

THE TRIPARTITE RECIPROCAL PRINCIPLE IN SELF PREPARATION OF THE MUSICAL AND OPERETTA SYNTHETIC PERFORMER

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Abstract: The reciprocal principle of the synthetic performer's self-training is the focus of this study because it is a fundamental pillar of role construction in musicals and operetta performances. By the term synthetic I distinguish that performer who has mastered the vocal, dance and acting arts, through which he realizes his roles in a given musical-stage work. The definition Synthetic is most accurate because of its broadness. The purpose of the independent work is to help the artist, within a rehearsal period, to prepare for each subsequent stage of the process. It is important to be able to get to the point where, when you go out in front of an audience, you will feel confident, completely removed from the feeling of fear and mistakes. When the actor has worked out individual elements calmly during self-preparation, they remain in him as safe places and he incorporates them during rehearsals. The process that the performer enters into while exploring the role on their own, much more quickly and naturally reaches the building moment of unlocking the SPONTANEOUS GAME. It is important during the independent work that the performer calmly and analytically outlines for himself exactly who in his role makes him insecure. The three main aspects that a synthetic artist should work on are:

- the actor's construction of the textual part of the overall structure of the musical-stage work.
- vocal learning and situating in the role structure of the individual musical numbers. The logical linking of the previous acting scene and the musical number. The discovery and exploration of the musical touches given by the composer to enable the performer to build a full-blooded vocal-artistic image.
- overall plastic ideas, searching, by improvising the most accurate physical characteristic of the character, during the rehearsals with the choreographer these ideas can be shared and become the basis for developing the dance passages.

Another direction in which the performer can practice independently is working out and perfecting dance passages already set by the choreographer. There is a triunity between these elements of the musical and the operetta, with certain binary relationships between each of the elements. Particular attention is needed on the accompaniment. Again, by asking specific questions, one must gain insight into the relationship between the accompaniment, the message of the song, and the musical score. The synthetic performer may experiment different physical body behaviours during the performance of a musical number in order to be able to suggest ideas during rehearsals to continue working on with the director, choreographer and scene partners.

Keywords: operetta, musical, synthetic performer, reciprocal principle

1. PURPOSE

I place the reciprocal principle of the synthetic performer's self-training as the focus of my research because it is a fundamental pillar of role construction in musicals and operetta performances. By the term *synthetic* I distinguish that performer who has mastered the vocal, dance and acting arts, through which he realizes his roles in a given musical-stage work. I think the definition *synthetic* is the most accurate because of its broadness. In music-stage works, the need for independent work is all the more imperative because the components in this kind of performance are practically encompassing the entire spectrum of human stage activity. In order to build a full-blooded fusion of acting, music and dance presence, these three basic elements must incorporate each other. To this purpose we are introducing a new approach to independent work called the tripartite reciprocal principle.

2. METHODOLOGY OF INDEPENDENT WORK

The purpose of the independent work is to help the artist, within a rehearsal period, to prepare for each subsequent stage of the process. To be able to get to the point where, when you go out in front of an audience, you will feel confident, completely removed from the feeling of fear and mistakes. "the foreign words and actions of the role become the artist's own words and actions. A creative miracle is happening" (Stanislavski, 2015, p.131). Every stage performer strives to reach moments where "the intuitive gives birth to its gifts in the moment of spontaneity" (Spolin, 1963, p. 8).

During self-stage training, the performer can devote his or her full attention to a piece of musical scenical work. When he has worked out individual elements calmly, they remain in him as safe places and he incorporates them during the time of the rehearsals. The process that the performer enters into while exploring the role on its own, much more quickly and naturally reaches the building moment of unlocking the SPONTANEOUS GAME.

Psychologist John Kehoe describes in his book "The subconscious mind can do anything" (Kehoe, 2018, p. 65-76) four stages for the amplification and practical mastery of thought, bearing in mind the two radically different states of human thought, namely LOGICAL and INTUITIVE. In Chapter 8 called "Intuition" he breaks down the different stages for clarity, naming them - preparation, maturation, awakening, and receiving. This psychological method can be applied to the process of reaching creative inquiry during self-study.

Preparation is the first stage in which information needs to be gathered. This stage is entirely in the logical-cognitive part of the process. In this case, the synthetic performer must study the era in which the musical-stage work is set, and seek information about the composer. Avenues of awareness can be through books, paintings from a given era, personal conversations with well recognized capacities in the field of a particular musical era, genre or genres, because it is common to mix different musical genres within a musical or operetta.

An important stage is to discover biographical and creative facts related to the authors of the libretto and the music. The exchange of such information between the members of the work team brings them together and helps the individuals to speak a common creative language. As a result, after such a working process of sharing, the end result is more likely to be a more holistic musical-dramaturgical reading of the work. The information gathered will enable intuition and imagination to create unexpected creative insights.

