

**ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS IN PRAGUE**

**THEATRE FACULTY**

Authorial Acting

Authorial Creation and Pedagogy

**MASTER'S THESIS**

**Musical Sensitivity and Actor's Expression**

**Ivana Atanasova**

Thesis advisor: Martin Pšenička

Examiner: Kateřina Daňková

Date of thesis defense: January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Academic title granted: MA in Authorial Acting

Prague, 2018

**AKADEMIE MÚZICKÝCH UMĚNÍ V PRAZE**

**DIVADELNÍ FAKULTA**

Autorského Herectví

Autorské Tvorby a Pedagogiky

**DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE**

**Hudbní Senzitivita a Herecký Výraz**

**Ivana Atanasova**

Vedoucí práce: Martin Pšenička

Oponent prác: Kateřina Daňková

Datum obhajob: 27.12.2018

Přidělovaný akademický titul: MgA Autorského Herectví

Praha, 2018

## **D e c l a r a t i o n**

I declare that I have prepared my Master's Thesis independently on the following topic:

### **MUSICAL SENSITIVITY AND ACTOR'S EXPRESSION**

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.

Prague, date: 27/12/18

.....

Signature of the candidate

## **Warning**

The use and public application of the findings of this thesis or any other treatment thereof are permissible only on the basis of a licensing contract, i.e. the consent of the author and of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.

### User's Log

By signing below, the user attests that he/she has used this thesis solely for study purposes, and he/she declares that he/she will always cite the thesis appropriately among the sources used.

Name	Institution	Date	Signature

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my thesis advisor Martin Pšenička, for agreeing on to take this journey with me in urgent times, as well professor Kateřina Daňková for accepting to be my opponent.

I am grateful for the consultations I had with professor Jana Pilatová and the help for finding my track that those meetings provided, as well as the inspiration being driven.

I thank to all the professors from KATaP for their openness and interest in my explorations. Studying in this department allowed me to create more soulful version of my own self. I thank professor Hanka Malaníková, for being my master performance's mentor.

I hereby thank the International Visegrad Fund Scholarship, without which I would not be able to study abroad.

This thesis owes a great support from the always present Vilma, my true friend, supporter, companion in soul, aunt, emotional doctor.

I would like to thank all my friends who had me in their apartments when I was writing this thesis, as well as to all the musicians who were willing to answer to my questions.

Thank you, my family, for supporting me and trusting me always!

## **Abstract**

### **Musical Sensitivity and Actor's Expression**

Within this master thesis I would like to express my understanding of the life inside a performer when this act is happening, by the eyes of musical means. Since the inner world is so difficult to be put on paper and made rationalized (could it be at all?!), as well as the sensitivity one could have towards it when performing, I am going to take concrete examples of the colliding points of music and theatre and the moment when they live together on stage. In order to come to the question of the 'inner rhythm', something that I imagine as crucial for existing on stage, I would like to examine what happens with the performer's expression when the musical sensitivity enters the world of creation. Followed by a beat that never stops, I see the performer's body as a music being navigated and operated. By approaching through my own experiences, this master thesis tends to explore how music and theatre (in their pure, initial form) meet in the performer's expression and where the possible edge/point when they become one could be.

## **Abstrakt**

### **Hudební Senzitivita a Herecký Výraz**

Ve své magisterské práci popisuji vnitřní svět pohybového umělce, který vzniká během uměleckého přednesu, z pohledu hudební terminologie. Lze vůbec takové komplikované emotivní pochody uvnitř člověka takto racionalizovat a přetavit do formy psaného textu. Postupně předložím několik konkrétních příkladů situací, v nichž dochází ke spojení hudebního světa s tím hereckým. Zaměřím se na moment, kdy oba tyto světy společně ožívají na jevišti. Především tak činím se zaměřením na "vnitřní rytmus" umělce, něco co považuji za zcela stěžejní prvek během živého vystupování. Proto bych chtěla popsat jaký vliv má na umělecký projev okamžik, kdy hudební cítění vstupuje do světa kreace. Tělo umělce chápu jako hudbu, která je manifestována prostřednictvím jeho pohybů. Zkrze mé vlastní zkušenosti proskoumám to, kde se hudba a divadlo (ve svých čistých podobách) potkávají v umělcově projevu a pokusím se najít místo, ve kterém dochází k jejich splnutí v jedno.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	8
-------------------	---

### Chapter 1: INNER RHYTHM AND LITTLE WORD GAME

I. Entering the world of inner rhythm and performer.....	9
II. The instrument and the actor.....	12
III. Examining limitations.....	15

### Chapter 2: PERSONAL PULSING

I. Initial impulse and finding a proper narrative form.....	16
II. Developing the idea: sounds and changes in dramaturgical structure.....	19
III. Continuation: musical impulses and theatre work.....	22
IV. The personal and the social through musical impulses: seeing the experience from aside.....	24

### Chapter 3: BRIEF *MUSICAL* JOURNEY TO THE PREVIOUS CENTURY

I. The modes of production and music according to Attali – a short note.....	28
II. Stanislavski: the <i>actor-who-sings</i> vs. the <i>actor-who-speaks</i> .....	29
III. Brook and the musical linguistic work.....	32
IV. Meyerhold's hidden treasure.....	33

### Chapter 4: MASTER AUTRORIAL PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE: MY OWN INNER – WHAT?

I. Choosing poetry and finding the voice.....	34/35
II. Seeking for an expression: playing with the poetry.....	38
III. Moving body and mind.....	43
IV. Words, music and language?.....	45

### Chapter 5: MUSICAL RESPONSES AND THEATRE CONCLUSION(S)

### CONCLUSION

I. To conclude or not.....	54
II. Finally – an end.....	55/56

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	58
-------------------	----

## INTRODUCTION

OK. You make a step. You stop. You take a breath. Then you make another step. Here, you don't look at the previous one you took, you just remember(ed) it. You take a breath again. You continue. Another step. You breathe out. One step at a time. Breathing in and out. As you lean on to the previous one, the next one is already approaching. Now, there's no time to think over, but just to go on. Step plus step, plus step, plus step and dance is born. You already established a way of remembering them, now, you are to stay in the moment and observe your body. Does it breathe? Can you feel your tiptoes? Where do your legs go? Or, are you stepping in one spot? Marching? For sure it doesn't matter. Your body is already moving, it's in full action. Your mind tries to trick you. Questions appear on the way, but can you stop? Is your head being led by questions and thoughts, or by the very rhythm you just started grasping and enriching? How does the inner rhythm feel like? Perhaps, that's a question to pay attention to.

You stop. You observe your breathing. All that you have done is in you. Is the body still moving? Does it dance? No additional thoughts are necessary here. Just a reconciliation of what you just did and of the questions and thoughts that might appeared in your mind.

Then, continuation happens. Now you can move on making steps, but you can also reconstruct and play with it. You discover a new way. One more, one plus. Your own way. One by one, steps become divided, ornamented, paused, looped, enriched... supported by the many ones you have made. By the ones you have created. Like this, you can continue to eternity and back. Now it feels like you are on a ride. You can ride. What is it that you can enrich now? What is it that you present now? How do you look like? Where is the "audience's" eye and can it touch upon you now?

...

To be unblocked in normal life is a luxury. It is very common that nowadays we forget about ourselves and by wanting to reach a "type of freedom" we see the stage as a possibility of unblocking many things that keep us locked in the "normal life". By "we" I mean "us", the stage performers. We want to enjoy and let ourselves go in what is happening there and feel a little bit more relieved afterwards, a little bit wider. But in theatre, you ought to be able to play with the blocks and manage the unblocks.



## Chapter 1: INNER RHYTHM AND LITTLE WORD GAME

### I

#### ***Entering the world of inner rhythm and performer***

What does exactly inner rhythm mean? Is it surrendering to the moment and welcoming your body wisdom? How is that connected to our emotions? Can we feel it and stay with it to that point where all our body and being involved could emerge its own performing expression? In filmmaking, for instance, there is a term called *internal rhythm* and it is used to signify the tempo of an action within a moving picture in a *shot*. Many things such as camera movements, usage of distance, movements of objects and people or even lighting are included. In my opinion, the term allows us to understand the life of what we see on the screen, seen and understood from the outside. Perhaps not most accurately, we can say the same about theatre when watching a performance. Nevertheless, there is another life happening at the same time, and that is the inner life of the performer which within self brings its own unique rhythm. Let us imagine that all of these terms, *movement*, *distance*, *camera*, *action* etc. could be applied in our visage of entering the performer's perception of his/her own actions. By being there, we might be able to look upon an inner rhythm as something meaningful for communication with the outer world which in this case is reaching the audience.

