowing the scenic and dramatic details to emerge from the song, rather than vice versa. Each tries to make the lyric content as cogent as possible in this situation, no matter how farfetched that may be. After each partner has responded to the other, the accompaniment stops, and the two continue with the improvised scene, limiting all dialogue to a capella sung fragments of each one's respective song. This activity leads to a new appreciation of the duet as theater as well as touching on phrasing off one another, singing different material simultaneously, and making a cadence or ending. Sometimes the best approach to a song in this exercise is to treat it as an "inside" (see "Inside/Outside," below).

For instance, this exercise might be set inside an airplane. Two students, male and female, take part. The man might decide to be a passenger having a panic reaction

to a patch of bad weather. He sings "Take Him Home" from *Les Miserables*. The woman assumes the role of flight attendant and tries to bring him out of his terror with "Big Spender" from Sweet Charity. As indicated above, neither participant knew what the content of the scene would be when they chose their song.

Uses of The Scene as Duet:

- To gain new respect for the dramatic content and potential of song lyrics
- To explore the dramatic dimensions of a song and discover new possibilities in old material
- To concentrate on exploring and improvising while singing

Songs in Unexpected Contexts. The student chooses a song to sing, gives the music to the accompanist, and begins to sing the song with piano accompaniment. Another student, who volunteers at the same time the first one does, enters the performing space and creates a scene by improvising in words and actions the "where" the two both inhabit and what the latecomer wants of the other. The first student continues singing, but within the context of the scene—i.e., as a singing actor. When the teacher/director has judged that the relationship between the two has been established, s/he may send in more actors to create or intensify a conflict. S/he will assign to the entering actors a character and a motivation while the first student continues singing, repeating the song as needed until there is a resolution or lessening of the conflict.

An example of this exercise: a woman sings "I Dreamed a Dream" from *Les Miserables*. Another woman enters and lies down on the floor, coughing, nauseated, and calling for a nurse. The singer continues singing, and begins administering to the patient on the floor. The director sends in one student, saying that this is a teaching hospital and that the student is a doctor, on rounds. The director tells three other students that they are residents doing rounds with the doctor, who is training them. They are all distant, matter of fact, and intrusive in their treatment of the patient. The singer becomes incensed by their treatment of the sick person and sings with much feeling, indicating her anger. The doctor wants to send the patient for some tests. The singer/nurse, through the medium of her song, protests. Even though the patient is very ill, the residents forcibly remove the nurse, whose song ends. The doctor talks to the patient, who asks that the nurse be allowed to accompany her for the tests. The doctor agrees, the nurse returns and the scene ends.

Uses of Songs in Unexpected Contexts:

- To act immediately in response to new information
- To discover new possibilities in well-known material
- To use a song in "actorly" fashion

Transposed Heads. In this very simple yet surprisingly powerful exercise, partners sit facing each other about five to six feet apart. The active partner has chosen a song and will describe, in great detail, someone who has had a profound effect on their life. Speaking out loud, and keeping concentrated eye contact with their partner, the active partner proceeds to describe and simultaneously place or transpose the "remembered" figure onto the body and face of the passive partner.

The active partner must use the second person form of address ("you") rather than the third person ("he" or "she"). For example: "You have red, shoulder length hair" (even though the actual person they're facing has short blonde hair and may even be of the opposite sex of the "remembered" figure). The speaker continues in this vein until the "remembered" figure has been recreated as completely as possible. At this point the teacher/director can ask further questions, such as "How do this person's hands feel in yours?" or "Can you smell him/her?" or "Has this person ever kissed/held/hit you?" etc., all with the object of intensifying the memory and presence of the remembered one for the rememberer. The passive partner remains just that, a blank canvas upon which the remembered one is recreated. In no way should the passive partner react or enter into the process; they are simply there, maintaining eye contact with the active partner throughout.

As preparation for the next step (singing the song), the teacher asks the active partner for more detail, such as, "Is there something you have never told this person, that you would like to tell them now?" When this next step in the process is deemed complete, the pianist plays a simple preparatory chord and the describer now sings the chosen song to the remembered one, accompanied minimally and *colla voce* by the pianist. The student should not attempt to perform the song, nor should the pianist play a full fledged accompaniment: bare bones, non rhythmic "chordal comping" is in order. Very often emotional surges of enormous and startling intensity accompany this song, so that the singer may even temporarily lose their voice or forget the text, but it's very important to continue to the end of the song in any way possible, and not give up. The singer is also free to leave their seat and move to and/or touch the partner, or simply to move freely in the

room. Most often tears result from this exercise, although rage and joy are also sometimes present.

After the song, it's prudent for the teacher/director to ask the singer "Do you need anything from your partner?" Mostly, prolonged hugging and stroking are called for; it's also good to have a sufficient supply of Kleenex on hand. This exercise can be so powerful that often the entire class is moved to tears just by watching.

Uses of Transposed Heads:

- As an introduction to sense memory work
- To sing directly to someone, with intense emotional involvement
- To manifest strong emotions in public, and survive
- To sing a love song and invest the act of singing with a personal, meaningful dimension
- For the passive partner, simply to be fully present for someone else without making any demands

Sound and Movement from Personal Anecdote. A student chooses a memory—a recent, meaningful one—and tells it to the group in a narrative style, not particularly dramatically. The student chooses how much or how little of the memory to tell. At the moment when the teller feels a special emotion being awakened by this telling, they leave the narrative mode and give full expression to this emotion by wordlessly letting it out in the form of an abstract Sound and Movement (see #2 in Energizing), a phrase the student repeats at least five times. This may occur at the end and/or in the middle of the anecdote. This phrase is in no way an illustration of the situation being told but, rather, reflects the teller's present emotional state while sharing the memory. The teller must not edit or curtail this outburst; it lasts as long as it lasts. The teller should not then verbally describe their feelings; the Sound and Movement has said it all. After it is completed, the teller decides whether to continue the tale.

Note: We like to do this exercise soon after the Christmas/New Year break and limit the anecdote to the holiday observance just completed.

Variation: Have the group join in and mirror the sound and movement when it occurs. This reinforces and enlarges the expression for the narrator and makes for a somewhat ritualistic exercise, fuzzing the line between teller and listener.

Although singing is not a part of this exercise, it is instructive to have the narrator sing immediately afterwards, to use productively that which has been activated.

Uses of Sound and Movement from Personal Anecdote:

- To explore alternating between a narrative, undramatic mode and an abstract, expressionistic one
- To open up and express extreme emotional states as they well up in the moment

Masks. This exercise from the ritualistic, nonliteral theater of the Sixties was an Open Theater staple. We use the following two variations as a warm up for the original (described below).

The group stands in a circle, and the first student starts by making a face, contorting the facial muscles into an extremely exaggerated and uncomfortable mask. Everyone in the circle mirrors this mask. Then the second person makes their mask and everyone minors that. This is repeated, going around the circle, till everyone has had a tum. Between masks, everyone relaxes the facial muscles, returning to an everyday face and massaging the face as needed. In the next variation, the first person makes a mask and shows it to the second person, who mirrors it and as the first person gives up their mask and returns to an everyday face, the second person changes the mask to their own and passes it on to the third person, and so forth around the circle. The original exercise, built on a series of five count phrases, follows. It has its own variations, and the entire exercise with variations builds in intensity and range.

On a slow count of five, conducted by the leader, students let their facial muscles become lax. They give up their everyday masks and arrive at zero, a non-affective, non-indicative face. In the short pause that follows, they let a sentence pop into their heads: "What a beautiful day!" "I'm so hungry" "Goddamn cab driver!" "I can't think of anything!" etc. On the next count of five, they keep saying this sentence to themselves and let the sentence, with whatever emotions prompted it and whatever emotions are stirred up by it, feed the creating and sustaining of a mask that expresses this state or condition. The teacher should remind them that their masks are contorted, exaggerated, extreme expressions of their feelings. On the next count of five, students takes turns showing their masks around the circle while continuing to repeat their sentences to themselves. On the last count of five, they let their masks go and return to their everyday faces. They shouldn't rush through any transition but fill the time with the task, taking all available counts

to effect these changes, from every day to zero, from zero to mask, showing the mask around the circle, and from mask to everyday.

Variation 1: When the mask is full, the students might take a further five counts to let the emotion, fed by the sentence, involve their whole bodies—i.e., they become the living statues of their sentences. In the next five counts, they show their statues around the circle and then return to normal, using five counts to release their bodies, then five counts to release their faces.

Variation 2: After making their masks/statues on a count several times, students take turns moving around the circle, facing each person and making eye contact while saying their sentences with their faces in the contorted state, i.e., not relaxing the mouth to deliver the sentence clearly but staying contorted and speaking even if their speech is unintelligible. After each student has completed the circle and returned to their place in it, they say the sentence again in the mask/statue state. Then each uses ten counts to return to the everyday mask and says the sentence again "normally."

Variation 3: The final variation involves moving the masks/statues in space, then all saying their sentences to one another, as they all move about, interacting in pairs or small groups. At the end of this variation, they should use ten counts to return to normal, then say the sentence as a line of dialogue—i.e., conversationally. This can lead, in turn, to an acting improvisation based on the interaction created by the use of these lines as dialogue.

Another possibility: the group divides in two. One half is assigned the line "Stay with me," and the other half is assigned "Go away from me." The groups might develop these lines as a mask exercise involving faces and bodies moving freely in space. As the groups interact with one another, conflict builds. The lines and the resulting conflict will increase in intensity due to the multiple casting and the sense of "team" that emerges in each group.

Uses of Mask Exercises:

- To enliven the face and increase facial expression
- As preparation for working within termporal limits dictated by music and song
- To learn to think quickly and respond immediately
- To learn to work larger than life—i.e., for the stage
- To learn to work organically through the body and follow its impulses without censoring or consideration
- As an introduction to Singing with New Information (see below)
- As an introduction to Inside/Outside (see below)—i.e., new awareness of the different faces we all wear in the world, which may reveal or conceal our inner thoughts and feelings and their intensity, even from ourselves

The Substitution Game. The class is divided into two groups, each with its own coach/director. A situation is created for an improvisation between two actors. This situation should be fairly open and neutral, i.e. two people sharing a train compartment. The character assignments should also be general, not too specific—i.e., one is young, the other middle-aged. Each group deals with one of the characters. The groups meet independently of one another in order to discuss such elements as history, social class, destination, etc. of their characters, without sharing this information with the other group.

The improvisation starts with one representative from each group participating. As the improvisation develops, the coach/director sends in new people to replace each team's actors. These new players must pick up the scene exactly at the point to which it has developed; they must not radically change the "givens" or intentions of the characters. Of course, as new actors are introduced, the scene will constantly change its direction in subtle and fascinating ways. The substitution may take place in midsentence or when the scene is lagging or, conversely, at the high point of a confrontation.

The nonperforming members of the groups must be as involved in the work as the acting members as they may be called on at any moment to participate. When they jump in, they must be at precisely the same place in the scene as the "actor"; in the same physical position, with the same energy level, and they must follow the logic, dramaturgy and flow of the scene up till that moment. Afterwards, in the general discussion, students can say whether they felt that their replacement violated or supported their intention and ways in which the scene developed that

delighted or disappointed them. The substitutes go in independently of each other, so that an actor from Group A may continue playing with a new actor (substitute) from Group B.

It is possible, at the end of this improvisation, to send in both "teams" in their entirety and have each group, acting as an ensemble, engender a multiple representation of their character. This results in all the members of Group A (each one playing their own facet of the character) confronting a likewise multifaceted portrayal of the other character. This works best at the height of the tension in the improvisation.

An example of this exercise that worked particularly well involved Group A playing a young, asocial skinhead forced to share a train compartment with Group B's middle-aged liberal returning from a visit to the Dachau concentration camp memorial. The many levels of interaction made possible by this multiple casting led to astonishing resolutions of the dramatic conflict, as each character gained strength through numbers while at the same time each team member retained their own unique viewpoint.

Uses of The Substitution Game

- To work with finely honed attention
- To gain insight into group dynamics
- To take responsibility for one's own work and to respect the work of others
- To explore the infinite possibilities inherent in any character

Mirroring Emotions. This group mirroring exercise focuses more on emotion than (as other mirroring exercises generally do) on individual actors. Movement, dialogue, and contexts can also be mirrored, but they are not necessary. Before beginning, the leader (teacher or student) makes a list of emotions to which they will refer during the exercise, so that they will not repeat an emotion or be at a loss to think of one during the exercise. This would cause a break in the flow of the improvisation. The list might include love, desire, sadness, anger, fear, hate, envy, and joy—and these could be in any order.

The leader should begin by calling up the first emotion in their body. They may experience love, for instance, as a swelling of the heart that spreads up into the throat, making them want to cry, but also causing them to smile. The leader should send this emotion strongly and directly, with intensity and clarity, to someone in the group, letting words and movements express the feeling present in their body.

The leader's partner will mirror the emotion, responding with words and deeds and a mini scene will develop.

This will also occur in the larger group, as each student mirrors the emotion of love and interacts simultaneously with the object(s) of their affection. To create a scene, the emotion has to have an object and be put in a context (who is involved, where is it happening and what is happening?) and have an action or intention. What do the characters want? For example, in "love," one partner might want to hold the other.

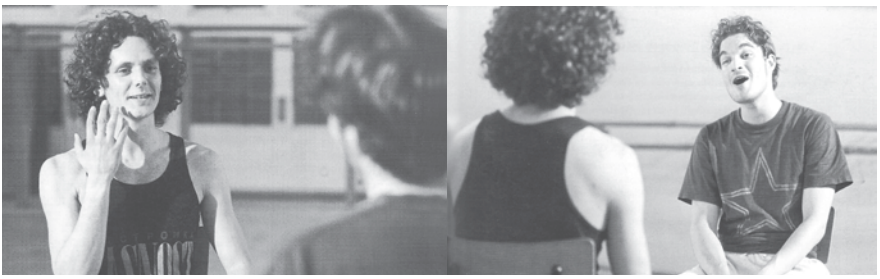
As the scene develops, the leader should keep in mind the next emotion on the list, and let that inform the choices they make. If the next emotion is desire, the leader may want love to lead to lovemaking with the same partner. If the next emotion is sadness, they may have to part from their beloved but want to stay with them, etc. Once the emotional list is complete, the leader finds a way to bring the entire exercise to a resolution.

Note: The leader should keep the list of emotions at hand and refer to it as needed. Group members have to work with divided attention, improvising while always aware of the leader's emotions and their changes as they occur. (The Open Theater called this a Conductor Exercise.)

Uses of Mirroring Emotions

- To increase the choice of emotions and broaden the range of acting possibilities for new actors
- To create an ensemble, i.e., a group of performers familiar with and sensitive to one another
- To work with divided attention, a necessity on the musical stage
- To work with heightened awareness of self, partner, dramaturgy, and conductor
- To experience dramatic "beats" in a scene

Personal Anecdote into Song: With a Partner. This exercise deals with individual focus and direct intimate contact. Participants choose a song and a partner; each partner also chooses a song. Both give their music to the pianist and set up two chairs facing one another, about six feet apart, and the pair sits down.