The Maturation stage is seemingly a latent one, but all information needs time to be made sense of. You can compare it to watering a flower, the water needs time to reach the root and the root needs time to absorb the water.

Through the concrete questions that have taken shape, the performer self-provokes and focuses and thus reaches the phase of **Awakening**, which is the precursor of the unfolding of spontaneous play. For the sake of clarity of the research the processes taking place in the brain are separated, but the actual processes in the brain at this stage start to happen spontaneously. The time and place of receiving a link between the extracted information and a working concrete idea is often unexpected. (What I mean is that the clarification of a task or detail doesn't necessarily have to happen only during the rehearsal process. The new role is like a puzzle whose pieces are scattered haphazardly before us. Often, too much deliberate looking stops the awakening process.)

Receiving answers is the final stage in which the desired answers reach the seeking performer "like a premonition or insight that pops unexpectedly into your mind when you least expect it" (Kehoe, 2018, p. 71). According to Johan Huizinga "play is a free action standing outside ordinary life (p. 43). . . and it can conquer the player completely. An action covered in mystery, which through transformation manifests itself as different from that in ordinary life. Play is a function of living beings that is not entirely subject to either biological or logical or aesthetic determination" (Huizinga, 2000, p. 35). When this playfulness occurs, triggered by the professional *synthetic performer* so that he can freely, unselfconsciously embark on the enactment of a moment from the acting, vocal or dance score, he becomes self-infected with emotions and feelings that drag him along. It is not a process of research, it is the presence of the man-artist in his fantasy, which is born from himself. We can compare it to the spider producing the material with which it builds its web.

"You have to be present to the scenes without verbalizing them, so I learned to keep my mind still" (Johnston, 1981, p. 13) Johnson describes the state he finds himself in during free improvisation. Similar to the mental actions that occur during dreaming when free associations are unaffected by conscious thought control. They may also be related to a specific scene, but free thought can shape events and actions performed by the character before or after the scene. Such associative mind games can cause the actor to get up and dance.

Nothing during this type of game is forbidden and nothing is wrong.

"Improvisation occurs at the peak of a person's intelligence, i. e. , it handles the first thought impulses that arise and the full capacity of his memory, and this involves large doses of non-judgment" (Karov, 2020, p. 74). For a successful, professional synthetic performer it is certainly necessary to develop and explore both his sensory nature and develop his intellectual reserves.

3. RESULTS

Charlie Chaplin answers the fundamental question for every performer what the ideal actor is like, what must a true professional possess in order for his stage work to thrill the audience, and for the characters he creates to be rich in nuance and full-blooded. According to him, "only intellect and no feelings - this is characteristic of the perfect criminal. Only feelings and no intellect - this is the model of the harmless madman. But when the intellect and the feelings are perfectly balanced, you get the excellent actor" (Chaplin, 1969, p. 315). SELF-QUESTIONING is one of the main tools for the work, QUESTIONING the self is the driving tool of the self-provoker.

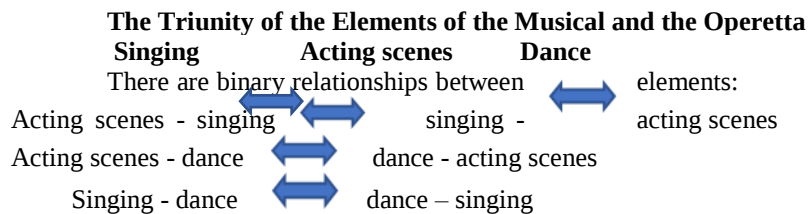
It is important during the independent work that the performer calmly and analytically outlines for himself exactly who in his role makes him insecure so that during his independent work to focus on those ones. The great contemporary composer Sondheim talks in the documentary "Six by Sondheim" about his way of writing musicals and compares it to solving puzzles, which he has loved to put together since he was a child. The journalist asks him

"you like puzzles. I wonder if arranging them is analogous to writing musicals. " Sondheim replies, "yes, to a large extent - like any kind of creative process." this response of the composer contains the essence of independent creative work.

The three main aspects that a synthetic artist should work on are:

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- overall plastic ideas, searching, by improvising the most accurate physical characterization of the character, during the rehearsals with a choreographer these ideas can be shared and become the basis for developing the dance passages. Another direction in which the performer can practice independently is working out and perfecting dance passages already set by the choreographer.

This separation of acting, vocal/singing and plastic work is only formal. I believe that the complete synthetic performer, working on the different aspects, realizes that to achieve a complete onstage synthetic image, the three main directions merge and complement each other in the working process. It is the correlation//relationships between the acting, singing and dancing elements that I call *the tripartite reciprocal principle of independent work*.