Movement is something that never stops and in overall, it is connected to the physical perception of things. Camera, according to Ivan Vyskočil, would be the always present eye of the performer that observes the actions. Distance is the path you need to walk in order to understand those actions. Following this logic, we slowly move towards the actor's existence on stage. What we might lack at this point is building those bridges of understanding how one thing moves towards the other one without losing its/the overall essence. It is like flying over 3D landscape, continuously moving closer and far away without landing on any spot. Could music with its sensitivity help in bringing those pieces together?

When you reach upon your inner rhythm and you are able to recognize it, your body itself becomes an instrument existing on the waves of that rhythm. This, within itself brings a

certain musicality. In fact, the rhythm inside is something that never stops. Just like the movement. We simply do not feel it all the time. We are humans being raised and living among so many artificial sounds and rhythms around us, that we are forced to forget about the one we have inside us, the one through which we exist in the chaos of all kinds of rhythms surrounding us constantly. Nevertheless, we should be able to differentiate the inner rhythm a person bears within him/herself from the rhythm when the act of performing is happening. As an actor, getting to know with your inner rhythm takes time. It takes attention and awareness of all we do in our life. How long can you hold that rhythm awareness? How long can you stretch it? How long can you keep it? Does the inner rhythm help us to become more sensitive in a musical way? Or the rhythm itself is music?

Let us start by a brief examination of musician's stage existence. When a musician is coming across this experience, he holds something next to him. His body is being connected to an outside entity, which is the instrument. That is his/her 'bound to be' partner. To keep the actual rhythm which the melody and the style requires, a drummer has sticks in his/her hands. But since he/she is being with his/her 'partner', he/she is to connect his/her inner rhythm, with the one we can hear. Furthermore, he can be subtle or he can go wild, but no matter how wild he/she gets or loses himself/herself into the rhythm, we see him/her with his/her partner on stage – the drums. We have an image of "someone playing drums", because it is the actual one we literally see with our eyes and precisely this image influences our perception towards him. We see him/her as a person who plays with his/her instrument and becomes one with it alongside the music he/she is creating or producing. No matter how deep he/she can go into this, we know that this person is having drums next to him/her, he/she is playing on them and physically existing as such. He/she is here to use that instrument, to enrich its power, to "become one with it" and to keep that image for audience's attention. This awareness of *me* being present and playing *my* instrument in front of an audience, opens a field of opportunities for *me to play* in general (not only the instrument). I believe that this is the moment that happens when us as an audience get dragged by the musician's virtuosity and there is nothing more left than to enjoy the virtuoso. We can dance, we can chant, we can clap, we can lose ourselves out of enjoyment, or we can stay still and admire the image we are watching, experiencing and being part of. But what happens with the musician's inner world?

I remember many times myself being on concert - everybody around me is dancing, and I am standing in one spot and simply watching the musician playing with his/her instrument while breathing in and out the sounds he/she is making. The music. As a performer and somebody who studied and experienced acting on stage, I would always spontaneously project myself in the musician's place (at least just for a moment) to see the perspective from there and then I feel my body reacting to the thought; starting to make shapes and impulses in the air, reacting with feet and knees, or arms and belly, or head and shoulders as if I am inside the instrument I am witnessing. Does this mean that I am feeling the instrument inside me or I am simply projecting an idea of how does it feel to play something? This question might be crucial for the further development of this thesis and I am going to come back to it.

In this manner I am going to continue towards the performer's perception and the difference on how we perceive things when existing on stage as musicians and actors. Since we are all individually different, the existence is also different for each performer, which clearly leads to different type of expression. What could be similar is the experience one can go through depending on a certain style (the chosen type of media/expression).

The official Oxford Dictionary definition for *performer* is: **1.** *A person who performs for an audience,* **2.** *A person or thing that behaves or works in the way mentioned* (ex. She is a poor performer in singing). The word itself has a spread usage nowadays. Actors have become performers in many ways and reached types of expression that many times are not necessarily connected to the world of acting. Artists use their bodies in installations as part of a performative concept, others make experimental sounds streaming them in live and they are still part of a performance. The "new age" emerging necessity to split up from framed artistic performative expression has brought a new meaning (or rather broaden) for the word 'performer', as well as the usage of the word 'performance'. To be more concrete in this context, all of the important theatre practitioners from the 20<sup>th</sup> century were exploring and examining the difference, or rather the inclusion and exclusion between the terms *theatre* and *performance*. They have clearly shown that they are not synonymous.<sup>1</sup> Anyhow, one thing

---

<sup>1</sup> "Theatre is not opposite of performance. To be precise: the theatre *includes* the performance but *does not imply it*. That means it can cancel performance, or at least suspend it, whilst maintaining, using and fine-tuning all of its instruments. Since it includes the performance without implying it, theatre may be defined as *that which goes beyond the performance*: in space, in time and in terms of function." Ibid. – Franco Ruffini, *Stanislavski's extremism*, from Schino M., *Alchemists of the Stage: Theatre Laboratories in Europe*, 2009

still stays unchanged and that is the contact with an audience, as simply stated in the Oxford definition. Without this relation, a performance cannot exist. Here and after, we are going to move inside the frames of theatre performing and possibly touch upon the points where this art becomes a mutual sharing within another performing discipline and that is music. In other words, taking into account every type of theatre expression being influenced or in touch with music in a practical sense but also, and more important, having the sensitivity to it. Many questions may arrive and they are all meant to tickle our imagination and deepen our thoughts about the understanding of stage existence and expression.

## **II**

### ***The instrument and the actor***

An actor, is an instrument to himself/herself, as the Stanislavski would define. He/she is to show this instrument, to build it up, enrich craftiness and share his/her talent. Let us remind ourselves that he/she is unique human being playing *with* his/her instrument on stage. There is no doubt that Stanislavski used this explanation in order to point out the importance of “getting to know with myself” and the type of work and efforts an actor has to accomplish continuously to become truthful and he was very much precise in the usage of that definition. Furthermore, that helped the actors he was working with to understand better the type of awareness they have to put in their work. Nevertheless, this statement, that the actor is an instrument to himself/herself - truthful as it is as well as explained to that point, that we can understand why an actor differs from a musician, per example, is not to be taken for granted. I find it as a sensitive expression and I would like to examine its edges for the purpose of this study; the point of departure in understanding theatre expression through musical means by the performer’s lenses may lay here.

Let us go step by step. Let us find the sensitive spots of this very rounded metaphorical explanation. Humankind has invented many types of musical instruments. All of them are unique in their own way. Even when it comes to the same type of instruments, there is still a difference. A violin differs from another violin depending on the type of wood it is being made of, as well as the age it has or even how much it is being used, which all together influences the sound being created. Furthermore, this would influence the attention of the musician and

the care of the sound coming out from his/her instrument; it would perhaps even develop a special attitude leading to a certain style of his/hers. Anyhow, we tune all violins according to the same pattern; jazz musicians tune all pianos the same, Indians tune all sitars the same... As for humans, none of us tunes the same, we do not have a pattern of how to start dancing or acting on stage... According to this, each actor is a unique instrument on his/her own. Of course, Stanislavski knew this and his intention was not to emphasize the actual difference between a human being and a musical instrument, but rather find sharing points of departure. Anyhow, we can all agree upon the fact that an instrument has its borders of usage when it comes to the sound capacity. Does the actor have borders of reaching things? Do we, as human beings have borders of capabilities? The longer you use an instrument, the better sound it makes, the better the musician expresses through it; the more the actor works on him/herself, the better he/she becomes, the deeper he/she reaches his/her inner self. There is only a slight difference – by the work of the musician an instrument spreads its capabilities horizontally, its sound gains better quality helped by the musician's efforts; in this way the musician gets to know with him/herself as well; while the actor by getting to know with him/herself through constant work is not only spreading, but deepening as well, which means he/she also goes vertically in the exploration (which partially, is due to the fact that he/she does not have a physical instrument he/she can connect with). We can say the same for the musician also, but not for the instrument<sup>2</sup>. In this manner, the efforts in which an actor is engaged are different than the ones from a musician. Through this vertical exploration, the actor enters the world of his/her inner beats of which a rhythm is consisted.

As an actress, when I think of my body being an instrument to myself I think: "How do I look?" and then, "What do I say?", "What am I thinking of that influences my body?" Can I tune this?