"Personal Anecdote in Song: With a Partner" Falk Berghofer, Karim Khawatmi
Photo © Archie Kent

The teacher/director assigns each participant a chronological age less than their true age, and each participant attempts to recall a meaningful incident from that time in their lives. The partners tell this incident to each other, the pair maintaining concentrated eye contact throughout this exchange and allow full play to any feelings that may arise, but they stay seated and apart. After the story is completed, they sing their songs in the same concentrated, intimate mode in which they each told their stories, and out of the same emotional condition in which they ended. The partners sing directly to each other; they do not perform for the group. They take turns singing to each other with the feelings each has evoked in the other with their memories and songs. They are free to move out of their chairs and approach each other, or to wander about the room, to touch one another or to withdraw into a closed-off corner, to serve whatever need they perceive, whether their own or their partner's.

Uses of Personal Anecdote into Song: With a Partner

- To sing directly to a partner from an emotional state
- To respect the fourth wall
- To sing familiar material in new and unprepared ways
- To allow oneself the freedom to respond honestly and immediately to a partner's work

Inside/Outside. On the outside, everything is fine; we behave politely and with propriety; life is good, and so are we. On the inside, though, everything is a mess; we scream obscenities and lustfully attack our best friend's spouse; life is rotten and so are we. These are examples of two extremes possible in this Open Theater exercise. The faces that we wear in public and the civilized behaviors we have learned, we call the Outside. When we remove the censor and give vent to the thoughts and feelings that are alive within us, we go into the Inside. Very often,

we are surprised by our own Inside even though it is also possible to discover very tender feelings there, or to experience the same feelings we showed openly, but to an extreme degree. We may not, however, be prepared for what we find ourselves doing.

The following is a version of this exercise, devised by Professor Peter Kock (our acting teacher) in his first-semester acting classes. The group stands in two lines. One actor from each line comes forward and meets their opposite in the middle of the space between them.

The first pair meets and has a normal conversation, talking and/or singing about anything except what they're doing (this exercise). On a signal from the teacher (loud enough to get everyone's attention) both participants go into their own Sound and Movement phrase. They don't think; they don't mirror each other; they just allow what happens to happen. The sound and movement of one member of the pair might be related to the conversation they've just been having or it might be an expression of feelings that have been around for a while.

The partners may focus on each other, or they may find themselves looking away. They may make body contact or move apart from one another. They repeat the Sound and Movement phrase (below) until their teacher signals them to stop; then they return immediately to the moment that they were sharing before time stopped and they went into their Inside(s). They continue their conversation, relating to each other "normally"—i.e., in their Outside(s), as though the sound and movement had never happened. The teacher determines (by signaling) how many times this process will be repeated and tells pairs when to take leave of one another and return to their places in the line. The next pair then does the exercise, and so on down the line.

Uses of Inside/Outside

- To free the actor of inhibitions
- To experience the amount of energy that becomes available when we stop censoring ourselves
- To learn to be in control of losing control
- To become aware of subtexts

Variation: Repeat the exercise as a "Thought and Gesture," using the same form but making the Inside realistic and spoken.

Singing with Intention. After the student gives the music to the accompanist, the teacher gives the student a motive for the song—the singer's goal in singing the song: for example, singing a child to sleep. A volunteer becomes the child and lies down on the floor. The student cradles the volunteer in their arms and nods to the pianist when ready to sing. The assigned task dictates how the student will sing the song.

The student has only the most basic information—i.e., he or she is a parent who wants their child to go to sleep. The student should focus on the task and should not think about emotions; they'll be there. The singer will have feelings for the child, but those feelings are not important here. The student might imagine a reason for wanting the child to go to sleep and let it feed the intention (what the singer wants) and keep the intention active. The role of the child is a supportive one, and the volunteer's task is to help the singer accomplish theirs. (Other tasks could include getting an in-law to leave the premises, to bring a lover closer, or to stir the audience to revolution.)

Note: As in many of our exercises, it is essential that the song be chosen before the task is assigned, thereby forcing the performer to sing their material in new and unexpected ways.

Uses of Singing with Intention

- To discover new ways of singing a song and finding new meanings in lyrics
- To sing with focus and with energy
- To be more realistic as an actor

Using Pillows: Projecting the Voice into Near (Personal) Middle (Group) and Far (Public) Space. The students stand in a circle. Their teacher gives one of them a large pillow, soft enough to be malleable. The student takes their time shaping the pillow, endowing it with the characteristics of a person who is very important to them. They do this by visualizing the person and remembering specific things such as a scent, a smile, a laugh, then letting their feelings for the person flow down through their hands into the pillow. The pillow becomes the object of and receptacle for their feelings and, thus, the essence of that important person who means so much to them. Each student in turn carries their pillow to a student standing opposite them in the circle and gives it to them. Then, before walking backwards to return to their place in the circle, the student says something to the person they have imagined (the pillow) that they have never said to them before. As they start talking, they will be near the person, their words in "near" or personal space—i.e., for them alone. As the returning student gets

farther and farther away, still wanting the person to hear them, they will have to speak louder, in middle space—i.e., loud enough for the group to hear them.

When they have returned to their places, they say something to the person's parents, as though they lived on the twelfth floor of a building in front of which they imagine they are standing. They call up to the parents in "far" or public space, filling the entire room with their voices. The person to whom they have given the pillow repeats the exercise in turn, and so on around the circle.

Note: The pillow should be about the size of a baby even though the person conjured up may be a full-sized adult. A pillow this size has substance and is manageable, and it provides for many associations that can stir up strong feelings.

Uses of Pillows to Project the Voice

- To become aware of the amount of energy necessary to project the voice in a theater, even with body mics
- To experience the ways intimate, friendly group and large audience situations affect voice volume and quality, and spatial focus
- To learn to call up feelings for one person and transfer them at will to another host, animate or inanimate

Who Has the Spotlight? This exercise should be done in a large dance studio. Students divide into two or three groups of three. (If more than nine students are present, they will have to wait for a second go-round.) Each group does the Double Mirror Exercise. On a signal from the teacher, one member of Group A begins to lead the group, dancing to music provided by the accompanist or to a recording, and leads by watching the two other people in the group and taking movement ideas from them as described in Double Mirror. The two mirror the leader, who tries to stay in the group space. On a signal from the teacher, the leadership passes to another in the group. The dance continues as leadership changes from the first to the second and then to the third person in each small group. The same process occurs in Groups B and C.

"Who Has the Spotlight?" Birge Funke, Falk Berghofer, Karin Khawatmi
Photo © Archie Kent

When all three people have led, on a signal from the teacher, everyone turns to face front. The teacher gives the lead position to one person in each group by giving them small pillows. This person leads not by taking movement ideas from the others but by originating them—i.e., will improvise a dance while the other two mirror the dancer. For example, when the teacher gives the pillow to the first leader in Group A, he or she travels downstage while beginning to "dance in the spotlight," in the middle and in front of the other two.

The first leader must really take the spotlight, making the audience look at them by increasing their energy output and moving cleanly, with large, focused movements. The other two dancers in the group can see the one in the spotlight from the back and/or (if in a large dance studio) in the mirror. They back up the featured one and copy the dance but with lower energy and smaller movements as they do not have the spotlight.

The teacher gives "spotlights" (pillows) to one member of each of the other groups, and they also enjoy their solo moments. In all three cases, there is a soloist and two backups, all performing at the same time. The students are encouraged to use the entire studio space for their dance while making sure that each trio maintains its "groupness" no matter where it may travel. The teacher rotates the

leadership and gives the pillows in turn to each of the two dancers in the other groups, giving everyone a chance to be in the spotlight and to be back ups.

Variation on Who Has the Spotlight? It is possible to give pillows to three people in one group or to two people in one group and to one person in another. It is also possible to have one soloist while the other eight vamp as back ups. This can become as confusing as it sounds, but it also can produce interesting situations and solutions. For example, it is possible to prearrange a neutral movement phrase for all backups to vamp when they don't know whom to copy.

Note: This dance does not stop, no matter how many times leadership changes. It ends when the teacher directs the leaders to find an ending.

Uses of Who Has the Spotlight?

- To learn to dance full-out
- To be alert and aware of spatial problems, learning how to keep your spacing in a group dance
- To learn how to support another's performance
- To learn how to keep on going no matter what
- To build endurance
- To be able to watch and immediately copy movement that you see

Throwing. Standing in a circle, the students pass a pillow around. Then they pass the pillow in the other direction. They pass it quickly, they pass it slowly. They pass it according to the teacher's suggestions, which can include "the pillow is warm, it is cold, it is heavy, it is light, it is thorny, it is smooth, it smells of skunk, it is melting chocolate, it is lovable, it is detestable," or it possesses any other qualities of the teacher's choosing. Next, the students throw the pillow to someone across from them, at first simply, then finding new ways to get the pillow to someone else in the circle. They return to simple throwing and add two more pillows, so that three pillows are being simultaneously tossed about.

Then one person goes into the center of the circle. Those in the circle throw the pillows at that person, along with curses and insults. The target person throws the pillows back, also cursing and insulting. When the target has had enough, they name a replacement, and the game continues.

Note: The first part of this exercise can be done with a ball instead of a pillow, but being hit by a thrown ball in the last part might prove painful and is not recommended.

Uses of Throwing

- To practice sense memory
- To lose the fear of being hurt in a physical fight
- To create an ensemble
- To be able to withstand criticism
- To play and have fun

ACTING EXERCISES

Singing with New Information. A student stands before the group and chooses a song to sing. It must be a song out of their repertoire about which they have a definite conception concerning style and performance. As will become clear, it's best to do this exercise a capella as it's too difficult to accompany. When the student has decided on the song, they try to arrive at a relaxed, "neutral" state.

When the student indicates they have achieved this state, one of the other students approaches and whispers a message—a bit of news—into the ear of the performer. This news should be emotionally charged, not bland. Some examples that have proven effective are "War has broken out—tanks are in the streets" "You're not pregnant" "Mother died" "You got the part" etc. Whatever the news is, it should be short and to the point.

"Singing with New Information" Michael Chadim, Mischa Mang
Photo © Archie Kent

The performer must react immediately to this information without due consideration, an immediate "gut" reaction, which they then allow into their body and face. Then, they intensify this physical reaction, all the while repeating the news to themselves (or, alternatively, having the "messenger" stay behind them and whisper the news continuously throughout the rest of the exercise) until a greatly exaggerated, often contorted body and face mask results, reflecting the emotional state caused by this news (see Masks, Chapter III).

The "news" must be specific and fashioned so that the performer can "use" it. ("You're not pregnant" won't bring too much to a male performer, but "She's not pregnant" might reap results.) When this highly charged, intense state has been achieved, the performer then sings the song while keeping the mask, which results in a radically different performance, totally unexpected and unprepared, in which the beauty of the voice plays no part. The student must maintain the facial mask while singing, even though this will probably hamper the correct articulation of the text.

In the course of this exercise, for instance, "I'm Not at All in Love," from *Pajama Game*, can be a shattering, heartbreaking cry while, conversely, Bess's "My Man's Gone Now" could be a liberating shout of joy. This is not to suggest that the song should be sung this way in a show, but it does open up the infinite possibilities of any song, and shows the students that intense emotions can be productive in singing. This exercise packs an emotional wallop and is exhausting if done properly. It's up to the performer whether to divulge the information that was delivered.

Uses of Singing with New Information

- To encourage immediate response to the here and now
- To allow intense emotion to enter the act of singing
- To have a secret while performing
- To employ the entire body and facial musculature as an expressive device
- Because the successful completion of this exercise depends to a great extent on the content of the message, and since that message is the creation of one of the performer's colleagues, this exercise can be a significant measure of trust among fellow-students
- To shake the performer loose from his/her firm preconceptions of how a song is to be "done" by going completely contrary to the apparent content and style of the work. We use this technique often.

Note: Once they have completed this exercise, students can usefully sing the song again, with accompaniment, to see what, if anything, resonates from the experience and might be useful in the future performance of this material.

Nonsense. The student chooses a meaningful, very personal anecdote, and "tells" it to the group in an invented language. This language can be a faux-Italian, Russian, or Burmese, or a babbling echolalia; the important thing is that it should be incomprehensible to the listeners. The student can be as graphic with supporting gesture and tone as they choose. (A standard task for the exercise is to tell of one's first sexual experience. Be prepared to roll on the floor with laughter.)

Uses of Nonsense:

- To publicly "tell" personal secrets without revealing them
- To concentrate on the form of telling, divorced from the content
- To attend to the melody of language as an element in "telling"

Jokes. When this exercise (standing up, speaking directly to the group, telling jokes) is suggested, most people react with "But I don't know any jokes!" or "I can never remember the punch line!" All the more reason to encourage a repertoire of jokes as preparation for learning a role. The bathroom or preadolescent humor most students have at hand is an indication of when most people stop learning jokes.

Uses of Jokes

- Learning timing and structure
- Learning to "deliver" a performance

Making People Laugh. This exercise is a companion to, but distinct from, Jokes. The aim here is to bring the audience to laughter mostly through nonverbal means like pratfalls, tripping, double-takes, rude noises, etc. Anything is allowed here—anything goes—and, as with jokes, the reviews are immediate.

Uses of Making People Laugh:

- To learn physical humor
- To get comfortable with absurd behavior and with being laughable in front of others

Lying. Sometimes called "telling the truth attractively". In this exercise, lying consists of "telling the truth beautifully." A student tells an autobiographical anecdote that ends badly, the worse the better. At the point at which the disaster or embarrassment achieved its inevitability, they improvise and manufacture an alternative ending, offering a version that ends—ideally—with the student exacting revenge or achieving retaliation. The listeners try to determine at what point Truth left the room. (It's amazing how eagerly students tell really embarrassing moments out of their love lives in this exercise. Maybe it's not so surprising. How often do we get the chance to publicly change the outcome of life's catastrophes?)

Uses of Lying:

- To learn to improvise on one's feet, i.e., before an audience
- To disguise feelings
- To have a secret play--only the player is aware of it
- For the audience: to attend critically

Hit the Critic. This exercise teaches students to give and to take criticism. So it is not so much an acting exercise as it is a glimpse into the possible negative results of students evaluating each other's work among themselves, as well as practice responding to criticism in their professional lives to come.

Students pair off and stand facing each other within striking distance. In turn, and starting at the head, they describe each other's physical appearance, trying to avoid any judgment or evaluation. The one being "described" has license to strike out and hit (under the guide lines of the Geneva Convention) the "describer" whenever the description seems to intrude upon the private sphere or to present an evaluation. The realization that the tables will soon turn may influence the care with which the first "describer" describes. A variation of this exercise is to have the "describer" use only positive, glowing terms of description and the "described" can lash out whenever they believes they are being lied to.