The first **acting scenes-singing** binary relationship builds on the basic principle of operetta and musical well summarized by John Kenrick " where words are not enough, the music and dance take over, bringing the show and its audiences to greater heights" (Kenrick, 2003, p. 3). Text-acting directions for building and developing the singing number can be sought through specific questions: where in the action is the song placed? Where in the dramatic action is the musical number? To whom it is directed? Is it introverted i. e. directed towards self or a partner or a group of other acting characters or the audience?

What is the meaning of the text and what is the parabola of the character's thought development? More often than not, the reaching of dramatic conflict in the action of a music-stage work is the reason why characters reach the limit of speech and move into singing, which in turn unfolds emotions to a higher degree of expression. As Tracy Moor sums up "if the Moment Before is adequately filled with subtext, you will know because the song's introduction will feel like it is coming from the singer, rather than being played for the singer" (Moor, 2016, p. 90).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between the composer's and lyricist's decisions, the accents they have placed (both in the musical and the spoken language), the inferences based on the performer's research (the subtext which the actor discovers), lead to "the music and lyrics must appear to be coming from the actor-to be something that the character is creating in that moment." (Moor, 2016, p. 90). A true emotionally intense start to the singing can only be achieved if the performer continues and builds on the previous acting scene. In order to achieve a smooth entry into the singing, the rehearser may introduce the practice of always playing/pronouncing his final lines on his acting stage, those immediately before the musical number. As a first stage of working on the smooth connection between the lyrics and the song, he can continue to recite the lyrics of the musical number as a monologue, his main goal being to make sense of the development of the lyrics as part of his character's acting development. Particular attention is needed on the accompaniment. Again, by asking specific questions, you have to look into the relationship between the accompaniment and the message of the song. Does the accompaniment emphasize on the mood of the song or is it in contrast to the meaning of the lyrics and the situation in which the song is set?

In the **Singing-acting scenes** relation, the direction of study is reversed. The singer-actor sets the musical number with its emotional intensity as a starting point for the development of the preceding acting scene. The main questions that the performer must seek to answer in this paradigm is at what point in the textual excerpt the themes that the musical number will develop emerge. Considering the nature of the entire musical number and specifically its

beginning and to what rhythm, strength of voice, and emotion the cast must build in order to reach a natural need for the character to sing.

In terms of the musical score, the initial questions to which the performer must answer, are: what is the structure of the arias my character is performing? What are the compositional decisions that make an initial impression – the tempo, the size, the characteristic musical lines, the style or styles in which the work is written? Challenges, vocally speaking, that stand out? These questions are also important in terms of how the performer will be able to properly allocate his forces and energy.

The overall plastic presence of the character can be built on the basis of the **acting scene-dance** interrelationship by exploring and making sense of the main features of the character. Its manifestations are explicated through the physical behaviour of the body through gestures and facial expressions. Often in the structure of musicals and operetta librettos the authors set bright comedy characters. For this type of typical, acutely-set and parody roles, performers must seek and build an adequate, vivid and memorable physical presence. In order to avoid the danger that the acute characterization remains only at the level of external presence, the performer must seek inner initiation, directing and concretizing his independent work through questions: what function does my character perform in the structure of the musical-stage work? What degree of distinctiveness is it necessary to achieve? Which main characteristic features of the character are brought to the fore?

The opposite direction of research namely **dance-acting scenes** can inspire the dancing artist to introduce into his overall plastic presence gestures, rhythm of gait, characteristic of the dance numbers he performs. A certain gesture can be inferred as a gestus that gives the image a more universal meaning.

The synthetic performer may experiment different physical body behaviours during the performance of a musical number in order to be able to suggest ideas during rehearsals to continue working on together with the director, the choreographer and the stage partners. When we talk about the **singing-dance** paradigm we explore by asking specific questions about the composer-submitted musical line of the character, we make use of specific directions such as specific musical line, tempo, rhythm, characteristic musical touches. Entering into the concreteness of the musical structure, it becomes the motor of *spontaneous play*, the artist launches improvisations focused on the plastic behaviour of his character during the musical number.

The reciprocal way of rehearsing with a **dance-singing** direction can give to the dancing-singer, a clear sign of where the accents are of the plastic presence of the singer. The performer needs to make sure they match the music with the dance peaks. At the same time following the development of the dance line, the performer must properly distribute his physical emotional energy. When there is a solo number, the performer needs to carefully refine and distribute his physical and plastic workload.

One very important observation - when a problem arises in the process of learning and practicing one particular element (acting, singing or plastic) the answers, solutions can be sought through the other two elements.

Binary interrelationships are leading to reciprocity of the elements united in the triunity of acting, singing and dancing, which are the essence of the musical and operetta styles.

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