The result is always different. Facing myself and my questions is always different. Mirroring my actions is always different. I cannot tune my voice and my appearance each time I go out on stage the same. For I am never the same.

An instrument can transform into something else in the hands of his/her master. It can reach flashing moments of divine which could entrap man's eyes and ears. Because the instrument

---

<sup>2</sup> Anyhow, measuring the efforts and their outcome, as well as comparing them is not useful, because exactly this way of division restricts us from understanding their uniqueness, but also the points that these two medias (music and theatre) share.

actually “portrays” the soul of its musician. It will produce sound coming out from the hands of its master.

Therefore, if a musician is to find his inner rhythm by connecting with his instrument in such a way that a relation between human being (without borders of capabilities) and an object (with borders of capabilities) is being made, an actor discovers his inner rhythm by doing both at the same time, taking him/herself as an object and **manifesting this contact in his/her expression!** According to Ivan Vyskočil, to be able to “see yourself” from the outside brings the eye of the observer. This level of awareness is really important in order to come to the truthful moment of “playing with myself”, something that he considers as crucial for the actor’s existence on stage<sup>3</sup>.

Actors have their soul for themselves. In their case a contact, like the one that musician makes with his/her instrument, could only be done with huge attentiveness and trust that *I lean onto myself* only. Systematically explained it would mean that the contact is happening inside me, but I need type of awareness which would help me to recognize it and continue building on it so that a truthful expression could come in the “outside world”. Here comes the crucial importance of the observer. By being able to take and see myself as an object of my own play – I am an instrument to myself, I play with it – I support the awareness from the inside by giving a response to it. This reaction coming from my ‘inner world’ establishes connection which in its own way provokes an expression and creates truthfulness. The object of my observation is in a way inside me so I have to have the eye of the observer in order to help that inner rhythm become alive, gain its form. A rhythm has to have its objectification, meaning that it has to come across something to be able to come true; by giving a response to the observer a connection is being made. The inner rhythm becomes alive and becomes true.

In other words, I should not only be able to see myself as an instrument, but feel and recognize the instrument inside me, and support this awareness from the inside, from my being and my existence so that a ‘truthful’ connection could be done.

I consider the realization of that connection as something that bears beat within, that moves as a flow throughout and perhaps, has its melody. This does not come out IN music (that the

---

<sup>3</sup> This is also part of the authorial acting approach, bringing in the road of “finding the author” on stage.

audience can actually hear), but maybe THROUGH music (that the actor can sense inside him/her).

Nevertheless, is the expression “the instrument IN me” precise enough? We are reaching a level of deeper understanding of words and more sensitive usage of expressions.

### III

#### ***Examining limitations***

Lisa Wolford, who in *Grotowski's Vision of the Actor* examines basic elements of his approach to performance, describes how Grotowski was being cautious towards taking the *author's* body as instrument. His physical and vocal training techniques, as he warned, were to ‘serve only as the preparation for genuine creativity’ (Wolford, 2007: 194). Taking the physical exercises for preparing the body as instrument, as she states leaning on to his words, can allow the actor to address specific limitations, such as a lack of stamina or flexibility, but they are certainly not sufficient enough to enable him accomplishing a very important task: *revealing yourself* in performance. As I mentioned at the beginning, this journey takes time and sensitive attention and it is a fragile surface to lean on only by taking your body as an instrument, especially when it comes to physical exercises. There are no recipes how to accomplish this task. The act of being with yourself, getting to know with your inner world and revealing yourself at the same time, Grotowski calls it *personal sincerity*. Based upon this, the actor – author has many challenges ahead than just taking him/herself as an instrument. This is part of the road. Even though I tried to examine the term ‘instrument’ to its extended meanings, taking into consideration not only the body, but the overall existence of an actor, I would not dare to make conclusions of any type. I am probably catching possibilities of how we can see the actor's discoveries put in a certain context. Of course, there is more in the experience and work than just ‘taking myself as an instrument’. What I believe is important, is finding your own awareness of how you transform things in creation with the notion of rhythm. Putting attention to that rhythm might lead to more sensitive creation and stage authorship.

## Chapter 2: PERSONAL PULSING

### I

#### *Initial impulse and finding proper narrative form*

In the second year of my master studies I did an authorial presentation, inspired by a Macedonian national folk dance. This experience was followed by adding actual sounds to the piece, as a continuation of the idea and expansion of its stage potential. It ended up as a collaboration with a colleague who made the sounds. Mostly, we developed those sounds using a digital semi modular synthesizer. We also used modulated recordings. Its stage expression was important to me, as it was through me and my creation that the changes were arriving. I could observe what is happening with the whole piece while my sensitivity to it alongside the creation of sounds was emerging.

The name of the dance is “*Teshkoto*”, meaning “*The Hard One*”. It is a male chain dance (*oro*<sup>4</sup>) that originated in the western Macedonian mountainous region of Reka (most common villages for doing the dance are Galichnik, Lazaropole and Gari), whose inhabitants are known as Mijaks. Their dialect is Mijachki. The majority of population in this region are Eastern Orthodox, but there is also a minority of Macedonian-speaking Muslims, called Torbeshi who dance *Teshkoto*. Both Mijaks and Torbeshi, as other Macedonian peasants were engaged in agriculture and herding, but many of their males are well known for doing seasonal migratory patterns around the region to find work and earn more money for their family. Apart from being performed at weddings<sup>5</sup>, its function, slightly particularized in a way, was often a performance taking place whenever a village sent young men off for an often-permanent trip abroad to earn money. Being considered as one of the most striking and special Macedonian dances, through years, it has become a national symbol, often considered as an embodiment of both the struggle and the resilient spirit of Macedonians through centuries.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Oro (horo, horos, kolo)* is a type of social dance, popular in Eastern Europe where the dancers are joint in a chain formation and moving in circular motion, existing in both open and closed circle form.

<sup>5</sup> Nowadays it is performed frequently by Macedonia’s National Folk Ensemble *Tanec* and at the annual *Galičnik Wedding*, a cultural festival in western Macedonia.



If I try to analyze the reason why I chose to work through the theme of this dance in my authorial presentation (or simply, why I chose to talk about it!), I would probably get into a network of explanations which will sound quite confusing as it was for me during the process, while looking for the main line, or more precisely – the focus inside. I probably wanted to share a story which would help me to find other meanings inside, intending to break borders with which the dance very often is linked (I elaborate this thought about the linking more precisely towards the end of this chapter). Therefore, I consider that it was important for me personally to find how can I play with the actual story behind the it.

What I first did was finding a way how to share the story of the dance. The narration structure was very important for the audience in order to understand what I want to “pass” further. Therefore, I put into words: my research about the anthropological meaning of the dance, historical facts about how it began, deconstruction of the physical appearance of the dance and my personal comments. Simplified, the narration was consisted of: facts about the dance and my story within. Anyhow, there was a slight problem right at the beginning – I was having troubles with finding my “real story” inside this authorial presentation. In other words, I had been looking for the layer which goes beyond just conveying a dance story. In this manner, I was having troubles with “choosing the right words”. I was not able to avoid not making the narration look like presentation of the dance. The sentences I had been using, so far seemed like some lesson. It is very hard when an actually existing and unique style of dance form, unknown to the audience, should be used to describe something else, to transpass a story of mine which I still had not found at the time, or, to be more precise, had not articulated. “What is my main interest in this dance” was one of the basic questions that I was going after. In my notes at the time I have written:

- *This is NOT historical presentation*
- *This is NOT cultural lesson*

What mattered was to really find the characters inside, as well as to find myself in the story and the position of the narrator – again me. Practically speaking, I was actually lacking my personal comments. As an addition to this, I have written: “*Where is the narrator? Why is she here?*” I was obviously having an untangled issue which needed time. Usually in these moments you are only common with the feeling which you want to share and that is abstract, since a feeling can be initiator, not a fulfillment. Therefore, I decided to play with the fact that

I have troubles distinguishing (positions of) characters in the story, all of which were played by me. Those were:

- the presenter – the one talking about the dance,
- the player – the one playing the characters from the dance's story,
- me – my existence as Ivana within the whole piece.