What should become clear in the course of this exercise is the relativity of all terms of criticism (one person's rave is another person's slam) and the utter unpredictability of how someone else will respond to one's formulations.

Uses of Hit the Critic:

- To learn to give constructive criticism
- To create a sometimes much-needed spirit of play

Catastrophe/Failure. This Tabori exercise is based on the premise that it's better to let out our worst fears (particularly before a performance) than to bottle them up.

Sitting in a circle, each member of the group tells their performance nightmare. When possible it's also good to act out this catastrophe: "going up" in the middle of a song, making their entrance onstage and forgetting their first lines, falling or tripping while dancing, etc. A variation on this exercise is to write reviews of their own performance before they give it—a good review and a bad one. It's also helpful to sing/dance/act as badly as possible, taking the elements that they have specifically worked on and tried to improve (intonation, rhythm, diction, projection) and exaggerating them in a negative way in a nightmare rendition of the material.

Uses of Catastrophe/Failure

- To reduce stagefright
- To make the "nightmare" real and learn to control it
- To share with others your secret anxieties and discover their currency

Song into Dance, Dance into Speech, Speech into Song. This exercise concentrates on those moments most characteristic of musical theater performance: when one artistic discipline seamlessly metamorphoses into another.

Students must figure out how to bring these two different expressions together in such a way that the transition from one to the other is as smooth as possible. They learn a nonmusical scene text and choose a song that seems appropriate to the character, style, and demands of the scene. They try placing the song at various points within the monologue and choose one placement. They decide in which ways they must modulate their speaking voices so that the first pitches to be sung do not sound as if another character is suddenly present. They might try interlarding the song with spoken texts, so that the accompaniment continues, or so that it dwells at a specific point in the song while they speak. They might alternately speak and sing phrases of their songs, or alternately speak and sing lines from their texts.

When they feel comfortable with this transition (speech into song), they are instructed to add the further transition to dance and movement, and to consider how movement flows naturally and organically out of the acting situation and the actor's condition. Students should note specific differences between movement and dance, and decide which is appropriate for the clarification of their characters'

intentions. Students then take all this material into consideration in order to decide where dance might enter into their performance in any of these ways:

- To express or to heighten an emotional state
- As a flight into fantasy
- As an intensification of the song
- To bring energy and excitement to a scene
- To frame the scene or bridge two scenes
- As a purely decorative element

They should explore the possibilities of singing and dancing simultaneously, and of speaking and dancing, and discover the role(s) the breath plays in preparing their performance. They should experiment with using the feeling of "up-beat" (in the preparative rhythmic sense) and figure out how it is possible to sing and/or speak immediately after a strenuous dance. Musical theater students will find all these questions legitimate and important, and they will find the answers in the detailed, careful work they do on specifics. For instance, if a song starts quietly and follows a highly emotional scene, then either the composer has allowed enough time in the introduction for the transition, or the actor/singer must achieve this transition on their own, by modulating the end of the spoken text so as to justify the entrance of the singing voice.

On the other hand, if the choreographer requires a sudden percussive contraction on the repeat of a ballad, then the performer had better start "tuning" their body before the event, even if this means making modifications in the vocal style while singing. Of course, in the best of all worlds, the musical theater performer will find a justification or adjustment for each of these transitions, so that they are organic and theatrically convincing. When the technique of these transitions shows, the audience may appreciate the performer's virtuosity, but they will be in that moment more appreciative of the performer and not likely to be moved and transported by the character being played.

After students have worked on some "created" scenes in the above manner, they might seek out those moments in musical literature where these same demands are made, and apply the lessons learned.

Follow the Leader. This group exercise is based on Mirroring (see #1, Movement and Dance) and requires a large space. Before beginning, the teacher must clarify that one purpose of this exercise is learning to accept criticism.

Each person chooses a place on the perimeter of the room and makes it their own place. They bring something into it that is their own personal property. They can also decorate and define the space with a chair, a mat, a blanket, or any other prop or piece of furniture available.

The exercise begins with everyone in the places they have selected. The first volunteer moves into the center of the room and performs a dance or improvisation. Those who wish to can join in and mirror the first ("follow the leader"), moving into the central space. Those who choose to remain in their places can call out disparaging remarks to or about one or all of the performers, each of whom chooses to ignore the remarks or to respond to them nonverbally, in dance or movement.

Students may choose to respond directly to a particular critic but may not invade the critic's personal space. The first volunteers, and those mirroring them can get close and even menace the critic, who remains absolutely safe and secure in their own inviolable area.

The Follow the Leader improvisation can be a full-out abstract or popular dance, it can be an animal improvisation, or it can be the nonverbal acting/moving expression of any other state of being. It can be playful and fun, quiet and tender, or intense and dangerous. Both movers and critics are free to change their roles as often as they wish, entering and leaving the center at will. When a student wants to give up being leader, they should give it to someone else in the center—i.e., someone who has been mirroring the leader—by calling out their name; they must accept the role as leader. As in other mirroring exercises, the change of leadership should be seamless, movement or action flowing from one improvisation to the next. The exercise goes on until the teacher ends it.

The group then comes together in a circle to talk about the exercise. This is important because often feelings are hurt by the critics' remarks, so performers need to ask, "Did you really mean that?" or "Am I really—?"

Uses of Follow the Leader

- To learn to risk a critic's censure and go out into the arena
- To have permission to be nasty and have fun with it
- To learn to respect another person's boundaries or their right to dislike your work, and still keep your distance
- To get used to bad reviews and just keep going
- To discover what it's like to give and to take criticism
- To form an ensemble

The Pressure Cooker. Each student is assigned a chronological age (younger than they currently are) and then comes up with a specific important personal memory involving themselves at that point in their lives. Standing in front of the group, they close their eyes and concentrate on remembering the event while the pianist plays through a song the student has chosen.

The student opens his/her eyes and, standing stock-still, allows them to move from side to side without moving any other body part—not head, neck, nothing. The student makes eye contact with various audience members then begins to sing the song s/he has chosen, all the while mentally "replaying" the "film" of the remembered incident. The student's singing should be as flat and expressionless—as "rote"—as the body is immobile. At the teacher's signal, the student breaks out of this straitjacketed state in one of the following ways, which the student determines instantly, in the moment:

- They go completely into the emotions that have been building up inside during the exercise of remembering and singing, and now allows them full rein. These emotions will color the student's performance of the song.
- They flee from these emotions (if they find them threatening, unpleasant or embarrassing) and performs the rest of the song with a degree of intensity sufficient to keep the condition from which they are escaping at bay.

Either through the tension created by the double task of remembering and singing, or through the power of the remembered incident, this exercise releases an extraordinary amount of emotional energy. If the second of the above paths is chosen (avoidance), then the level of performance achieved can be just as productive and intense as the first. In either case, it is important that the student experience singing in a "supercharged" state, and discover the power of his/her own emotional resources.

Uses of the Pressure Cooker:

- To perform with divided attention
- To sing with a secret agenda
- To sing in an extreme emotional state

Dialect or Native Language. It is often productive to encourage the improvising actors to employ their family dialects or native languages other than English in this work. They have spent so much time and energy losing these speech attributes on the way to achieving a kind of neutral, homogenized "stage" English (although in no way as severe as the Hochdeutsch called for in the German theater) that they sometimes lose the ease and deep personal connection to language that is everyone's birthright. Actors for whom English is a second language have an even harder row to hoe, especially when dealing with childhood memories or songs.

Singing from the Present. Students are instructed to remember something that has happened to them within the previous 24 hours, something with emotional content. They are to concentrate on recapturing this memory as completely as possible through "sense memory" work, with the assistance of the teacher who will ask them questions to jog their memories.

They do not have to divulge the content of this memory, so they need not censor any embarrassing or intimate moments that occur to them. When they've transformed the recent "then" into the vital "now," they sing a song out of their condition for, but not to, the audience. If other people are involved in their recent memories, they should imagine those people in their scenes and sing the song directly to them. Note: The "specialness" of this exercise is the availability, the freshness of the catalytic event. It also shows how much of our quotidian lives is valuable and suitable to use in our work on the musical theater stage.

Uses of Singing from the Present:

- To make the recent past vivid
- To sing to imaginary partners or to events that still resonate in our lives
- To sing without revealing the subject
- To respect the fourth wall

Blocks. This exercise deals with problems that interfere with the act of performance. We use it with students in their second year of study. It is very important to note that these lessons are not therapy sessions. They may be therapeutic, but that is not their purpose. Rather, our premise is that once a fear

that blocks or limits performance possibilities is defined and publicly expressed, it will be more manageable. The student is unlikely to be "cured" of the block, or radically changed in any way. In any event, this work has often proven to be highly effective in improving the level of performance and self-confidence of the students.

The teacher distributes drawing materials to the students, who may take them to a private area of the room or work under supervision while they draw a picture of what gets in the way of their performing as they would like to perform. Their drawings should depict its appearance, this "something" that stops them. A student's block could keep prevent them from doing a love scene, perhaps, or to strip, or to have a fight on stage. A block could make a student shy, unsure, or self-conscious. It may not be one thing that has a shape and color; it may be a series of things, or it may be a relationship or a memory that makes them clutch or freeze up. They can use pencil, charcoal, crayons, etc., to give their blocks tangible forms.

When they have completed their "dreadful" pictures, all the students reassemble in a circle, with their blocks. One by one, going around the circle, they take turns showing their pictures and describing the thing that is in their way. Their classmates ask questions about it but do not judge, analyze or interpret what they see or what the presenter says. Questions are aimed only at clarifying what an individual student has drawn.

Barbara and Stanley Walden with students as they draw their blocks

The teacher then takes these pictures and, before the next class meeting, devises a scene or situation to enable each student to physicalize and act out the visual representation of their block. Before the students realize this task, they should choose a song; The teacher will direct them to sing their song either when they have completed their task or while they're still involved in it. Here are some examples of this exercise and how it works:

One student was physically ill at ease before the group, ashamed of his body, and had indicated in his drawn block that this was a performance problem for him. We suggested that he disrobe in private and wear a bathrobe to cover his nudity. All the viewers put on blindfolds, and all of the lights were turned off so that the room was pitch black. The student was then free to remove his robe and dance in front of us, without the slightest possibility that he would be seen. After he had enjoyed this unseen dance in front of an audience, he was given the choice of remaining naked or putting the robe back on. He chose to wear the robe and lay down with his face to the floor. He then signaled that it would be all right to turn on some lights and later, that the audience could remove their blindfolds. Keeping his cheek against the floor, and reveling in the sensuousness of his body resonating against the ground, he sang his song in a way that was a revelation for him and for us. His sense of privacy was respected while his "block" was addressed. This support made all the difference in enabling him to break through his performance block.

Another student was concerned with her ability to memorize—to learn and retain text and lyrics. We had her sit before us (we were in a line facing her). She was to ask the first person in the line, "What can't you do?" and "What can you do?" That person then responded to these questions with a fanciful or realistic answer and asked her, "Do you believe me?" She then responded, "Yes, Stanley, I believe that you can't fly a plane, and I don't believe that you can do a cartwheel." The next person in line was then asked the same questions and responded. The performer, using the same formula, stated, "No, Bobbie, I don't believe that you can't ride a horse, but I also don't believe that you can perform brain surgery. And yes, Stanley, I believe that you can't fly a plane and I don't believe that you can do a cartwheel," adding the first response to the second, and so on down the line. This process could have been maddening, so we built in a safety valve: she was free to break out of this concentration at any time by going into a relaxation exercise or by singing. But she stayed with the extreme demands of this task all the way through to the end, and achieved the extraordinary result of going through all ten variations without a hitch.

A moment out of the "Blocks" work, used in the collage "6M3F": Markus Düllmann, Uli Scherbel, Asita Djavadi, Karim Khawatmi, Mischa Mang, Falk Berghofer
Photo © Michael Sondern

Putting the Block Exercise to Work. In a laboratory meeting soon after their first public appearance in the collage (see Chapter II), class members are asked to think about how their blocks affected their performance. Each student or the teacher chooses a piece of material from the collage that hadn't worked for the student in performance. Students should allow their blocks to affect them, and find ways to use the blocks rather than being overwhelmed by them. They might, for example, repeat the talk or scene given them while singing their songs from the collage.

"Blocks": Mischa Mang, Eva Thärichen, Michael Chadim, Marcus Dullman, Asita Djavadi
Photo © Thomas Kube

Uses of Blocks Exercise

- To demystify and normalize blocks by making them apparent and communal
- To make the individual's performance freer and fuller by making each situation personal and pertinent
- To provide a structure for contacting intense emotions and a form in which they can find expression, i.e., the song
- To work with a real situation rather than a theoretical one
- To weaken a block's power through repetition and familiarity, or to use its power by changing the threat into a challenge
- To learn to be an active problem-solver rather than to be victimized by one's own emotions

Creating a Scene from Conflicting Intentions. This exercise is based on the teachings of Sanford Meisner, who taught acting at New York City's Neighborhood Playhouse for many years.

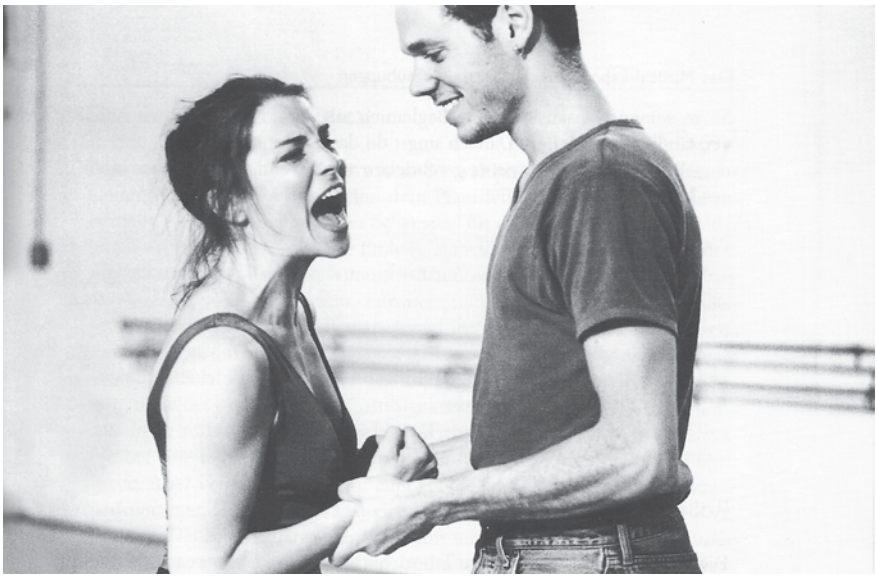
The teacher asks for two volunteers, who step up and wait for instructions, which the teacher gives to each student separately, out of the hearing of the other. One of the volunteers is told that they are an understudy for the lead in a musical, and on this night, the lead is sick, so the understudy must go on the next night. They are on stage, at the piano, in order to go over some of the songs they will perform the next might. What they don't know: The other volunteer is in charge of the theater. It is his/her birthday, and friends have planned a big party at a new restaurant. They want to close up and go to celebrate. The students play the scene until they resolve their conflict or the teacher ends it.

Note: If intense feelings are stirred up and no other outlet for expressing them (going into a song, dance, or written text) presents itself, the students must discuss what has occurred before the class is over. The teacher should provide time for this, but if that doesn't happen for some reason, the students can request it.

Other conflicts might be (1) a secretary to a casting director, whose boss has ordered them to keep all calls and callers away (if they want to keep the job) is appealed to by an actor down to their last dollar, whose agent has said that this casting director might have some acting work, or (2) a person who is packing in order to catch a plane that leaves in an hour and a half is interrupted by a former lover whose mother is desperately ill and who needs the name of a doctor, which is written on the cover of a book somewhere in the apartment.

Uses of Creating a Scene with Conflicting Intentions

- To learn to think on one's feet
- To learn to deal with intense feelings
- To experience ways a scene can build to climax and resolution
- To start a scene on a highly charged emotional level



Birge Funke and Marcus Dullman
Photo © Archie Kent

Keeping the Song Fresh.
Each student chooses a song and gives the music to the accompanist. First, the student sings the whole song a capella and with lyrics of their own choosing—i.e., the singer finds their own words for this known melody in the moment of performance. The lyrics need not rhyme or be finished. Then the student sings the song again with its original lyrics and with accompaniment, making the original lyrics as fresh as the improvised lyrics were.

Uses of Keeping the Song Fresh

- To slow the process of choosing words and so discover their meaning
- To make the song the performer's own as if for the first time
- To discover lyrics as a conduit for direct expression of powerful emotions
- To use the song as "Inside" (see #10, Musical Theater Games and Exercises) to express what's really going on

Variation: The teacher instructs the students to remember a meaningful event in their lives, then to visualize what happened and to express their feelings in nonsense (see #2 of this section) using the melody of the song they chose. Each student sings their nonsense lyrics unaccompanied, with the intention of making the audience understand their intended meaning. With the same intensity, the student then sings the song as written, accompanied, imparting the content of the original lyric.

Role Reversal. This George Tabori exercise is used in two-character scenes to free the performers from fixed decisions about their roles and to add new dimensions to their relationship. When possible, students use a scene from a musical, a scene in which a duet is sung. Although students may encounter difficulties of range, this exercise will increase their appreciation for the counterpoint demanded by the composer. Pairs of participants do exactly as the title suggests—reverse or exchange roles with each other—and perform the scene they have been rehearsing, this time with characters reversed. The partners must not copy each other's performance, use the exact text, or wait for direction. Instead, they should improvise the scene and find their own way to play the action, thereby gaining insight into the motivations of each other's character while watching each other play their own roles. Then they play the scene again, in its original configuration.

Note: Teachers should conduct this exercise only with players who have mutual respect for each other and who trust one another, as this type of work can easily wound and lead to feelings of resentment.

Uses of Role Reversal

- To give both actors new ideas for their own roles
- To help both actors understand their partner's role and the challenges it poses for anyone playing it
- To relax the rehearsal atmosphere and have fun

The Ten-Minute Musical. Each of three classmates independently chooses a song and gives their music to the accompanist. They come together and create a three-character playlet in which the content of all three songs can figure. They find a title for their "musical" and limit their performance to ten minutes. The songs might be very different from one another. Here is just such a playlet, created by the students in our workshop in Moscow using a pop ballad, an Italian aria, and an up-tempo rock number:

The dresser of a rock star is a wannabe composer. One day, the dresser brings his latest song, a ballad, to the rock star, hoping that the rock star will perform it. The dresser/composer shows it to the singer in the dressing room just before a performance, but to no avail; the singer expresses no interest. The singer makes his entrance on stage and sings an up-tempo rock number. In the audience is a young woman, head over heels in fandom. The star is accustomed to being adored by his fans and uses them in his act. He brings the girl up on stage. She gives him a rose and he kisses her, whereupon she faints dead away. The dresser,

accustomed to this occurrence, catches her in his arms and carries her back into the dressing room.

As he looks at her, he begins to fall in love. When she comes to, he offers to go and get her a glass of ice water. Alone in the room, she finds the star's jacket and begins dancing with it, humming and singing an Italian aria. The dresser returns with the water and the two begin to talk. The girl has found the dresser's song on the dressing table and asks him about it, thinking that the rock star wrote it. But the dresser claims it as his own and begins to sing it to her. At this point the rock star enters and the two men sing and dance the song as a duet, vying for the attention of the young woman.

She is again charmed by the rock singer's charisma, but the dresser, knowing that the star will only abuse and exploit her, decides to fight for her. He lunges at the singer, the two scuffle, and the singer knocks him down. After checking his face in the mirror for bruises, the singer yanks his jacket from the girl's embrace and makes a grand exit. The dresser recovers and comforts the dejected fan, singing his song to her once again. She is then finally able to see and appreciate him. He invites her to have a cup of coffee with him and she accepts. He takes off his jacket, puts it around her shoulders, and the two exit.

(Note: This could also be a three-act musical!)

Uses of the Ten-Minute Musical

- To learn firsthand about the makig of musicals by creating one--i.e., by fashioning an original love story, finding the right dramatic moment for the song, etc.
- To learn to collaborate
- To demonstrate technical knowledge of all three disciplines and in the particular unity that is the musical
- To learn how each discipline can be used either to stop or to further the action, or to change the energy level in the theater
- To learn the practical side of staging--i.e., props, wardrobe, etc.
- To be able to communicate musical descisions to the accompanist

PART 3:
LABAN WORK
EFFORT/SHAPE

Rudolf Laban, born in Bratislava in 1879, was a dancer-choreographer who created a system of analyzing and notating movement that touched on philosophical questions of "being" and psychological questions about the "individual being." Laban's work has been used by dancers, choreographers, actors, athletes, educators, psychotherapists, and industrialists for nearly a century. In our work, we focus on two of his ideas, one about shaping the body in space, and the other about the effort required to move the body in space. Laban joined these two ideas into a unity he named Effort/Shape, now called Laban Movement Analysis. We use Laban's ideas simply, and they have proven useful to our students in more ways than even we imagined.

SHAPE

Shape is the way the body forms the area around itself as well as the way it forms itself in space. It is also possible to shape the body's inner space. By shape, we mean process: a moving, rather than a static, idea. We limit our use of the word "shape" to work that focuses on the vertical, sagittal, and horizontal planes.

Rising/Sinking. In the vertical plane, the body moves up and down, and shapes by rising and sinking. When this plane is used by a lone mover, the student can be addressing issues of autonomy. When a duet or group uses the vertical plane, they can address the idea of power in relationships—i.e., who's above, who's below, and who's on an equal level.

Advancing/Retreating. When used by a lone mover (in the forward/backward or sagittal plane) this can deal with issues of courage. When used in a duet or group, it can deal with the idea of position in relationships: who's ahead and who's behind; who attracts or is attracted; and who repels or is repelled.

Widening/Narrowing

When used by a lone mover (in the side to side or horizontal plane), this can deal with issues of privacy. When used in a duet or group, it can deal with the idea of "sharing" in relationships: who's in and who's out, and with whom one is open or closed.

EFFORT

Effort has to do with the quality of movement: the ways in which a person uses his/her energy. Laban separated effort into four motion factors:

- Flow: The circulation of energy in the body, borne by the breath and made manifest in movement through its opposite parameters of bound and free
- Weight: Gravity made manifest in movement through its opposing parameters of light and strong
- Time: Duration made manifest in movement through its opposing parameters of sustained and sudden
- Space: Focus made manifest in movement through its opposing parameters of direct and indirect (or flexible)

The Eight Full Efforts

The table below shows the eight possible combinations of the motion factors of weight, space and time. Flow is taken for granted as being present in each and every moment of our physical lives, so it is not specified in the full efforts—i.e. a slash is free, and a twist is bound, by virtue of the simultaneous combination of the other three motion factors.

The Eight Full Efforts	The Motion Factors		
	Weight	Space	Time
Punch	strong	direct	sudden
Press	strong	direct	sustained
Flick	light	flexible	sudden
Dab	light	direct	sudden
Twist	strong	flexible	sudden
Slash	strong	flexible	sudden
Glide	light	direct	sustained
Float	light	flexible	sustained

SHAPE: THE EXERCISES

Authentic Movement. The first exercise in which we use the Laban work is Authentic Movement. We do this exercise over a period of four classes. In this partner exercise, each student will be either a blindfolded mover or a witness. In the first class, the mover is directed to move in only one plane (dimension), for example the vertical—rising/sinking. In the second class, the mover works in a second plane or dimension, perhaps the sagittal—advancing/retreating—and, in the third class, in the remaining plane—in this instance, the horizontal—widening/narrowing. Then, in the last class of this series, movers use all three planes. Afterward, partners discuss the movers' experience and the witnesses' experience before they trade roles. A variation is to perform the exercise, in any or all planes, without the blindfold. Students may keep their eyes closed while moving in place then open them when moving about the room.

Note: It may be necessary to limit the number of blindfolded movers to avoid collisions.

Uses of Authentic Movement

- To be "yourself" in front of an audience
- To move from a real impulse but within a prescribed direction
- To discover the difference in the planes and the connections between moving, feeling, and thinking
- To learn how to witness without judging or projecting
- To be able to free-associate with images and ideas, both as mover and as witness

Combining the Planes within a Square. This dance phrase is taken from the teachings of Irmgard Bartenieff, who brought Laban's Effort/Shape work to the United States from her native Germany. The teacher instructs the students to imagine a square, the center of which will be the fulcrum of all the movements in the sequence. The students stand on their squares.

On the count of 1, they step diagonally forward onto the right foot and relevé, advancing/widening/ rising all at the same time toward the downstage right corner of the square. They use their arms in opposition—i.e., the left arm comes forward to shoulder height, and the right arm rises out to the side, also shoulder height as they perform this opening step.

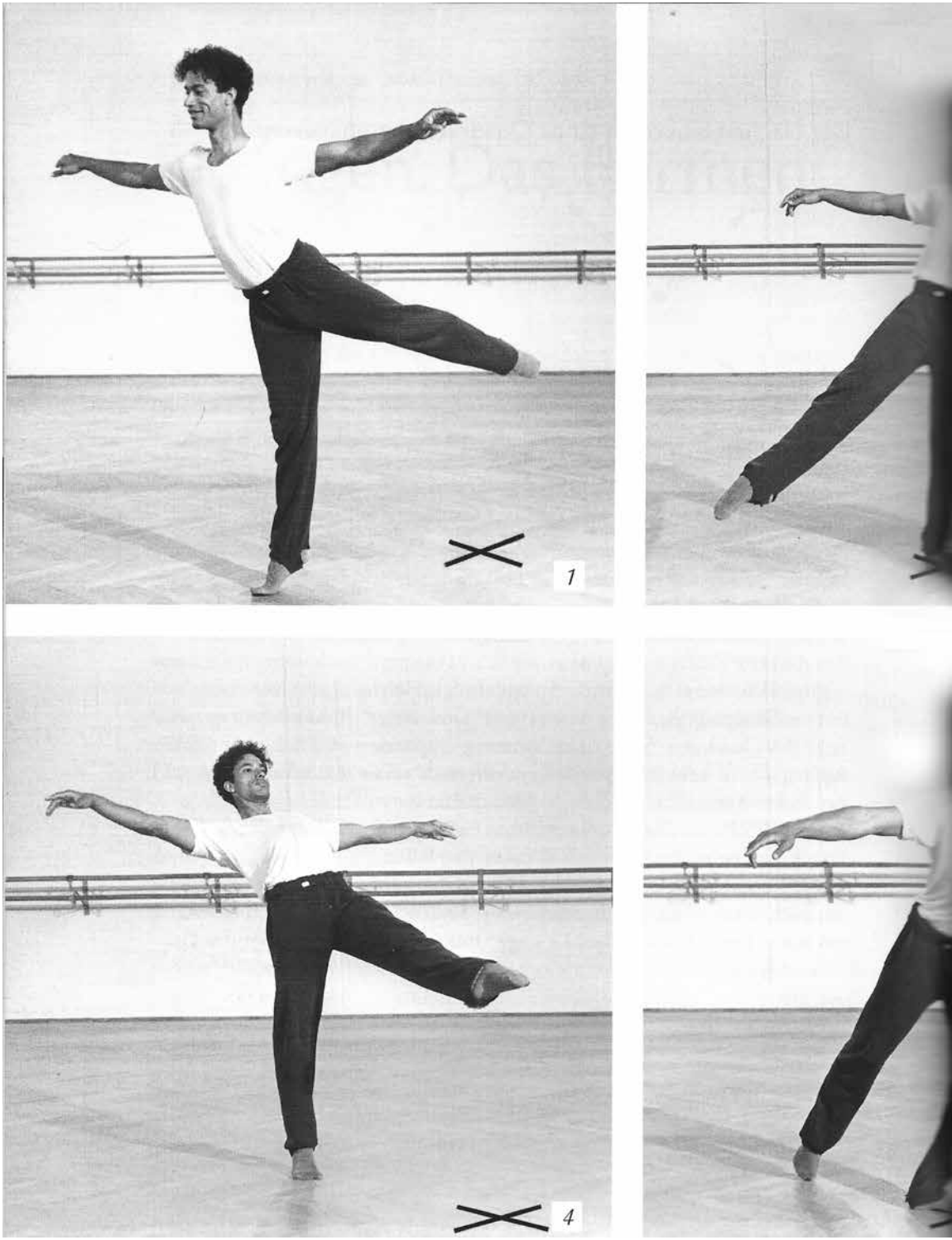
On "and," they fall back toward the center of the square in plié onto the left foot and drop their arms to their sides.

- On 2, they deepen the plié, twisting and rounding their upper torsos forward and around to the left (retreat/narrow/sink) as the right foot touches the left upstage corner of the square and takes some weight, arms forward toward the floor.
- On "and," they transfer all their weight onto the left foot and return to an upright position, arms dropping to their sides.
- On 3, they step diagonally backward into the right upstage corner of the square onto the right foot and relevé (retreat/widen/rise), arms out to their sides at shoulder level.
- On "and," they fall forward toward the center of the square and plié onto the left foot, arms dropping to their sides.
- On 4, they continue the forward momentum, falling toward the left downstage corner of the square, catching their weight on the right foot, and plié while twisting and rounding the upper torso forward and around to the right (advance/narrow/sink), left arm forward, right arm back.
- On "and," they transfer all of their weight onto the right foot and return to an upright position, arms dropping to the sides, before repeating the entire sequence on the other (left) side.
- The student dancers will experience the flow in this exercise if they inhale while advancing/widening/rising and exhale while retreating/narrowing/sinking.