In this way, the narrator was shifting between two lines of the story: facts about the dance, which also meant being in the story of the dance and dilemma about what am I presenting. She (the narrator) was the one sharing a story which she wanted to share and the one asking for better clarity in intentions by having doubts. This meant that now the personal comments were the questions about 'what do I want to achieve'. Moreover, distinguishing for me personally meant being more precise and reach clearness with the structure's layers. It was meant to help me in my stage existence. Eventually, I played with this situation when I first presented the idea at the *klauzury*<sup>6</sup>. I played on the fact that not knowing what do I want to achieve by retelling this story could bring me new and exciting moments, and what is more important – it could bring me new knowledge and awareness of my piece. And so it happened.

Performing with the awareness that my piece is not shaped when it comes to the initial idea and that I am not certain about it and putting that fact as a play inside, lead me to new discoveries and more clear perspectives:

1. I was certain that playing with the dilemma of distinguishing characters is not what I was seeking for. The dilemma issue was to be out because that was just part of the helping process. It meant that the position of the narrator should be changed.
2. After the 'authorial presentation' and having contact with an audience, it was obvious that the emotional story behind the dance that was connected to the characters inside was much more important than the actual facts about it<sup>7</sup>. This layer should have had/was supposed to have more sharpened focus in order to help me find the narrator and reach the overall structure's focus.

---

<sup>6</sup> Czech term for the period of closing semester in art schools.

<sup>7</sup> By 'actual facts' I mean the explanation of what does a step mean, what is the usage of an instrument, in what way the dancers are positioned etc. After some time, I realized that it is actually not an issue of the facts themselves, but in what manner they are passed over.

When you work on something which causes you troubles to articulate what is the idea really about, the only way to untangle things, perhaps, is by trying to discover that in the working process. Of course, it always takes time until you realize that you actually had articulated yourself and there is a clue inside what you have already created. You just could not see it. Not recognize it. (Why? I don't know.) While writing notes for this thesis, I came up with the realization that during the process and in all of the solutions there had been just ME who is part of it. My own feelings about it, my own discoveries, my own way of retelling, my initiative about it, my interest in it... all of this, had been my own existence as Ivana inside the story. My own rhythm. Perhaps, I should have turned more towards the initial impulse – existing on stage through the dance, feeling the dance in my body. Simply standing and “doing nothing”. Listening. Then, lifting up a leg to make a step, lifting up the body to make another step. Breathing. One step at a time and words start coming out. Emitting themselves in the space. Nevertheless, one dives into finding a practical solution when being in the working process. Conclusions of this type, if they happen to appear on the way, are considered as a side effect. (Why? I don't know.)

## //

### ***Developing the idea: sounds and changes in dramaturgical structure***

As I felt inspired from what I was doing, regardless the problem of finding a better narrative structure I decided to develop the piece in such a way that specially made electronic sounds inspired by the dance would be added to it as part of the performance. This was the second stage of working on this idea. In fact, an *Authorial Presentation*, which is part of the programme in KATaP, should evaluate and estimate how an idea and the work on it is understandable and how it communicates with an audience. It is meant to help the student understand better what he/she is exploring in such a way that all three elements of expression (speech, voice and acting) would come together. It is a dropped seed. Furthermore, it can be taken as a model in theatre where a concept which departs from text, transforms into stage creation. I believe that is why it is called “presentation”.

So far, I was speaking about the dance in general and its conveyed meaning throughout my working process, or about my efforts to find the line connecting both my story and the overall

one around the dance. Anyhow, my culture's folk dances are always highly connected to the music they bring with themselves. *Teshkoto*, or *The Hard One* is considered to be one of the most difficult Macedonian folk dances to perform (maybe even the most difficult one)<sup>8</sup>. 'It begins with a dramatic, slow and nonmetric section where the dancers execute precise lifts, steps, and leaps. The musicians, accompanying the whole dance, must expertly follow the leader, picking up on visual embodied cues' (Silverman: 2015, 97). This inseparable part, the music of the dance, brings in another attention, one that was a firm part of my whole process and above all, a trigger that influenced the construction of all my stage expression. *Teshkoto's* music is not accompanied by any lyrics and singing part. It does not have a regular type of meter, which is the case with many Macedonian dances and folk songs. Its meter is rubato, a rhythm which is not countable in beats. Perhaps this "broken/undefined/stretched" structure essentialized in the first part of the dance, coming out of the powerful instruments' sounds, resembling like an organized chaos when you hear it, has dragged my attention and tickled an inspiration in a theatrical manner. If in our theatrical understanding, we take it as a divided structure, meaning that the physical appearance of the dance is one and the music is another thing, the powerful notion of the musical part appears to be vivid in another way. My understanding and perception about the dance's music came to be more visible during this stage of my work.

There are two types of instruments being used in the dance, *zurla* and *tapan*<sup>9</sup>. When the first documented volume of folk dances by the Janković sisters appeared (1934), a lot of attention was paid to its slowness, the contrasting latter section, as well as to the communication between the leader of the dance and the *tapan* player, as a result of the improvisatory nature of the music and dance<sup>10</sup>. Working with my colleague, my intention was to develop the sounds based upon the metaphorical signs in the dance's "story". Structurally, we were focused on creating an atmosphere. Per example, one of the most striking movements in the whole dance is when the dancers go slowly all the way down to the ground on one leg, while putting the opposite heel onto the bending knee. This happens throughout the whole movement of going down while the heel remains lifted on its toes. Practically, the whole

---

<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, this could be considered as a myth. Also, the dance is not named like that because it is hard to perform, but because it belongs to a group of chain dances which are called 'Teshki Ora', due to their slow movements.

<sup>9</sup> *Zurla* is a double reed pipe, in this case played in pairs and *tapan* is a two-headed drum.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3h3BI4Sotcl>

body's weight is supported by the five toes and the ball part of the foot. At the same time, dancers hold hands in the line of the shoulders, keeping up the chain structured form. In the very dance, this movement represents eternal fight against the earth's gravity and the necessity to split up from that heaviness that drags the spirit down<sup>11</sup>. For me, visually speaking, this looks like a spiral stretching. My colleague developed sounds according to it, attempting to display the earth's heaviness by creating deep sounds or reaching sound frequency that resembles sky, as if being up. We worked using simple signs and associations such as: *flow* or *stretching*, *earth* or *air*. Then, sounds inspired by the actual instruments used, *zurla* and *tapan* would be *apocalyptic* or *thunderous*. Eventually, there were five types of sounds based upon five, inseparable parts of the dance's story, according to my reading and what I considered as important to support what I was seeking for. Divided, the associations emerging sounds looked like this:

- *EARTH > heaviness of ground*
- *SKY > tendency to go up, to reach stars*
- *APOCALIPSE > my association about the zurla's sound*
- *LIFE BEAT and THUNDER > my association about the tapan's sound*
- *Air FLOW > saying goodbye to the young men (as part of the dance's background story)*

By this time, I was simply following my inspiration driven by the topic, which led into creativity with sounds and collaboration. This path of development was not intentionally opened to solve the issue of finding more apprehensive dramaturgical support. The created sounds were there to accompany my presence, to support my story and to provoke audience's attention. In a way, they could be taken as a sound installation, as part of the viewer's experience. Despite this fact, working on creating something plus, driven by musical inspiration withdrew another attention which was being more sensitive to my personal story. It felt like the sounds are affecting the words I am using and that the movements I am discovering are enlarging the sound quality. It meant that the dramaturgical structure is slowly changing and pointing its way out as a specific form. It was suggested to me by one of my professors at the very beginning, before the first presentation, that I should take care of the rhythm I am using and

---

<sup>11</sup> "Heaviness of living" in the context of slavery, hard times of living, sufferings that piled up through the centuries of subjugation.

make it longer. It is actually the rhythm of the whole piece and the rhythm in me. Perhaps, it is worth to mention that only in the *tapan*'s case we had a recorded sound whose intention was to catch glimpses of beats in its actual rhythm (in the dance). I am sharing parts of my diary notes during this second stage of working on the piece: *"I am moving through music and text. I am looking for the story's rhythm that my body bears. I am not thinking of any form, so far. I am not seeking for a final result. Should the new created sound be part of this as a character, help, or maybe underlining something? Perhaps I am the drum through which the rhythm moves, where the stoicism takes form and place, and the flow passes through..."*



Figure 1: From KATaP's student festival, *Nablízko*

### ///

#### **Continuation: musical impulses and theatre work**

Did this whole process helped me or made my work more complicated? Perhaps that is not the right question. Even though I was asking myself all the time "Where does the story moves? What am I retelling?", an inner impulse was present all the time, leaving me no space to hesitate in what I was doing. I believe that the musical inspiration brought a line of unstoppable and continuous notion within the process, regardless the cracks in the narrative form. What I am trying to say, is that if this authorial presentation was inspired by another

topic not connected to music in any way, I may have stopped or jumped into changing it when facing the fact of not knowing *why have I chosen this*. As my acting professor, Vladimir Milchin would say, in theatre pushing things for the sake of reaching an aim by every cost, does not always function; sometimes, no matter how good they are, we need to let go of certain ideas and give space. On the other hand, the music being present as a real part of the structure, both story and sound wise brought in certain expression and form in which this whole idea was slowly developing on its own. Here comes more psychosomatic way of seeing and understanding oneself within the work. For an actor, there is always an *inner rhythm*, inner pulsing that is being responsible for his/her creation on the spot. I was trying to move through this pulsing during the process of preparation, trying to discover how does my piece breaths in terms of rhythm. Here, I would place the body movements, the words I was using and the general atmosphere that the whole structure had, altogether with the sounds created. After a certain time, I came to the conclusion that *the body movements together with the narration are the music of an authorial performance*. This track of observation might lead to a conclusion that the music moving inside the performer's (stage) existence, something that I dare calling *inner music* in this case, tends to go out as a (specific) performative expression, seeking for its form. This form is an essence for the whole work. Based on the essence, the actor/performer could discover his/her unique way of expression. In other words, finding the rhythm inside and being able to recognize how it leads you, as well as learning to trust it could be a great help for finding out more about the structure. This could be a clue for the understanding of an authorial performing expression seen through and helped by means of music.

The first time I performed my authorial presentation the music (of the dance) I spoke about was not the same one with my music, the inner one. In fact, the way I talked and the way I moved, was a thing on its own. Another story, another rhythm. As a self-reflection I would comment that they were not in the same union, they could not identify between themselves, they were not "tuned". They were still strangers to each other. Special attention should be put on the way we create our narration form and in what way we identify with it. Could this awareness bring us knowledge for the inner rhythm? Could that rhythm possibly teach us what is the essence of our expression?

When I heard the sounds that we created I thought that that is sort of “visible music”, something that me and the audience could hear and feel. It is the expression that has already come out as a certain form due to the musical sensitivity and inspiration. What I believe we did, was dividing one part of the story I wanted to present, and that was the physical side of the dance itself, explored through metaphorical language. For some reason, it was really important to me to deconstruct movements from the dance and talk about their meaning. As I continued rehearsing on my own with what I had so far as dramaturgy, meaning taking into consideration the sounds we created with my colleague, an emerging necessity of doing even more movements was arriving. The story I initially wanted to use was now divided into sounds. The movements emerging from them could actually be sought as help for discovering the story connecting all of these pieces. Basically, this was another layer of narration. Movements as part of deconstructed dance language, narration form supporting their meaning, sounds accompanying them – all of this was part of the dramaturgical structure already. I was just in the quest of finding one more layer – my personal story, connecting everything.

Was it necessary? Could this possibly be part of an inner music, an “invisible one”? One that does not need oral narration form?

#### IV

##### **The personal and the social through musical impulses: seeing the experience from aside**

Working and developing sounds while trying to find my inner story within, helped me in a specific manner, untangling a clue for me: I am speaking about my own present, about a present I share with others and the present happening in my country. Practically, this adventure, creating “another music”, one that resembles our time and space was already fulfilling many cracks in my quest for finding what I am really talking about. The second time I performed this presentation, alongside my colleague’s presence who was playing with the sounds on stage with me, I finished the piece with the sentence/comment: “I think we are still performing *The Hard One*”. Dramaturgically, I used a banal story that happened to me during this stage of the working process, which I stretched throughout the piece ending with



the question “Where are you from”, a question pointed to me. This time, it appeared to be more personal, for I was using more clearly directed point. By using the question “Where are you from?” I found a trigger for my narrator’s position and that was me, Ivana, in some banal situation in Prague. I finished the story commenting on the present political situation in my country.

The history of *Teshkoto* and its contemporary representations in Macedonian society are highly connected to the struggle of being accepted, or more precisely, acknowledged in the world political scene, having problems of identity almost always with its neighbors. Nation building has had its phases after the liberation from the Ottoman Empire (1912) and after Macedonia gained independence in 1991 (I was one year then), the ethnic politics have taken centre stage. Important Macedonian folklorists argue how folk dance was ideologically tied to nationalism, and dance seen as the “keeper” of “national history”. According to Carol Silverman, in an essay, ‘Macedonian ethnic identity is historically fragile; a sense of being besieged externally by neighbors and internally by minorities informs national discourse. Heritage policy is directly affected by this framework’ (Silverman, 2015: 96).

Why am I mentioning these facts in here?

Many of these explanations, statements and conclusions came after this whole process, actually while writing about the experience. My primary intention was not to talk about the politics in my country, but by using the sentence at the end I realized that the whole piece has a socially political input all the way long. What does a heaviness mean, how do we send young people abroad, why do we immigrate, how do we celebrate and cry at the same time, how we see life, what does the life through centuries bears in the body and eventually what of it is inside me... It even goes beyond that. In a sense, it becomes anthropological “issue of discussion”. Does my body recognize any of these questions and how does it behave when it comes to this “story” – perhaps that has been my (real) focus all the way long; and everything that came alongside the road has been manifestation of the idea, seeking for its stage expression and form. If we approach the issue with an authorial acting eye, the question ‘What of it is me’ brings on stage the authorship focus, which among the other things is being truthful to myself and what I am creating.

Coming back to the dance, the striking power that it has as a performative form had been endowing a lot of national sentiment through which many people recognize themselves. The crucial postwar identity-building period has taken advantages of this historical and folk treasure to portray it through nationalistic lenses and it continues like that up to date. Nevertheless, Dave Wilson, an American musician who lives and works in Macedonia for many years already, makes slightly different point, a broaden one, saying that ‘the love and appreciations many Macedonians have for *Teshkoto* does not turn them into right-wing nationalists’ and that ‘it paints a picture of a greater struggle in which they take part’, providing ‘solidarity and hope’. Amidst the complex challenges of building a nation in the post-socialists Balkans, *Teshkoto* enables Macedonians to both abandon and continue their Ottoman and Yugoslav legacies. (...) With its heavy, complex meanings and the strong sentiment it evokes, *Teshkoto* exemplifies a unique and indisputable Macedonian identity, albeit in a different way than that imagined by extreme nationalists.’<sup>12</sup>

In 1948, Blaze Koneski, one of the most distinguished Macedonian poets and writers, being part of the first generation of post war writers and the major figure for language standardization, wrote a poem titled “*Teshkoto*” which ‘invokes national liberation against enslavement’ (Silverman 2015: 98). The poem evokes metric imitation of the *tapan* and it begins like this:

*“O Teshkoto! As soon as the zurli start playing wildly  
As soon as the tapani thunder with an underground echo  
Why is a hot sadness burning in my chest,  
Why is a river pouring into my eyes  
Why do I feel crying like a child  
Bending my hands and covering my face  
Biting my lips and squeezing my cursed heart  
Not to shout”*<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> An essay by Dave Wilson, “*Teškoto and National Sentiment in Macedonia: ascribing meaning, experiencing tradition*”.

<sup>13</sup> Because of the difficulty in re-creating the effect of the metric imitation, written in eleven syllable rhythm verse, the poem was not translated in English for a long time. This is a translation provided by Carol Silverman in her essay “*Macedonia, UNESCO, and Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Challenging Fate of Teškoto*”. Other, official versions done by Macedonian translators nowadays already exist.

Even though the origin and the whole story it bears within is a struggle for survival and the voice of liberation, both expressed through the body, initiating rising of a new era of freedom, the existence of the dance is a signifier of mutual sharing experience and common creation, one that has no director, nor author, but exists as authentic authorship expressed and shared by community “performers” and “participants”. I tried to break dimensions of the understanding with which the dance has been preserved; I tried to speak about its pure form beauty; I tried to break the stereotype with Macedonians (and Balkans in general) are often connected, underlining it by diversion; I was exploring how do I see this and what can I do with a distance. I tried to find other meanings inside, one that has no connection with national sentiment but existence of bigger human dimensions, even its “playful” potential of contemporary performative reading. I had tried to be authorial, playing through music and dance.

This exploration, that appeared as a simple idea for an authorial presentation had brought many discoveries on the way; some of them concluded afterwards. It began as a simple deconstruction of a male dance, it continued with the quest of finding its suitable narrative layer, it developed into creating sounds, it transformed into a question on its own, it emerged exploration about the acting nature, rhythm and expression. How can all of this be seen through the eyes of music and theatre together?