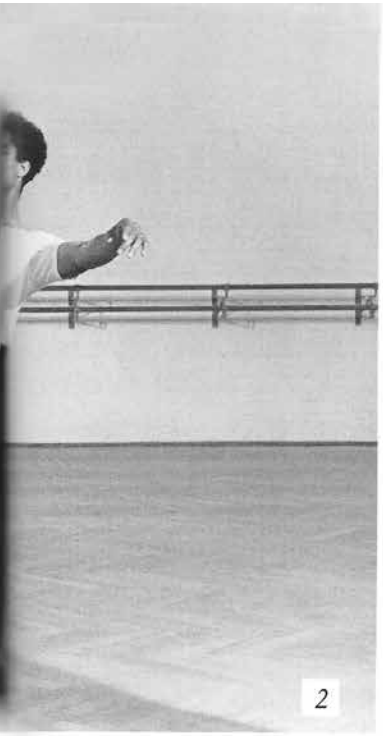
As a variation, this exercise can be done while moving across the floor on the diagonal by varying the size of the advancing steps (making them larger) and the retreating steps (smaller). The rhythmic proportions between the steps can be varied, and the phrase can also be organized in different meters.
Here is a three-part group dance using the Planes:

Uses of Combining the Planes with a Square:

- This exercise makes explicit use of Flow — thus, the use of phrasing in the dance--because it is built on the breath.
- Doing so introduces the relationship between personal space (the kinesphere) and public space (the studio).



"Combining the Planes within a Square", Marc Basiner
Photo © Archie Kent



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3

5

6

The Wave: Rising/Sinking. The teacher instructs the students to stand in a line facing the audience, and begins to count aloud. The first of ten people to move lifts the chest and lets the head fall back. On 2, the knees soften and continue rounding and sinking to a deep knee bend on the counts of 3 and 4 (not a backbend; the back may arch but the center of gravity must not shift), one foot slightly in front of the other. On 5, the head begins to come forward, and by the count of 7, the dancer will have completed the sequential movement, ending in a deep plié with torso rounded, hands touching the floor in front and head dropped forward almost to the floor. The dancer remains in this position until the count of 16. The second person to move (the person to the left) begins the sequence on the count of 2 and completes it on the count of 8, also remaining in the final position until the count of 16. The third person begins on 3 and so on, until the whole line (in this case, ten people) has moved in a canon to create the "sinking" half of the wave, which ends on the count of 16.

To create the "rising" half of the wave, the last person (in this case, the tenth) begins to rise and uncurl on 1, going through the above sequential movement in reverse, arriving at the beginning position on the count of 7. The head is not centered on the spine until the count of 7. The ninth person begins on 2 and ends on 8; the eighth on 3 and ends on 9, etc., until the whole row is once more standing on 16. Repeat the sinking/rising sequence.

"The Wave": Falk Berghofer, Eva Thärichen, Marc Basiner, Birge Funke, Karim Khatawatmi, Asita Djavadi, Michael Chadim, Markus Düllmann
Photo © Archie Kent

Steps to the Outside:
Widening/Narrowing. This segment should be done in a moderate 3/4 meter. On the upbeat, the student dancers in line turn and face each other in pairs. The first student turns one quarter turn to the right; their partner turns a quarter turn to the left. At the same time, the partners grasp left hands and on counts 1 and 2, each lunges as far as possible to their right, onto their right legs. Their right arms swing down and out organically to second position. They will need the "and" of 2 and 3 to rebound, in order to return to face each other. They change hands on the "and" of 3, now holding right hands. On 4 "and" 5, each lunges as far as possible to the left, onto their left legs, letting their left arms swing down and out to second position. On the "and" of 5 and count 6, they rebound, and on the "and" of 6, they stand in the center, partners facing each other, and change hands. They repeat the six-count phrase, performing it four times.

"Steps to the Outside: Widening/Narrowing"
Photo © Archie Kent

The Yes/No Bridge: Advancing/Retreating. On the "and" after the fourth repetition of the above six-count phrase, the dancers turn as a group and take an additional six counts to run into a corner in order to begin this section, which creates a bridge of bodies on the diagonal. The first dancer moves in the direction of the opposite diagonal corner, at his/her own tempo, having decided whether s/he is moving toward that corner or away from where s/he is (thus the name of this exercise: yes/no). For example, s/he is advancing, going to meet the intended in a prearranged tryst, but does not really want to go (moving in bound flow). S/he only travels the distance of a few steps and then holds in a position expressive of his/her emotions. The next student has decided s/he is being chased by a dog and need to get away and go home. S/he moves backwards (retreating in free flow) as fast as s/he can until s/he is just beyond the first person, perhaps falling to the floor as s/he stops and physically connects with that person, then holds that position until each group member has taken a turn, connecting to the person who preceded him/her, and the diagonal "bridge" is completed. There are no formal counts. After each "link" in the chain is joined, the next person enters. On a signal from the teacher, the group disconnects and each person completes his/her action—i.e., arrives at their destination.

Singing on the Sagittal Plane. Advancing and retreating provide at least four (rather than just two) motivational or action possibilities—i.e., advancing in free flow ("I want to get there") or in bound flow ("I don't want to get there"), retreating in free flow ("I want to leave here") or in bound flow ("I don't want to leave here"). Conflicts provide additional possibilities: for instance, "I want to get there, but I don't want to leave here" or "I don't want to get there, but I don't want to stay here, either."

Each student chooses a song and gives the music to the accompanist. They go to a corner of the room and choose one of the four unconflicted possibilities:

- "I want to get there."
- "I don't want to get there."
- "I want to leave here."
- "I don't want to leave here."

The song determines the student's choice. For example, a woman singing "Out of My Dreams" from *Oklahoma* may decide that she wants to get "there," i.e., "into his arms." She should focus her attention on the corner diagonally opposite her as if he were there and, employing her chosen motivation, walk to the center of the room, stop in the center, and sing her song, accompanied and focused on that opposite comer with the motivation "I want to get there" to go to him. When she

begins to sing, she should allow herself to move naturally but minimally. When repeating the exercise, she may also want to include the "Out of My Dreams" idea, which would make her have to choose about the corner she is leaving. This could reinforce her motivation or it could create a conflict—one of the additional possibilities mentioned above—if she would rather not leave her dreams. Her focus would still be on the diagonal corners of the room, in the sagittal plane, clearly forward and backward, but her desire to leave or to stay where she is and to get where she is going could create additional interest.

Note: As in all Laboratory work, this is an exploration, not a staging.

Uses of Singing on the Sagittal Plane:

- To focus the performer's attention
- To physicalize the idea of "intention" by reducing it to the specific spatial directions of "I want" = advancing and "I don't want" = retreating
- To explore the variations possible in more complicated scenarios and to discover what happens within the body and, therefore, to the song
- To learn to sing to someone who is not present and make the delivery strong

Variation. Begin as described above. In this variation, however, when a student gets to the center of the room, the imagined focus of his/her song is a student who stands in the corner facing the singer. The singer begins singing in the sagittal (advancing/retreating) plane. The student in the corner responds either by mirroring the singer (advancing/retreating in the sagittal plane) or by moving in the opposite direction of that plane (retreating) or in one of the other planes (vertical [rising/sinking] or horizontal [widening/ narrowing]). The singer can choose to continue to initiate movement as s/he sings, or to mirror the movements that the partner in the corner is making in response to the song. The singer continues singing and completes the song, actively exploring the use of the planes as an expression of the song's content and the relationship between the partners.

Uses of Variation on Singing on the Sagittal Plane:

- To focus the performer's attention
- To expand the range of intentions for the actor and to clarify them through their physicalization, i.e.:
  - "I win" = rising
  - "I lose" = sinking
  - "I withhold" = narrowing
  - "I love" = advancing
  - "I fear" = retreating
- To sing within a changing relationship
- To go with the here and now

The Planes into Relationships. The class divides into two groups. Starting from opposite walls, one person from each group comes to meet the other in the space midway between. Having met, and facing one another, they slowly move in opposite directions of the vertical plane, i.e., one rises as the other sinks.

Then both return to an even level and continue moving (one rising while the other sinks). After again returning to an even level, both return to their respective groups, and the next pair carries on with the exercise. One possible variation is for both to rise and then both sink, moving in the same direction at the same time.

On the second go-round, the pair advances to meet one another, in the middle of the room. One continues to advance but the other retreats; then, the two trade directions, ending finally with both moving back to their respective groups (on the sagittal plane). Both also may advance and retreat at the same time.
The last meeting involves the horizontal plane: the pair alternates between widening and narrowing. Both may widen and narrow at the same time and thereby discover a hug.

Uses of the Plane into Relationships:

- To explore relationships on a purely physical and spatial level
- To understand that "insides" (see Chapter 3) are physical
- To learn that using the body can help to call up feelings, and that feelings will change the body

Improvisations on the Plane: the Use of Shaping in a Scene. Students are in pairs. One is told to act the character of a parent whose daughter wants to go away with her boyfriend for the week-end; the parent does not approve. Working in the vertical plane (rising/sinking), the parent character is in the upper/powerful position, and the "daughter" is in a lower position, seemingly powerless. The pair improvises verbally until the accompanist begins to improvise chords at the piano. At this point, the players gradually exchange positions—i.e., the daughter gets the upper hand, and the parent becomes powerless to stop her. The daughter rises; the parent sinks. This transition is sung like an opera. Before the music plays, the students improvise their spoken dialogue; after the music starts, they improvise their sung text in the form of solos and/or duets. The scene will be over when the conflict, after reaching a climax, is resolved. What has been shaped is the relationship between the two characters.

Other possible narrative situations include a woman trying to pick up a man at a bar (in the sagittal [advancing/retreating] plane), and a rude teen-ager on the subway, intimidating another passenger (in the horizontal [widening/narrowing] plane).

Uses of Improvisation on the Plane: the Use of Shaping in a Scene

- To learn to physicalize roles
- To become aware of the dramatic tension inherent in unequal relationships and the resultant pressure for resolution
- To make singing as natural as speaking
- To become less role- or self-centered and more aware of the relationships between characters and what has to happen to make the relationship change
- To become aware of dramatic development in a scene

EFFORT: THE EXERCISES

Experiencing the Motion Factors (Nonverbal Exercises). Laban identified weight, time, and space as factors that describe human physical motion. The exercises described in the table help students experience the interaction of these factors so that they may have complete control of their bodies in space and of physical impressions they are creating in their roles as musical theater performers.

MOTION FACTORS AND THEIR ATTRIBUTES

Light	A puddle is covered with a thin coating of ice. Cross it without breaking through.	To experience your sense of gravity as being in your chest first (light), then in your pelvis (strong). Note: strong is not the same as heavy. Light is not the same as weak.
Strong	Play imaginary volleyball, serving and hitting an invisible ball back and forth over an invisible net.	
Time		**Use**
Sudden/ Quick	Get ready to run a race. The starter calls "Ready! On your marks, get set—" and you anticipate, start too soon.	To make clear what is meant by an attitude toward time. At one extreme is a quickness that can jump the gun. At the other, a suspension that can put off the moment of truth. In both cases, when dealing with music as a singer and/or dancer, knowledgeable use of the Time factor can result in very personal and delicious phrasing.
Sustained	It's getting late, but you don't want to leave a gathering of friends, so you keep finding ways to put off taking your leave. Finally, you decide to stay overnight. Do this nonverbally, concentrating only on how you feel when time is suspended.	
Space		**Use**
Direct	You are the parent of one child at a playground. Keep your eye on your child. To be aware of the difference between a single focus and multiple foci. Note that Indirect is not unfocused. It is flexible.	To make you aware of the difference between a single focus and multiple foci. Note that Indirect does not mean unfocused; it is flexible.
Indirect/ Flexible	You are a teacher responsible for ten children at a playground. Make sure they're all safe.	

Analyzing Walks. The group sits on the floor in a large circle. Each student takes a turn walking around the inside of the circle. The others attempt to determine whether the walker's walk is bound or free (flow) and which element of this factor predominates in different body parts—i.e., is the head held rigidly, or is it balanced in a relaxed way? How about the elbows? The chin? The students observe carefully, noting whether the walker's energy is sustained over Time, smoothly ongoing and without change, or whether there is a quickness to each step; whether the walker's gaze is directly focused in Space or his/her eyes travel over the group or around the room; they listen to the walker's step, to decide whether it is strong or light (Weight). The walker continues circling for as long as it takes to make the analysis.

Sometimes, analyzing the space and weight factors is difficult because the walkers are so involved with their internal spaces that they have no attitude toward external space, or they have dropped their energy, producing a heaviness or dead weight—i.e., they abandon the weight factor.

Uses of Analyzing Walks

- Learning to see and analyze subtle but clear differences between people in their ways of occupying physical space
- Learning one's own personal walk as a new type of self-knowledge

Improvisations with Motion Factors. A musician should accompany the class during this exercise. The class divides into two groups; students pair up and take separate positions in opposite corners of the room. The exercise begins when the teacher calls out a motion factor—for example, flow. The first pair of students travels toward each other, improvising movement in the motion factor specified by the teacher. They meet and interact in the middle of the room; then, each continues to the opposite corner and exchanges positions and groups. The next two students enter from opposing corners, then the next, etc., until the entire class has improvised in the flow factor.

After this first round, the class embarks on a second, in which each pair chooses a motion factor other than the one they used in the first round as assigned by the teacher, and so on until the entire class has performed the exercise four times, each time dealing with a different motion factor (see Note below). While they dance to the music using the motion factors of flow, weight, time and space, students should remember that each factor has two possibilities— i. e., extreme or opposite attitudes toward that factor:

Motion Factor	Possibilities/Attitudes
Flow	Free
	Bound
Weight	Strong
	Light
Time	Sudden
	Sustained
Space	Direct
	Indirect

The first time a pair performs the exercise, each of them adopts a different possibility of the factor they have chosen. If they are in the flow factor, one is free, and the other is bound. When each reaches the opposite corner, they switch possibilities: the one that was free is bound, and vice versa.

Note: After the first round, in which the teacher assigns the first motion factor, partners must be sensitive to one another because in the three subsequent rounds, they will choose the motion factors themselves, so they will be different for each duet. For example, in the second round, one partner may begin to improvise a staccato (or quick) dance, and the other dances toward him/her in a sustained adagio (a duet in the time factor). But the next couple may select the weight factor for their second pas de deux.