The second stage of work ended by actually making another dance music, decomposed into sounds whose enlargement and meaning came after they met in the space with my acting presence. When my colleague understood the atmosphere and the body better, it enabled him to play and compose alongside my presence. My expression, followed by movements and narration opened space for him to enlarge the sound quality and use them attentively as part of the narration. On the other hand, my attention towards the rhythm of the piece and my own body sharpened. The sounds provided lead me through deepening the importance of my movements. New movements arose as well. Through all of this, the position of the narrator was slowly finding its way out and the dramaturgical structure was shaping as precedent.

If we take the musical sensitivity as something through which the actor could find its stage presence, we could say that in such a manner he/she would be able to discover his/her own, authentic expression.

The movements that the actor's body creates alongside the narration he/she is using, triggers musicality. Those body movements are part of the physical manifestation of an inner rhythm. In this way, through attentiveness of my inner rhythm, something that pulses inside my body and the type of rhythm I am creating outside of it, the gates for authentic authorial expression, helped/supported by "musical means" are open. Canalization.

### **Chapter 3: BRIEF *MUSICAL* JOURNEY TO THE PREVIOUS CENTURY**

#### **I**

#### ***The modes of production and music according to Attali – a short note***

In 1977 French economist and scholar, Jacques Attali, published a book *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. In it, he argues how music as a special cultural form of art is tightly connected to the mode of production<sup>14</sup>. Covering the history of Western music and its relationship to the development of modern society he believes that music is prophetic, thus highly informative about the period from which it came. His critical theory by the lenses of Marxism is evident throughout the book and his focus is on the Western political economy, as the bounds of musical paradigm are pushed and under a change, intimately connected to changes in society. He divides the progression of music into four stages, beginning with the first one which he titles as *Sacrificing*. The fundamental argument here, adopted from the philosophical view of Rene Girard is that humanity possesses an "essential violence". (...) Noise is violence and with music it becomes a 'scapegoat', a mechanism, or more likely technique, that humanity has developed to deal with the essential violence. That, all together would be the music.

He implies that 'all music can be defined as noise given form according to a code' (Attali, 1985: 24-25), existing in limited space and being closely connected to 'rules of arrangement'. This code is theoretically knowable by the listener. 'Listening to music is to receive a message. Nevertheless, music cannot be equated with language. Quite unlike the words of language – which refer to a signified – music, though it has a precise operationality, never has a stable

---

<sup>14</sup> *Mode of production* as defined by Carl Marx and Marxist theory.

reference to a code of linguistic type. It is not 'a myth coded in sounds instead of words', but rather a 'language without meaning'.

Our interest in music here might be more of a profound meaning on an intimate level - exploring the actor's expression in such a manner through music, that would bring more sensitive understanding of the word "performance". For this reason, I am going to take a brief look upon discoveries, or rather explorations and life-devoted work in theatre in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which I consider important in order to make connections with my own experience and thoughts. Part of it belongs to this chapter and another part continues in the next one, due to the logic of making more proper connection.

## II

### ***Stanislavski: The actor who sings vs. the actor who speaks***

Everybody knows about the revolution in theatre made by Stanislavski in Russia towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. Theatre people are common with his work at the MHAT (the Moscow Art Theatre), the Bolshoi Theatre, the training of actors and his commitment in systematizing the actor's work, as well as the question of directing and moreover, *theatre and life*. Grotowski himself, who studied directing at the State Institute of Theatre Art in Moscow, acknowledged Stanislavski's teachings as primary influence in his work. Furthermore, especially as a young student, he 'voiced a strong conviction that Stanislavski's work in the domain of physical actions was the most vital and enduring discovery of his remarkable research into the foundational tenets of the actor's craft' (Wolford, 2007: 193). Perhaps, not all of us know that Stanislavski, towards the end of his life was devotedly working (until his last moment) into better understanding of the inner action through his *tempo-rhythm* explanation and started to see this whole idea more clearly.

In 1915 he began to work with opera singers in a studio at the Bolshoi Theatre and eventually, what had been discovered there continued to be part of an exploration in the Opera-Dramatic studio which was founded in 1935 in his home, at Leontev Street, which happened to be his last theatre laboratory<sup>15</sup>. He worked with singers. Then again, he worked with young actors.

---

<sup>15</sup> Mirella Schino, *Alchemists of the Stage: Theatre Laboratories in Europe*, p. 106-109

For him, the *actor-who-sings* lacked the knowledge how to turn the movements guided by the exterior music into actions with feeling inner tempo and rhythm. When a matching of the 'external and internal' would happen, then that would be the right tempo-rhythm. He was practically concentrating on guiding the *actor-who-sings* into the *actor-who-speaks*. The singers would need to support their physical actions and gestures through rhythmic exercises which would help them reaching harmony of body movements. Here, the work with words and sounds was important; to find the life of a character would mean to find living line between the sounds that the composer has made and "the fire" in the singer's heart. Only by justified feeling from the inside, carried by inner, mental tempo and rhythm the action would become real.<sup>16</sup>

The actor-who-speaks, on the other hand, does not have an exterior music to guide him/her, so for him/her, the equivalent of music would be the exterior tempo-rhythm. In the actor's case, the matching of the external and the internal would made the music become real, it would become *great music*. Do we lack an understanding of this statement? How can we describe "great music" in our words? Tempo is speed. Rhythm is placement of sounds in time, which has a repetitive pattern. Paying attention to tempo-rhythm for an actor would be taking care of the speed of all actions on stage, meaning everything which surrounds him/her that has a quality of movement, while "conducting" his/her own actions through the feeling of rhythm (which is consisted in words, in dialogue, in steps, in body movements etc.). The symbiosis (in beats, I would say) between everything happening around me and my own existence and input in that surrounding delivers an outcome: great music.<sup>17</sup> Then, the 'movement becomes dance, the words uttered by the voice become poetry. Together, dance, poetry and music express 'the truth of human passions' (Ruffini, 2009: 107). As testified by his students, such as Toporkov, Stanislavski was insisting on 'good diction in physical actions', which would mean finding the music inside, as well as having a sense of music. He often encouraged them to sing their actions. In his book *My Life in Art*, he had said: "Stage action, like the spoken word, must be musical".

The Opera-Dramatic Studio was practically just a beginning. According to Ruffini, in *Alchemists of the Stage*, this had been an extreme theatre laboratory, its present was its future. He had

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> The term *great music* is being used as description in Schino's book by Franco Ruffini, *ibid.* p.107.

been trying to draw a mutual line between the *actor-who-sings* and the *actor-who-speaks*. They would be the same thing, 'only under the guidance of different forms of music'. This type of revelation, in my opinion, appears to be crucial in the understanding of stage existence in overall, and its life, as a beat. For Stanislavski, the physical actions were the music. According to many, the discoveries of music were the true revolution of the system. It withdrew conducting many exercises based on physicality and working on the creative state by "musicalisation" of the body. Long have lived Stanislavski, the future of this seeds of discoveries would have reached its blossom. Nevertheless, seeing the physical actions through music finds its path years after in the work of the other "alchemists on stage", through other forms and explorations. Every theatre discovery is a life material and put in the hands of its explorers, it gains a shape speaking out loud about the time and space it is born in. The actor is an unseparated part of this journey, for it is through him/her that the crossing of boundaries arrives. We can freely say that the last work of Stanislavski had been concentrated on finding stage creativity in a genuine way, where the actor could express his/her life beat and deepen his/her existence. The actor was encouraged to be the actor-creator in a different way, on a more profound level. Seen through that kind of level, the actor-who-sings and the actor-who-speaks would share no difference in *living truthfully* on stage.

Years after, in Grotowski's vocabulary, this would become the *total act*, an act of revealing yourself by *self-penetration* and *disarmament*, accomplishing truth, both personal and universal.<sup>18</sup> He would make his actors to sing hours and explore intimate processes.

Peter Brook argues that *the truths* that an actor transmits can appear from sources either in himself/herself, deeply connected to his/her being, or something far, from the outside. The process of reaching both of these ways is sort of a psycho-somatic integration and he calls it *transparency*. In order to achieve this, an actor must move beyond 'ego-driven virtuosity' and be able to listen 'through the body'.

### III

---

<sup>18</sup> By no doubt, part of his explorations are a continuation of what Stanislavski himself started to explore. He was also influenced by the work of Meyerhold, but more in the domain of physical training methods.

### ***Brook and the musical linguistic work***

All the important theatre practitioners from the previous century were putting stress on working at a level deeper than that of the intellect. Physicality and emotionality were crucial vehicles for provoking internal responses when using external stimuli, such as text. When they were working with text, they were treating it - as a starting point in a physical way. The believing that an existing language is tied to habitual type of reactions, has brought deeper work with words and their embodiment in the actor's expression. For instance, Peter Brook was experimenting with 'dead' languages, such as Ancient Greek, which were unknown to all of the actors in the group (who were from different cultural backgrounds). They were given long series of letters to work with, as in the earliest manuscripts. He 'believes that it is possible to respond to a given text even when the actor cannot understand the referential meaning of the words' (Marshall, Williams, 2007: 183-184). For this reason, they were studying the structure of sounds which a language can offer, and 'tasting the texture and qualities of energy' which is actually the 'music' inside words. Then, it was really important to listen how that 'music' impacts the inner landscapes of the actors. By studying the structures of sounds they were exploring what constitutes living expression. They were also working on creation of their own language, where 'intonation and clarity of intentions' is important. It is evident that the text is treated in a physical and emotional way, rather than through intellectuality.

Working with 'dead' languages was practically exploring its musical potential in which every actor was deciphering "meanings" by his/her own intuitive sensitivities. As quoted in Lorna Marshall and David Williams' essay, by scanning the text with a sensibility that an actor has, and according to Brook, that is the 'inordinately developed emotional faculty' (which is his/her *truly scientific tool*), 'gradually the rhythms hidden in the flow of letters began to reveal themselves'.

Marshall and Williams conclude:

*"(...) Brook's linguistic model is musical: a communicative medium of the senses in which means and meaning are indissolubly interwoven. For Brook, such music represents an untranslatable language sufficient unto itself: pre-intellectual, emotional, physically rooted, and potentially transcultural."*



Peter Brook is known to work with actors from various cultures throughout the whole world, actors who had already been trained in a particular way, according to the culture they come from. When they had come in the International Centre for Theatre Research in Paris (CIRT), they have encountered work which was beyond theatrical conventions, a practice where the enculturated should have been peeled off. What is left then?

### III

#### ***Meyerhold's hidden treasure***

In this short passage, I am going to put recent discoveries I had about Meyerhold's work in his studios, workshops or laboratories, connected with the field of music. Since I do not feel prepared enough to talk about his work in a more elaborative sense, but I still feel it is important to be mentioned, hereby I am going to make short points about his musical work from what I read in *Alchemists of the Stage: Theatre Laboratories in Europe*.<sup>19</sup>

- To describe the biomechanical actor, Meyerhold used a terminology such as: *a director musician, an actor-musician, an actor-composer or an actor-poet*. In the work for biomechanical preparation of actors, he often used music. This preparation 'was compared to practices intended as exercise for the player and his instrument'.
- Meyerhold was interested in and inspired by the oriental theatre. He was also driven by the work of artists such as Isidora Duncan or Jacques Dalcroze. He was keen on circus art and using commedia dell'arte as part of the physical preparation of the actor. In all of his performances he had been using moments where theatre dance happens, i.e. when through the body, in that dance, the actors express emotions or complex mental or psychological states. No words. Just body.
- Since it is able to 'develop his/her taste and organize his/her body', he said that music must be part of the actor's education. In whatever studio he was working, music was always one of the subjects. In 1908 an idea reached a school where in the first year of studies both musicians and actors were learning *solfeggio* at the piano, singing and diction. Until the 1920's, the history of music was also being taught and rehearsals

---

<sup>19</sup> The book is mentioned above, in the previous reference; all of the references in this passage – *ibid.* p. 119-139.

were accompanied by music where actors had preparation being accompanied by pianists. For Meyerhold, learning the theories of versification, solfeggio and rhythm, helps the actor to be 'multifaceted', to become 'juggler of the scene'.

- When working with music, the actor raises his/her awareness of theatrical tempo, which helps him to 'memorize the text and its spatial score'. According to him, the development of *musicality in acting* is important for having a sense of time in a performance. For that, music is the best organizer. An actor must learn and feel rhythm and space, because acting is duel with time! Movement, which may result in an exclamation and spoken word, was conceived through time and rhythm.
- In this sense, acting would have its phases, 'constructed like constants'. Per example, if a repetition of a posture appears, as in music, it is not an actual repetition, but 'deep study, 'a signal for an association'. The relationship between duration of actions is also part of this understanding. Therefore, contrasting times, would result in giving a sense to the action. In my understanding, it is also developing sense for what happens in-between the actions. It is like the pulsing space between two beats, something that vibrates.

Central role in all of Meyerhold's teachings and explorations had been always the actor's body, a body that can become 'versified'. Lines, movement, rhythm and voice would be extra-linguistic means of expression. For him 'the words are but patterns on the canvas of movement'. All of that is in the body. Movement is created in its relationship with time, and by that with rhythm. A constant repetitive word in his dictionary had been 'rhythm'. As cited in the *Alchemists of the Stage*, '*instead of developing the spiritual essence of the rhythmic matrix, Meyerhold saw a living force that struggled against the monotony of the metronome*'. Eventually, that music, the actor's ally as he says may not be audible, but 'it must be felt'. The actor becomes a 'versified' version of his/her own creation.

#### **Chapter 4: MASTER AUTHORIAL PERFORMANCE: MY OWN INNER – WHAT?**

### ***Choosing poetry and finding the voice***

My authorial master performance consisted of two general parts: portraying poetry through stage and cleaning as subject for the piece. I wanted to use my experience as a cleaning lady and find a dance which mechanically repeated actions could provoke. I wanted to explore and find how much poetics can exist in these movements. I also wanted to find “grounding” of the poetry that I have written, and withdraw another life from its verses. I was aiming to find its potential stage expression. By adding pieces of my poetry, I was able to embrace this exploration with a narrative form. Actually, the pieces of poetry, each one of them taken from a separate poem, were meant to become the general and supportive narrative form of all my actions.

Problem number one: each of the extracts I have taken was a reality on its own. Each piece of the poetry was portraying different emotion, different time, different potential situation, which obviously is preceded by the different time and emotional state when the poem had been written. They seemed like cut realities. *“But there must be a reason why I have chosen exactly these parts”* - I was thinking. My choices were in general based on the pragmatism of a certain verse, how much a chosen verse and the constellation of words inside can allow itself to be transformed into stage action. Therefore, a quest of finding a way how to make bridges in-between discovered situations was arriving, and it was extremely important to find a general connection for all of these parts, a dramaturgical line that puts “the meaning” of all the individually poetry pieces together. Nevertheless, one thing was obvious – the actions that could appear from cleaning movements, were offering the possibility to always be used as trigger for further stage action and development of a situation; they could help in the ‘later on quest’ for bridges; for after all, cleaning is “down to earth” *action word*.

Something abstract as poetry leaned onto something very concrete such as cleaning, seemed to be a good start. These two subjects, seen as very opposite at first sight, could open space for creation of many stage situations that go beyond their primal understanding and eventually create a network of layers which gives one the possibility to choose which layer would be the line connecting the whole piece. In other words, by “opposing themes”, a space for creation of many possibilities is open. Only by rehearsing and giving yourself time to

consider what is happening during the process and what is it that you are discovering, you could be able to catch and embrace the overall structure.

In his lifetime research, something that he refers to as “the *inner* aspect of the work”, Grotowski ‘voiced a desire to demystify the creative process, seeking to define a methodology of performance training that would free the actor to accomplish his or her work without obstruction and also without waiting for random inspiration’ (Wolford, 1985: 196). In this manner, self-reflecting of the actor plays a crucial role, the attentiveness with which I observe my working process and myself being inside even bigger one. Another kind of awareness for ‘who am I’ then opens. This is all part of the road to *personal sincerity*, a term Grotowski used to describe the type of truthfulness in expression actors should reach on stage. In his work with actors, he was well known to include usage of songs for provoking such a type of awareness.

Thomas Richards, a student of Grotowski and later on one of his most important collaborators, comments on the work of songs when he encountered Grotowski in Irvine, California, 1984. Lead by practitioners from Haiti, Korea and Bali they were working on songs and their first task was to learn the melodies precisely and then sing for hours, which was more than just a test of endurance.