Uses of Improvisations with Motion Factors:

- To continue to clarify Laban's terms in order to learn, through them, how to see and analyze movement
- To experience the emotional component of dance
- To encourage the creation of your own choreography
- To become acquainted with your own style by discovering what feels most natural and comfortable to you

The Eight Full Efforts

- A *Punch* is any movement that is strong, direct and sudden (or quick). Jumps are *Punches*; a karate kick is just as much a *Punch* as is the movement of a fist through space. Students should move across the floor and back as a group, using their whole bodies to discover their own ways of *Punching*.
- A *Press* is strong, direct, and sustained. So next, as if they are pushing heavy bureaus across the floor, students *Press*—with their hands, their backs, their

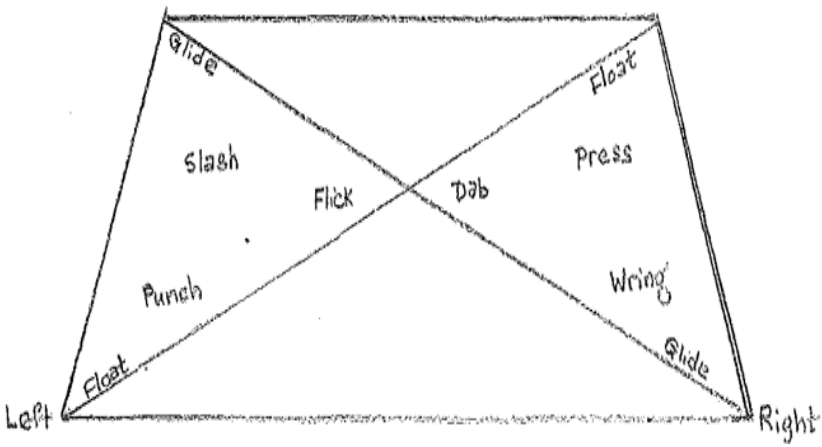
heads. They should give their imaginations free rein to try different *Presses*, any *Presses* that occur to them. As they return, they should try pushing/pulling each other: a pull is a *Press* toward oneself instead of away.

- A *Dab* is a quick, light, direct touch. Each student pretends to be a baby chick, trying to peck its way out of a paper bag as it crosses the floor. On the way back, the student/chick goes into a little tap dance, pokes at a doorbell, or types a letter, continuously discovering uniquely personal *Dabs*.
- A *Flick* is a swat that fails to connect. As if flies are buzzing around their heads as they make their way through a carpet of fallen leaves, students cross the room *Flicking* the flies away with their hands and lightly, indirectly and quickly *Flicking* the leaves out of their way with their feet. On their return, students toss their heads to shake off persistent flies.
- A *Slash* is a controlled flail—strong, indirect, sudden motion. Students cross the floor as if they are *Slashing* their way through thick jungle undergrowth, describing immense, purposeful figure eights in the air. On the way back, they try their own variations on *Slashing*.
- A *Twist* is a strong, indirect, sustained turn of a body part: turning a doorknob, opening a jar, and belly-dancing are a few examples. Students *Twist* their way across the floor and back again, trying all these and finding more of their own.
- A *Glide* is what airplanes do. Skaters, too. Students move themselves or parts of their bodies in light, direct, sustained ways, investigating all possibilities that occur to them as they move across the floor and back.
- A *Float* occurs when objects such as the seeds of a fleecy dandelion are blown in a direct path and disperse. Students let their bodies become those winged seeds being blown away as they *Float* lightly, indirectly and in a sustained way across the room then return, *Floating* in their own way, either alone or in relation to others.
- Students may be instructed to improvise their own dances using all the efforts. They also may create nonverbal scenes in the same manner, for instance:
- Knock lightly on a door (*Dab*)
- No response; knock harder (*Punch*)
- Push against the door and try to open it (*Press*)
- Try the door knob (*Twist*); the door swings open (*Glide*); walk into the room easily (*Glide*)
- Stop and look around (*Float*); brush away cobwebs (*Flick*)
- Cross to the other side of the room through obstacles (*Slash*)
- Turn the doorknob on the far door (*Twist*)
- Pull the door open (*Press*)
- Run out (*Glide*)

Uses of the Eight Full Efforts:

- To free the instrument: the self
- To provide a common, nonjudmental language that describes the use of energy and is applicable to and useful in every aspect of musical theater performance
- To surprise and delight so each student performs in new and uncharacteristic ways, thereby creating shapes, sounds, characters and situations outside of the "normal" or habitual vocabulary
- To suggest a way of analyzing and creating one's own solo performance, the changing relationships between people in a scene, and the movement of the scene itself

Moving through the Eight Full Efforts. The teacher arranges sheets of paper on the floor with one of the eight efforts written large enough on each one to be read from anywhere in the room. (See drawing for one suggested configuration.) While the students do the exercise and move from area to area in the room, the sheets will act as road signs, designating how they move, behave, or sing while in that area.



Students can begin in whichever area they prefer and move as they wish in order to experience all eight efforts at least once. *Dab, Flick, Punch, Press, Twist*, and *Slash* are single areas in which they respond either alone or in relationship to others (according to the sign's name) but when they move into the comers, they *Float* or *Glide* on the diagonal, from corner to comer—*Float to Float, Glide to Glide*—traveling in space. The positioning of the other effort stations is arbitrary, but *Float* and *Glide* must be in the comers.

Note: Students who begin in *Press* (see above diagram) must move into the corner and cross on the diagonal in *Float* if they wish to get to *Punch*—i.e., they don't cross directly from stage R to stage L. The center space is reserved for the two efforts (*Float* and *Glide*) that travel in space.

Variation 1: A Solo Dance. Students who want to begin in *Glide* inhale deeply, letting their arms rise at their sides to shoulder level; as they exhale, they travel in a light, direct, sustained manner from the L downstage corner to the R upstage corner, *Gliding*. They then step into *Floating* and, without pausing, explore all the ways they can move strongly, indirectly and smoothly, writhing or twisting. When they move into *Dab*, they go into light, direct, sharp movements. They may continue these movements into the *Slash* area, confining these strong, indirect and sudden movements to their pelvises, and then move into the strong, direct, sustained *Press* in their chests and arms. *Floating* from downstage R to upstage L lightly, indirectly and sustained, they may then jump into the *Punch* area (strong, direct, sudden) and end in *Flick* with a light, indirect, quick *Flick* of the wrist. Students should try not to stop between the areas, but rather, make smooth transitions from one Effort to the next. These solos can be danced to music or in silence.

Students may want to use some shaping to move from effort to effort. For example, after widening and then *Gliding* across the floor, one may retreat into a *Twist*, rise into a *Dab*, advance into *Slash*, sink into *Press*, rise into *Float*, narrow into *Punch* and retreat into *Flick*.

Variation 2: A Group Dance. The same exercise as above is done by five to eight people moving through the same effort areas at the same time and relating to one another. Alternatively, group members may choose to begin in different effort stations and to proceed in different sequences. Body contact is expected.

Variation 3: A Group Acting Improvisation. Using the same form—i. e., moving from one area to another at will—group members interact (perhaps as though at a cocktail party), using the emotional aspects of the efforts. In *Punch*, for example, an argument or fight might ensue. *Twist* can elicit sadness, turmoil or whining. The use of speech is encouraged in this acting variation, and both the sound of the words and the choice of what is said is affected by the effort station they are in. People in different areas can interact, i.e. a *Twister* and a *Dabber*; two *Floaters* and a *Glider;* a *Presser* and a *Slasher,* etc.

Variation 4: Telling a Story (solo). Each student tells a short story or anecdote while moving through the effort stations, letting the effort factors dictate how s/he speaks—the quality of the sound; the phrasing, and the dynamics. Content and quality may belong together or may have no relationship to one another whatsoever.

Variation 5: Singing through the Eight Full Efforts.
Each student chooses a song and an effort station at which to begin. S/he sings the song, moving through all six floor areas and along the two diagonals, letting the efforts dictate the manner in which s/he sings: the quality of the sound; the phrasing, and the dynamics. If necessary in order to get through all eight efforts, the student may repeat the song.

A Solo Song
Each student chooses a song. As s/he sings it, a classmate holds up different effort signs one by one. The classmate may change efforts frequently or not, but the performer's task is to be informed by the name of the effort and to change the singing sound and style accordingly. From center stage, directly to the audience, the student sings the song to the class twice through: the first time in the exaggerated ways dictated by the signs, the second time in a more natural way, without the signs being held up but still letting the effort possibilities color the performance and the use of his/her voice. The emphasis of this exercise is on singing, but the performer should feel free to move a little if it is helpful.

Uses of A Solo Song
- To go with the given and to follow directions
- To be able to use these ideas in one's own work
- To continue discovering new sounds and vocal possibilities
- To become busy with the music and the task and, thus, to forget to be afraid

Creating Your Own Dance Using the Efforts. Each student chooses the full effort s/he enjoys most and breaks it down into its elements: light or strong? sudden or sustained? direct or indirect? Which full effort is its opposite?
For example: strong/sudden/direct : light/sustained/indirect = *Punch* : Float

Effort	Weight	Time	Space
Punch	Strong	Sudden	Direct
Float	Light	Sustained	Indirect

The teacher or the students themselves create a Full Effort dance sequence to perform by beginning with each student's chosen Effort then changing single elements en route, ending with the opposite Effort. For example, here are three of six possibilities for *Punch:*

Dance sequence (1): *Punch—Press—Glide—Float* (*Punch—Press—Twist—Float* is also possible.)

Effort	Weight	Time	Space
Punch	Strong	Sudden	Direct
Press	Strong	Sustained	Direct
Glide	Light	Sustained	Direct
Float	Light	Sustained	Indirect

OR

Dance sequence (2): *Punch—Dab—Flick—Float* (or *Punch—Dab—Glide—Float*)

Effort	Weight	Time	Space
Punch	Strong	Sudden	Direct
Dab	Light	Sudden	Indirect
Flick	Light	Sudden	Indirect
Float	Light	Sustained	Indirect

OR

Dance sequence (3): P*unch—Slash—Twist—Float* (or *Punch—Slash—Flick—Float*)

Effort	Weight	Time	Space
Punch	Strong	Sudden	Direct
Slash	Strong	Sudden	Indirect
Twist	Strong	Sustained	Indirect
Float	Light	Sustained	Indirect

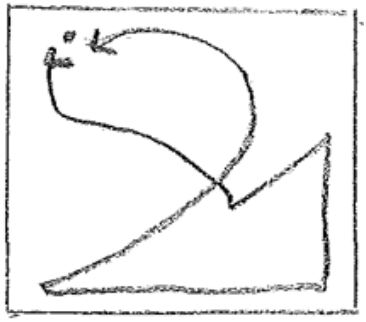
As you can see, six different sequences are possible between each pairing of opposite Efforts.

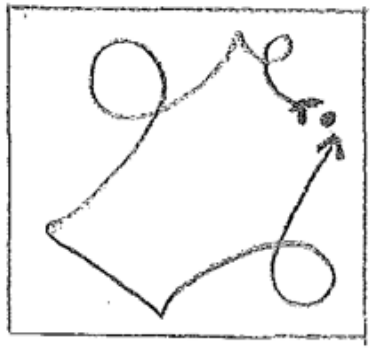
Now, from a corner, travelling across the floor on the diagonal, students improvise and try out the different sequences separately, one at a time, and as a totality—i.e., one after another, in different orders, or any sequence or order of sequences that they want to be their dances. They need not exhaust all possible permutations in making this dance but just concentrate on making the dance that pleases them. Or the teacher may assist by choosing sequences and assigning them arbitrarily.

Uses of Creating Your Own Dance Using the Efforts

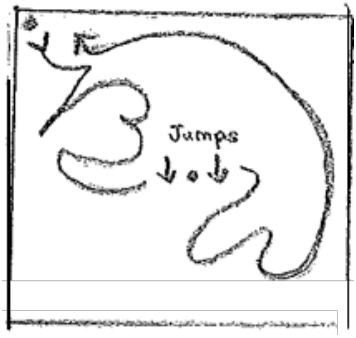
- To become aware of one's own dance movement style
- To have some tools and a vocabulary for creating an original movement \ sequence
- To memorize a dance sequence
- To learn to phrase movement

Creating a Floor Plan. On a blank piece of paper, students draw floor plans of any shape that pleases them, with dots to indicate entry and exit points.

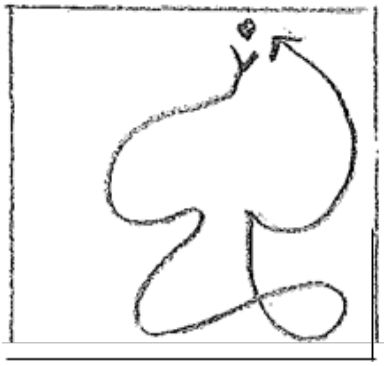




For the purposes of this exercise, students begin and end in the same place, so that they can repeat their dances at least twice, without stopping. They can even make a floor plan of their own initials, like this:



The students walk their patterns in space, three or four at a time. They acknowledge each other in some way when their paths cross. Then, as a group, they try using the planes (advancing/retreating, rising/sinking and widening/narrowing).

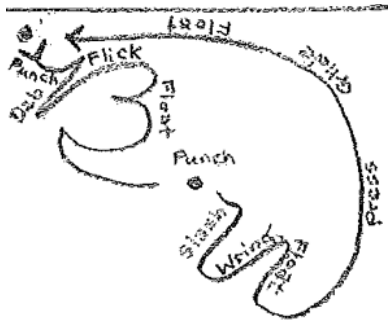


Uses of Creating a Floor Plan:

- To become aware that dancers do not only face the audience when they perform, and that dances have shapes in space
- To experience group dances that spring up and suggest choreograpic possibilities
- To encourage the use of shaping (directions and levels) in choreography
- To suggest emotional possibilities between dancers

Creating a Solo Dance Using One's Unique Effort Dance and Floor Plan

Students have at least half an hour to choreograph this dance, in which they travel the full Effort sequence(s) along the path of their floor plans, as here:



Each student sets an exact series of dance movements (choreographs a dance) according to their choices from the Efforts so that they can repeat the series exactly each time. They perform it twice through, without stopping. Students should incorporate the idea of the Planes in their choreography; they should think of using different body parts, different levels, and clear points of focus—and remember to breathe. They should know where they want the climax of their dance to be, and use dynamics and phrasing to reflect this. The accompanist will improvise to each dance.

Uses of Creating a Solo Dance Using One's Unique Effort Dance and Floor Plan:

- To begin to develop choreographic tools
- To learn about performing a dance by creating one's own
- To be alert to new possibilities that pose surprising problems--and their solutions

Variation: While pairs of students create duets by performing the separate dances simultaneously, they relate to one another, look at and touch each other.

Choreographing to a Song. Students choose songs from their repertoires that they know very well and they think are compatible with the individual dances they have just choreographed. They review their songs with the accompanist, then set their dances to them, changing the choreography as they must so that it fits with the music, and vice versa.

Uses of Choreographing to a Song:

- To discover the problems of creating dance to existing music--and their solutions
- To begin to work on putting two disciplines together

Song Into Dance: A Musical Scene Using One's Own Choreography. This exercise requires plenty of time. First, students think of dramatic contexts for their songs. Suppose one is going to sing "All I Need is the Girl" from *Gypsy,* which begins, "Got my tweed pressed, got my best vest," etc. The singer (male) has decided he is at home, daydreaming about a woman called Karen. He summons up his courage and calls her for a date. She agrees to go, and he arranges to pick her up in an hour. He is ecstatic. He hangs up the phone and goes to his closet. Opening the closet door, he begins to sing the song and continues doing so as he dresses for the date. He sings the whole song through. The second time the song is played, he dances up to the bridge (release) of the song. He sings from there to the end of the song, and exits, now on his way to pick up Karen. (Obviously, this is not the way the song is done in *Gypsy,* but accurate reproduction is not what we're about here.)

Uses of Song into Dance:

- To begin work on a musical scene using all three disciplines simultaneously
- To learn by doing

Using the Full Efforts in Acting Improvisation. The teacher assigns each student a role in a scene, together with a full effort. That effort is the character, its way of moving and talking and interacting. The situation: a grandparent's birthday celebration, during which the granddaughter, just home from college, announces to her parents that she is pregnant. Her boyfriend arrives by cab soon afterwards.

The cast of characters:

Role	Effort Possibilities
Grandparent	*Float* or *Punch*
Mother	*Punch* or *Flick*
Father	*Twist* or *Press*
Daughter	*Dab* or *Glide*
Boyfriend	*Slash* or *Twist*
Cab Driver	*Press* or *Punch*

To clarify: in the first possibility, the Grandparent will behave in a light, sustained, indirect manner, perhaps talking in a breathy drawl, going in and out of sleep, and ready to accept all information with equanimity. The Mother is strong, direct and quick. She may be brash and argumentative. The Father may be a pessimist and a whiner—strong, sustained, indirect—the Grandparent's child. The Daughter is

light, quick and direct, using repetition rather than strength to make her point, needing help to be heard, enjoying needling her parents. Her Boyfriend slashes in where angels fear to tread, strong, indirect, sudden. He is her protection from her family. The Cab Driver is insistent, strong, direct, sustained, pressing to be paid. This improvisation can be repeated with different Full Effort assignments given to the different roles each time.

PART 4:

ORGANIZING THE EXERCISES TOWARD SPECIFIC GOALS

Collage "I'm Aufbau"
A. Mandy, T. Stool, K.Probst, S. Martens, A. Tape, R. Hornemanr, K. Herzer, A. Rietz
Photo © M. Redl-Von-Peinen

In order to accomplish our goals, we plan our classes to combine specific exercises in a particular order. This section details when and how we use the exercises described above. Our goals fall into four general categories:

- Creating the ensemble
- Getting rid of hindering habits and acquiring useful ones
- Being believable
- Learning to perform

Following are four typical classes, each created specifically to address one of the above categories.

1. CREATING THE ENSEMBLE

Each entering class is, of course, made up of individuals who are usually—but not always—strangers to one another and who are suddenly thrust into a proximity that is exclusive and intense. For the next four years, they will spend most of their

waking hours with their classmates and their teachers. If they can learn how to work together, their four years in the program will be pleasant and productive, but they must learn how to "play" together and use the group in order to become performers.

In the first and all subsequent lab meetings, students sit together in a circle on the floor. (The floor is a great leveler, and the circle is unifying.) Students and teachers begin to form a group. Teachers talk about the program and invite students to talk about their experiences in it. The group shares information about problems, remedies and resources. The lab as a course of study is discussed, and accompanying expectations and fears are brought into the open. The teachers leading the class describe the plan for this first session.

The Constructive Rest Position (CRP) is the first exercise each new class does together. Students get towels and belts from their dance bags for use as needed and remove potentially slippery footwear. Students are directed to find "their" places in the room and to lie down in the CRP position. The teacher leading the exercise dims the lights, gently makes necessary corrections in students' positions and begins talking them through the imagery. This relaxation exercise fosters physical self-awareness. The experience, although deeply personal, is shared by everyone in the room, and the CRP enters the group's communal body of knowledge.

This exercise segues smoothly into **Humming as a Group**. As the exercise progresses, the room gradually fills with a low sound that energizes each participant, not only through the use of breath and the vibration of sound, but also through the swelling of the chords created by the group's shared sound. Students rise and come into close physical contact in order to hum into and against each other. In the resultant intensified vibration of sound, each person shares him/herself. The barriers between people come down (and couples, without knowing it, have played their first love scenes). When the pairs have coalesced into one body and the whole group is physically joined and humming together, they have taken their first steps toward creation of a true ensemble.

After the group separates, teachers and students once again form a circle and discuss their experience without judgment, criticism, or analysis. Students are asked to describe their experience, and each has a chance to answer. (For this practice and philosophy, we are indebted to George Tabori; see page 27 for a photo of Bobbie Walden conducting the CRP).)

Sound and Movement, which follows, rekindles and increases the energy generated by **Humming as a Group**. It requires students to mirror and to improvise, to use and play off of one another's ideas and impulses. People confront their need to look good and their fear of being ridiculous. The teacher describes the exercise and then directs the seated group to rise and perform it first in its circular form and then in the two-line version. Upon conclusion, a ten- or fifteen-minute break is in order.

When the class reconvenes, students again describe their individual impressions and experiences of **Sound and Movement.** In the course of doing so, they get to know themselves and one another better. Each student chooses one of the songs they sang at their audition and gives the music to the accompanist, instructing him/her as to how they want it played (tempo, key, cuts, repeats, etc.). Each performs the song for the other students and the teachers, now seated as an audience. This is the first time that they hear and see one another perform. A little healthy competition ensues, and much appreciation is expressed. We hope that students will use this lab and each other:

- To lose their physical inhibitions
- To listen empathically and with full attention
- To open up and be vulnerable
- To rely on one another in an exercise
- To learn about themselves and one another
- To offer and accept new ideas, being inspired by others and thereby widening their range of possibilities
- To learn about the relationships among tempo, timing, and energy
- To share the responsibility for making an exercise work

2. GETTING RID OF HINDERING HABITS/GETTING USEFUL ONES

Many students come to the program from schools, teachers, or families whose affection was won or withheld for practices that are irrelevant to our work in training musical theater professionals. But all performers want and need to be loved, and will do almost anything to win approval and avoid neglect. Both praise and disparagement can be limiting for any performer, especially at first. Students can also come to the program with fears that are almost incapacitating. But if the need to perform is stronger than the fear, it can help to counterbalance insecurities, and self-confidence can grow with experience.

In the opening circle, teachers take care of business and encourage an exchange of information and ideas from students before introducing a discussion of criticism

and its effects. To illustrate how personal and various reactions to criticism can be, the teacher introduces **Hit the Critic** to the group.

Students choose their partners for the duration of the class and take their places in the room. Couples work simultaneously. As one partner describes the other, the describer is "hit" when comments come across as hurtful, cruel, or nasty. The critic may realize his/her power and ability to harm as s/he discovers his/her partner's sensitivity and sensibility. The partner, on the other hand, may be delighted to have permission to strike out and silence the critic. When partners switch roles, they can each give as good as they got. In the second half of the exercise, compliments may still prompt a slap when heard as sarcasm or untruth. Although both may laugh, the significance of the lesson will be clear. Upon completion of the exercise, both partners have the opportunity to examine their motives, needs and responses and to talk about them with the whole group.

The teacher then presents **Authentic Movement in the Sagittal Plane (Advancing/Retreating)** and distributes blindfolds, which effectively close the movers' eyes to their own appearance and stop self-criticism. In this partner exercise, as the blindfolded one moves, the other watches. There is no "right" or "wrong" in authentic movement. Movers move on impulse and as they wish, the only directive being to respond physically to urges to approach or to avoid someone or something real, remembered or imagined. The moving group is small, but people share space, and because they can't see, they must use their other senses in order not to run into each other. Teachers watch carefully to prevent accidents. When time is called, partners remove their blindfolds, and the class assembles to talk about the exercise. Movers speak first. Witnesses ask permission to make comments and do so with great care and objectivity, taking responsibility for their own reactions. The exercise comes to an end when both partners have moved, both have witnessed, and they have talked together about each experience. Then the group takes a break.

When class resumes, students are instructed to choose a song and give their music to the accompanist. The exercise **Personal Anecdote into Song, With a Partner** is described to them. Sitting in chairs, facing one another, one partner tells the other a childhood memory and the other listens. Each focuses attention and energy on the other as s/he recounts the memory of an event that gave rise to strong emotion, which may resurface again in the telling. Or they may not. The task here is to be plain, direct and honest and to let whatever happens, happen. The listener's task really is only to listen, not to show an audience that s/he is listening, and not to "respond." Only when the story is over does the listener

respond, singing directly to the storyteller, and with the task of using the song to give him/her what s/he needs. Often there are tears, and noses and mascara run; that is all right. Sometimes, students feel that they didn't "get it," but they are assured that they will have another opportunity at some point—not to do it "right" but to have the experience. We hope that in this lab students will learn:

- To avoid overacting and indicating, showing us "how their characters would act"
- To forget about how they look; to stop watching themselves as they perform
- That learning means making mistakes and that the need to be perfect is deadly because it stops exploration
- That being critical of self and others can be harmful, especially in the first year
- That being ugly and ridiculous are necessary for tragedy and comedy
- When improvising, to concentrate on the task, and not on their inner critic
- That improvising will get easier with time
- To focus energy and attention
- To trust the teacher to set and maintain safe limits so they can "lose control"
- To be positively competitive
- To come to class prepared to work (dress, materials, attitude)
- To have good work habits (being punctual and not bogged down by the problems of the day [although the productive use of these concerns is encouraged])

3. BEING BELIEVABLE

"We could make believe—" "We could behave as if—" "We could pretend, without pretense, as if it were true." The actor knows the difference between fantasy and reality, but the better s/he is at entering into the universe of the performance—improvisation or play—the more convincing and believable—successful—s/he will be.This class begins with the opening circle. It continues with Guided Imagery into Improvisation.

Sensory Awareness. In preparation, students lie in the CRP, eyes closed or blindfolded, with their feet toward the center and their heads creating the circle's periphery. They are instructed to do the following:

- Be aware of the sounds in the room (the teacher makes different walking sounds, claps, scrapes a chair along the floor, laughs, crinkles paper, sounds a bell, etc.).
- Be aware of the smells in the room (the teacher brings to each student a fi eshly peeled orange or tangerine, a freshly cut pine bough, perfume, etc.).

- Be aware of touch (the teacher touches each student with, or lets him/her feel a scarf, a brush, a metal spoon, etc.).
- Be aware of taste (the teacher brings to each student a piece of bread soaked in soy sauce, a piece of tangerine, a raisin, chocolate, etc.).

The teacher continues, addressing the group, leading them in **Guided Imagery**, something like this:

Imagine that you are six years old. Begin to see the home you lived in then. In your mind, go to your room or your private place. Use all of your senses to really be there: feel the temperature; see the light; see the windows, floor, ceiling, walls and door; see the colors and shapes; touch each piece of furniture and smell the air. Then leave your room and walk through the house. See the pets and the people—especially the people. Find a special object, something that had special meaning for you, as a door to a memory of that time. Take time and remember something important that happened in that place, with those people and with that object.

After five to ten minutes in the memory, find a way to say goodbye. You will be able to bring the object back to the present with you. After you've said goodbye, become aware of the sounds in this room, and of your body on this floor. Bring your knees to your chest and roll over onto your side. Sit up slowly and wait for instructions.

The Improvisation. When everyone is sitting up, the teacher directs the students to leave the circle. From a heap of disparate objects (anything available in the room—shoes, towels, books, dance bags, clothing, etc.—they are told to choose the object that most closely resembles their imaginary remembered object. Then, returning to the circle and sitting on the floor, each student in turn describes the object that s/he has brought back and, remaining focused on it, describes the meaningful event in which the object played a part. S/he then sings a song (folk or children's) that was connected with that time. After completing this stage of the task, the student continues as a child occupied with the toy/object as the next person in the circle describes his/her object. This activity continues until all the students have told their stories and have sung and are playing with their objects. Each then becomes aware of the others, and they interact as six-year-olds do at a birthday or Christmas parties.

The teachers, as adults involved with these children, enter into the improvisation after the situation and relationships have become firmly established. The

improvisation will lead where it may, always respecting the cardinal rules of all improvisations:

- DON'T HURT YOURSELF
- DON'T HURT ANYONE ELSE
- DON'T DESTROY THE STUDIO (minor collateral damage allowed)

4. LEARNING TO PERFORM

The Musical Lab. The Musical Lab is based on the following premises:

- The first step to self and sensory awareness helps a student use his/her memory of known places, objects and states of being to create the place of the play and the character's physical reality.
- By telling meaningful personal anecdotes, students have the experience, sometimes their first, of delivering a monologue with strong emotions and without "acting." When they take these feelings into an improvisation or song, they have used their own past to create a character's present.
- Because improvisations are unplanned and/or unscripted, students must learn to be open to the here-and-now of the scene. This helps them believe the situation, because it is of their own making. If they don't believe it, it is immediately obvious and can be dealt with.
- By knowing and believing who they are, where they are, what they are doing, and what they want, our student performers will be believable.

Ultimately, the purpose of the **Musical Lab** is to provide students the opportunity to learn basic performance skills and to integrate what they've learned in all their other classes (dancing, singing and acting) by improvising new musical moments for one another once or twice a week. The lab serves as basis and synthesis for the program.

Students need to learn what each discipline demands as well as what they share and ways to combine them. In all three, the living, breathing, responsive body of the performer is the instrument through which s/he sends focused energy out to reach and win an audience. The use of self in a solo, duet or ensemble may differ, but when it does, the difference is common to all three disciplines.

The opening circle leads into the **Double Mirror**. Students become alert and focused and immediately responsive to what they see. The group splits into smaller groups of three and continues this dance exercise. Leadership is passed and students learn to pace themselves as the dance continues. Without pause, the groups turn to face the audience and the teacher designates the "stars" by giving them a pillow. Standing out in the group, shining as though in a spotlight, requires

incredible energy. The other performers modulate their energy, taking on the role of back-ups. The roles rotate. All performers must split their attention and watch their spacing carefully while mirroring; dance and watch the pillow as they wait for "stardom"; and "sell it"—all while gasping for breath as they keep on going until the teacher calls a halt. Break time.

After the break, several exercises are combined toward the common goal of learning to perform: **Singing with an Assigned Emotion, Personal Anecdote into Song, Dialect into Nonsense, Broadening Focus from Near to Far**. Each student chooses a song, gives the music to the accompanist and stands facing their classmates (the audience). The teacher whispers the name of an emotion in the student's ear. The student remembers an incident in their life in which this emotion was extremely strong. They choose a classmate as a partner, and the partner comes into the stage area. Focusing on this partner, the student relates the personal anecdote in the dialect or vocabulary used at the time and place where the event occurred. For example, if it is a tale of terror set at home in Texas when the student was seven years old, they drop the stage diction they have worked so hard to perfect as an adult, and revert to the ways they spoke at home as children. When they come to the high point of the story, and the assigned emotion is reaching its peak, they go into **Nonsense**—into an imagined "foreign language"—and tell the climax of the story in this language. Then, sustaining this strong emotion, the student nods to the accompanist when ready to sing. Letting this extreme feeling flow into the words of the song, they sing to the partner. As in many exercises, the song will have been chosen before the student knows in what context it will be used.

To sing "Blue Moon," for instance, to a partner while in a state of fear is perhaps not being true to the intention of the creators of the song, but the actor gets a chance to discover new and surprising meanings in the lyrics and to discover possibilities for playing a musical scene—e.g., justifying the emotion. As the song is sung, the teacher may send other classmates in to support and make the situation more believable by assigning them roles in the performer's story.
During the song, the singer shifts focus from singing to the partner to singing to the audience (i.e., breaks through the fourth wall). Events that transpire during the improvisation are allowed to influence the performance. This exercise teaches the students to feel at home on the stage in the following ways:

- To be comfortable showing themselves and knowing how to do so to their own advantage

- To be familiar with theatrical accoutrements (lights, props, etc.); jargon ("SR," "the fourth wall," "upstage," etc.); etiquette (backstage demeanor, not upstaging, etc.) and practices (don't whistle, do use deodorant, etc.)
- To be able to split their attention between playing a character in a scene and fulfilling the tasks of the performer: being believable and picking up the tempo or a dropped hat when needed; justifying the character's intentions and remembering text, music, choreography and direction; being natural and "bigger than life" at the same time
- To be able to pick up and remember movement, music and acting directions quickly
- To be confident that the stage is where they belong

In addition to the above fashioning of the exercises into coherent classes, some other possible variations include the following combinations. These "lesson plans" are suggestions, not dogma. Teachers and students should use exercises as creatively as possible; we develop new exercises all the time. Mainly, the Lab should be structured and, in addition to being a lot of fun, it should focus on each one area or problem per session. Consult the table below for specific exercise combinations (classes) that focus on each of the four categories.

SPECIFIC EXERCISE APPLICATIONS			
For Ensemble Work	**For Getting Rid of Bad Habits**	**For Being Believable**	**For Learning to Perform**
The Double Mirror Stroking Opening Resonating into Body Parts First Steps A Walk Through the Woods Jamming Songs in Unexpected Contexts Mirroring Emotions Using Pillows	Self-Inventory Sound and Movement out of a Personal Anecdote Masks Singing with an Intention The Full Efforts Used in an Acting Improvisation	Transposed Heads Inside/Outside Singing with an Intention Singing from the Present All the Laban work	Mirroring Speech and Song The Swedish Circle Singing with a Task Singing Out The Substitution Game Using Pillows All the Performance Exercises

PART 5:

FINALE

One thing cannot be said too often: although many of our exercises deal with the psyche of the performer (and, indeed, some are borrowed or adapted from various psychotherapies), it is in no way our intention to enter into a healing process in which the basic character of the individual, along with their attendant neuroses, is changed or eliminated. This is especially true because some of these may be precisely why the student has chosen this field and others may be exactly that which feeds the talent of the performer. That said, we stand on our assertion that the only treasure the actor brings to their performance, outside of technique, is him/herself. That self can best be exploited as a treasure when it is discovered, known and employed.

Actors are not better people, neither in the general scheme of things nor in the sense that they have achieved a nirvana of total self-integration. They are, and must be, braver and more intense (and perhaps more self indulgent) than the average person. To enter into this self exploitation without an awareness of limits, of where technique can provide a safety buffer, is to risk severe psychological injury to themselves and to others. Conversely, to avoid the self-exploitation that creates great musical theater is never to approach that dangerous zone where the extreme states of personality come into play.

Many of our exercises are designed to help the performer arrive at those intense states required from the contemporary musical theater performer, without the usual supporting strictures of text, dramaturgy, choreography, psychological analysis of character and/or specific musical shapes. By sidestepping all the above structures, all of which are valid, necessary and extremely valuable to the finished performer, we make available to our beginning students the experience of singing, dancing and acting in these extreme conditions. They learn how valuable and unique all of their personal histories and emotional treasures really are.

Undue emphasis on the psychological makeup of the character and the accompanying jargon—psychobabble—have held sway long enough to engender a postmodern counter-reaction. Robert Wilson claims to have no interest in the psychology of his slow movers; Brecht had as little use for psychologicalmotivations as he did for "expressive" music. Whatever the style or aesthetic, however, the one irreducible fact is that a human being has taken the

stage and is performing in front of others. The simple bravery (some might say foolishness) of that act cannot be overestimated. Martha Graham, in fact, called one of her dances "Acrobats of God." The performer who follows the Voice's admonition to Ibsen's Peer Gynt to "be thyself" is performing with an added sense of security and an added dimension of technique.

Of course, the musical stage is famous, even notorious, for its share of unexamined personae, able to achieve and sustain stellar careers on the basis of extraordinary singing (studied or untrained) and dancing talent, sometimes even coupled with an instinctual dramatic sense. There can be no arguing with such a thrilling performance, saying how much better it would have been if the performer had only studied this or that technique or method. Conversely; intensive, long-term study cannot guarantee a convincing performance if one or more of the disparate elements that make up that performance are just not available to the individual. To repeat, the irreducible minimums for the musical actor are a larger-than-life personality, an acceptable voice (this covers a wide range of possibilities, vide Rex Harrison, Jimmy Durante), and a physical ease—if not a finished dance technique—on the stage.

If these elements are present in the right proportions, and you get cast in the right part, and you get to work with a director you respect, and the piece has value, and the New York Times reviewer is not overly dyspeptic that evening, and there is no newspaper strike, and word of mouth supports the good review or supplants the mixed reviews, and you avoid injury during the rehearsal period, you may get to perform in a Broadway hit. That is, you may get to do eight shows a week for at least two years, although with the present economics of the theater, two years probably won't begin to pay back a profit to the producers and creators of the show.

As they begin their four-year program, we explain to our students that they have chosen one of the most difficult and demanding of the performing arts disciplines. If they are less than totally dedicated to this study, they would be better served somewhere else. Of course, if they are convinced of their talent, and have so convinced us, then a world of rewards is available to them that is denied most other people. "Life upon the wicked stage ain't ever what a girl supposes," according to Mr. Hammerstein, Jr. But if you work like one possessed and enjoy a special talent, and if you're lucky, a career as a performer in musical theater can be much more than a girl (or boy) supposes.

APPENDIX: THE PROGRAM IN ACTION

The founders of the program brought together two seemingly disparate elements from their unique backgrounds: from one side, the rigorous training of the classical musician and dancer (and, further, the enormous demands made upon this training by the commercial musical theater) and from the other, the liberating, unorthodox, improvisatory experiences drawn from the experimental work of The Open Theater in the USA (1963-1973) and The Tabori Ensemble (1972–1985) in Germany. Many others have followed similar explorations (we don't claim to have invented the wheel), but this program's application of these practices to the training of musical performers is, if not unique, then at least unique-ish.

Aspiring students audition for admission to the program. The first year is a trial year, a kind of extended audition: if their talent finds its limits early, or if they have not brought the requisite discipline and dedication to their work, their study is terminated. A second winnowing is possible, but rather more complicated, after the second year. The third and fourth years constitute the "advanced" course of study.

The training year consists of two semesters, each about 16 weeks long—i.e., three to four weeks longer than the "normal" university/conservatory semester—in order to accommodate workshops in supplementary disciplines and extended training in voice and dance. (Three-month vacations for performers are absurd.) The workshops range from fencing, Alexander Technique, and acrobatics to an Introduction to Acting on Stage, Microphone Techniques and intensive vocal "retreats." During the school year, students attend professional theater regularly and, in the second year, make at least one theater trip to another city or country. In addition, leading musical theater professionals visit the program and give master classes.

The training is intense: a casual glance at the typical first-year schedule makes clear how intense. The days are long, averaging 12 hours of nearly continuous structured activity. Whenever possible, dance classes are scheduled in the mornings and followed by acting, speech, basics, or theater history. Because students come to the program with radically differing levels of training in the various disciplines—some are primarily dancers, some singers, some actors—the program's training schema respects the level of proficiency the student already has achieved (by providing beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels in each

discipline for each student) and fosters a feeling of ensemble in each new cohort of students. Individual instruction in voice, basics, speech, individual lab, and piano is scheduled in the afternoons; in the first year, evening hours are reserved for group instruction in musical lab, chorus and acting.

First-year students have no performance demands, and students may not accept any outside performance engagements during the academic year. This tradeoff is crucial, because many students—even those who have attained some proficiency—arrive poorly trained. In order to absorb the new training fully, they must devote their undivided attention to program instruction without being distracted by continuing in previous performance styles, which would only reinforce any bad habits and make them that much more difficult for the student to break.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="6">The First-Year Schedule</th></tr>
<tr><th>Hour</th><th>Monday</th><th>Tuesday</th><th>Wednesday</th><th>Thursday</th><th>Friday</th></tr>
<tr><td>9</td><td colspan="2"></td><td>9-10 Ballet</td><td>9-10 Jazz</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td rowspan="2">10-11:30
Ballet</td><td rowspan="2">10-11:30
Ballet</td><td rowspan="2">10-11:15
Modern Dance</td><td rowspan="2">10-11 Ballet</td><td rowspan="2">10-11:30
Ballet</td></tr>
<tr><td>11</td></tr>
<tr><td>12</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="2"></td><td rowspan="2">12-1 Music Theory</td><td rowspan="2">12:15-1:45
Music History</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td rowspan="5">2-7
Individual Lessons</td><td rowspan="3">2-6
Voice/ Speech</td><td rowspan="4">2-7
Theater History
Piano</td><td>2-5
Voice Basics</td><td rowspan="5">2-7
Individual Lessons</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td rowspan="2">5-7
Individual Lessons</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td>5-6 Chorus</td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td rowspan="4">7-10 Lab</td><td rowspan="4">7-10 Acting</td><td rowspan="4">7-10 Lab</td><td rowspan="4">7-10 Acting</td><td rowspan="4">7-10 Lab</td></tr>
<tr><td>8</td></tr>
<tr><td>9</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td></tr>
</table>

BIOGRAPHIES

BARBARA WALDEN
Master of Movement Therapy (MMT, Antioch University New England), Academy of Registered Dance Therapists (ADTR), Master of Social Work (MSW, Hunter College, New York), Certified Social Worker (CSW).

Born in Hartford, Connecticut in 1934, she made her stage debut four years later, with the Mark Twain Masquers, an acting company founded by her mother, Helen Dolgin. She received her theatrical training at the Randall School in Hartford and performed there until she moved to New York City to train as a modern dancer. She studied at the Martha Graham Studio and was for many years a member of the Paul Sanasardo and Donya Feuer Studio for Dance company. She also appeared in works by Doris Humphrey, Lee Theodore, Helen Tamiris, and others. On Broadway, she appeared in *Ankles Away*. She studied acting at the Herbert Berghoff Studio and The Open Theater. In Germany she appeared on the musical stage and on television, and worked with George Tabori as both actor and choreographer. From 1976, she was a dance and movement therapist, and from 1989 a social worker, in New York.

After many years as a dance teacher in the New York area, she joined her husband in Berlin, to collaborate with him in founding and developing the Musical/Show Department at the Berlin Hochschule (now Universität) der Künste. She was immensely proud of her two sons, Matthew and Joshua, and four grandchildren, Elijah, Aliza, Casey, and Kema. Barbara passed away in Palm Springs, California in 2012.

STANLEY WALDEN
Founder and Honorary Chairman for Life of the Musical/Show Department at the Berlin Hochschule (now Universität) der Künste, Stanley Walden was born in 1932 in Brooklyn, New York, graduated Queens College/CUNY, and studied composition with Ben Weber.

FACULTY MEMBER: The Juilliard School, Sarah Lawrence College, SUNY Purchase, The Lincoln Center Institute

GUEST COMPOSER: The Eastman School, SMU, Yale University

MUSICAL ASSISTANT: Martha Graham (*The Witch of Endor*), Josè Limon (*Chaconne*), Jerome Robbins (*The Office*);

COMMISSIONS: *Invisible Cities* (The Philadelphia Orchestra), *Weewis* (Joffrey Ballet), *After Auschwitz* (Musica Viva, The Eastman School), Chamber Music for Jan DeGaetani, Gilbert Kalish, Joel Krosnick, Robert Levin, Reri Grist and others.

THEATER: *Oh! Calcutta!* (with The Open Window-New York and international); *Scuba Duba* New York; *Pinkville* (American Place Theater and Berlin) and *The Kid* (American Place); *The Serpent* and *Mutation Show* (The Open Theater), *The Winter Project* (J. Chaiken); *Endangered Species* (Martha Clarke, BAM); *Back Country* (Boston); *Miami Lights* (Coconut Grove, FL and Mountain View, CA); *Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Arena Theater, Washington DC); *Butterfly Madam* (Palm Springs, CA); *Claire* (Bochum, Ghent, TV); *Cafè Mitte* (Grips Theater, Berlin); *The Beggar's Opera* (Renaissance Theater, Berlin); over 50 productions with George Tabori in Germany (Berliner Ensemble, Bochum, Munich, Hamburg, Bremen) and Austria (Burgtheater, Vienna and Der Kreis); *Goldberg*, Karlsruhe

OPERA: *Liebster Vater* (Bremen, Weimar, Berlin, New York); *Dr. Faustus Lights The Lights* (G. Stein; Cologne, New York); *Bachs Letzte Oper* (Erfurt, Germany)

FILM (as performer): *The Crazy American Girl* (Greenwich Film, Paris); *Frohes Fest* (1st Prize, Mannheim Film Festival); *Desperado City* (Camera d'Or, Cannes)

PERFORMANCE: 20 years as free-lance clarinetist in New York with the Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera, Radio City Music Hall, The Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, etc.; as actor with the Bochum State Theater in "Jubiläum," with Der Kreis (Vienna) in *Zum Zweiten Mal*; solo concerts in New York, Berlin, Vienna, etc.; program with Hanna Schygulla, Hebbel Theater, Berlin; Symposium "Tabori and the Theater of Holocaust," University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia

CONDUCTOR: American Dance Festival, Brandenburg Philharmonic, Budapest Chamber Orchestra (Cividale), Kurt Weill Festival (Dessau), Spectrum Concerts, Berlin.

RECORDINGS: *Some Changes* (Albany Records); *Cafè Mitte* (Sony Music); *Three Ladies* (Bridge Records); *Oh! Calcutta!* (DG Records); *Stanley Walden Chamber Music* (Naxos American Classics)

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Singing, Dancing Actors Needed! Total Performers! …but where will they come from?

This is a workbook for students and teachers of the musical stage. The authors, Barbara and Stanley Walden, have developed a course of study at the Academy of the Arts in Berlin that not only integrates the three disciplines of song, dance and acting but also makes available to the beginning student in an understandable and practical way the elements of musical theater performance that are usually available only to the finished professional, i.e. how to sing and dance in highly emotional contexts without losing control, how to draw on ones own personal experience and psychology in creating a character while fulfilling the dramatic demands of the piece, and how to keep a performance "alive upon the wicked stage" over a long period of time.