*“The work on the songs is like a research into oneself. It is between the person, the song and the technique. (...) What is important here is what is being done, the relationship between us and the song, between us and the actions that are supporting the song. What happens to the human being while singing is important.”*<sup>20</sup>

He stresses that while singing for hours with a straight spine he began to sense “that something unknown was starting to happen with the repetition of the song” and that something else was present in him, leading him to face with an unrecognizable notion in that moment, as part of one’s *inner life*.

The part of your inner self which can be objectified in such a manner that you can play with it on stage and make it vivid through a dialogue, Vyskočil described it as *the inner partner*. His discipline, *interacting with the inner partner*, is practically based on this “technique”, as a

---

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/08/20/theater/theater-work-on-the-songs-is-like-a-research-into-oneself.html>

possibility to touch upon the *inner self*. Furthermore, discovering this can be an essence for the authorial acting expression, in which a type of *personal sincerity* is considered to be essential. In what way the voice plays a role here? Why is the voice so essential in discoveries aiming at our own selves? How can we retell a feeling or sensation whilst hearing our own voice?

During my master studies, I have had the strongest resonance in thoughts about my own self after the classes of voice and singing. It was something like uncovering different qualities of skin, peeling off layers, moving vertically back and forward... Many questions were appearing, and many of them disappearing, evaporating when I would start singing the next time.

One can respond to the inner partner, only by hearing his/her voice, says Vyskočil. If an articulation through the voice does not happen in the space, the connection is hard to establish. What is crucial about the voice and the work with it, is understanding that a voice is actually sounding and sounding is the silver line making a connection with the inner self. This sounding makes the voice an activity, something that moves the existence and deepens the expression. In a practical sense, working with the voice is seeking for the quality in movement. Grotowski considered that we have many voices inside. His work with songs actually tended for the discovery that *the voice is my body* and that the song is just mean, for *I am only a radio*. In this sense, the voice would become an invisible hand of the actor, connecting the inner world with all its beats and flows to the outside one. In a consultation with Jana Pilatová<sup>21</sup> for this thesis, she stressed out that Grotowski was always looking for different quality of the song (in fact, something that Richards talks about), because a song is a 'living being' and by working on it, the actor becomes its director. It is important to mention that for him, this is present in the songs, which are part of a *living tradition* and that not every song has this quality. There is no doubt that this had been one of the reasons why he had brought practitioners from Haiti, Korea and Bali to work with the actors in Irvine, California, among whom was Richards. In other words, a song living through the people within time conveys such a quality which can rise the actor up to a state of feeling that *the song sings him/her*.

---

<sup>21</sup> Jana Pilatova is currently teaching at DAMU in the department for Authorial Acting and Pedagogy. She had experience working with Grotowski as a young actress, in Poland. Her main subject nowadays is Theatre Anthropology.

Furthermore, he considered that European people tend to follow the melody (of a song) in overall, and not the separate compositions which the instruments have. This, perhaps explains why we should not think melody wise, or even instrumentally when working with/on a song in this manner, but rather *what it does to/with me*.

*“Elimination of music not produced by the actors enables the performance itself to become music through the orchestration of voices and clashing objects”* (quoted from Grotowski, in Wolford, 1985: 196).

Recently I was singing in an apartment of a friend who wanted to record my voice with a structure of melody that him and his partner had done; after two or more hours of trying, singing, improvising on a melody – words from a poem in (and from) my language came to me and I sang them. Before that I was singing tones, notes, momentary phrases that were coming to my mind but now I was singing words. I do not know where they came from, but when I started transmitting them out, I felt as if my whole body sang them. It was not just my voice doing that, it felt that they are simply coming out in front of the microphone, but vibrating everywhere. I remember that before that moment, I was trying to focus on feeling the melody; I assume that means really hearing it with the body. Then Martin slightly put up my voice, so I could hear myself through the headphones better. After this, the poetry words slowly started revealing themselves.

The songs which are part of a living tradition have been created and brought to life by common people, their live essence has started in the very creation of verses which by time have become lyrics. Their shape has become readable in a musical way. Could the poetry which I am writing be a ‘living tradition’ in/of my body? Does it have its own music, its own melody which my body wants to speak out? How can my voice support this?

## II

### ***Seeking for an expression: playing with the poetry***

To come back to what I started with in this chapter, my initial idea about working with poetry which I myself have written was to drag out an essence with another possible meaning,

conveying 'universal truth' which would communicate with the audience in a performative sense. For this, feeling and responding to the poetry through many aspects was necessary.

The poetry I write is part of my inner life. Or at least, I suppose it is like that. It is a manifestation of an inside landscape that has its form in words. Anyhow, as a written form, it has already surpassed certain existence of an inner life, for when you write you face a momentary type of truth (just as when performing!) and afterwards those words could only offer to be readable in many ways. Saying out loud verses from my poetry is like a remembrance of my inner self, but transforming them into stage action is like connecting to the "inner self of now". It is like reaching upon a version of yourself and trying to play with it. In this manner, one could say that putting a poem on the test of examining its stage possibilities brings in another "life chance" for it, only, in a completely different shape.

When it comes to the poetry, my main intention was to find its many possibilities of stage expression by breaking its structure, dividing it, turning it up-side-down and again from the beginning... to play with it as much as possible. Being in a way afraid at the time of the potential pathetic, or rather lyrical form it can bring up, I was trying to deliver different means of playful potential that could become an expression, a language of the piece. By approaching my poetry in this manner, I really was able to discover varieties of potentials/possibilities. Absurdly, this brought up a lot of lyricism in the whole piece and therefore the cleaning became poetical cleaning; and the poetry extracts, by the many tries to be put "down to earth" started to become civil, as a matter of fact.

I believe that the act of personal sincerity is also connected to the way of work and how do I perceive my actions during a certain process; without facing the reality that my poetry is not what it had been when being written and that it cannot be portrayed in the same way on stage, I would have not been able to come to the possibility of relying on those words to be "glue" for the narrative structure, to be the seed for stage actions.

Grotowski considered that the work without obstruction and without waiting for random inspiration is important for the actor. Avoiding already done recipes or methods for certain occasion is also important. By bringing my poetry on stage, I felt I have no recipes nor methods, my hands were empty. On the other hand, they were fully free. It was just me and

the verses I had written; the poetry and the rhythm its verses bring, and the type of freedom in expression which could be reached.

By deconstructing my poetry, I could follow more attentively what is the rhythm of the whole piece. Another more complex level arrives with this, and that is following the actions and creating their own rhythm. Eventually, what I realized I had brought up, was a type of lyricism which embraces the whole structure. This was not a form, it was not a technique, nor an aim, but rather an “achievement” from the work on words and their usage through stage expression, to which the stage actions are inseparable part. What I believe had been more important at this phase is how my inner self connects with the actions I am creating; those actions are triggered and supported by the words but they are also manifestation of an inner flow. The body must be ready and sensitive to this and the whole being prepared to listen.

Unfortunately, by the time of the ‘premiere’ of my master performance, I could not fully succeed in making the bridges in-between the two worlds I intended to play with: cleaning and poetry. Those bridges were in general being carried by stage actions. Should I have been listening more to the words and their shape, instead of looking for logical connection by stage actions? Should I have followed the verses without any obstruction and caring that I would not be understood?

A pre-version of this performance was done a month before for Prague Micro Festival 2018, an annual festival combining contemporary writing with art, film and performance<sup>22</sup>. Then and there, even though the structure was still on its way to shaping, I had a certain lightness in the body with the flow of my poetry, that somehow later (for the next time of performing, i.e. master perf.) hid itself away.

Despite of all the circumstances the performance found its own path and it was manageable to convey full structure which would communicate with the audience. I was happy to perform, not knowing what certain moments could bring. The structure, being supported by the “lyricism flow” eventually, was consisted of:

- Excerpts from poems => verses becoming lines
- Movements from the physicality of cleaning => becoming stage actions

---

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.praguemicrofestival.com/about/>



Movements were slowly reaching their lyricism, and verses were becoming the narrative form establishing contact with the audience. Both of them, words and movements were one action on stage.

*\*Example:* I am cleaning an invisible glass between me and the audience with round movements becoming basically a dance, while saying a poem of mine whose subject is a lost love moment and whose object are horses, who are being killed. Here is a part of the poem:

*It will rain.*

*The next step will be better.*

*While the steps are improving,  
like wild horses,  
with eyes fixed  
we hold.*

*Just that.*

*Horses are smart,  
aren't they?*

*And horses are killed,  
aren't they?*

*It seems it will rain.*

*I'm already soaked.  
I took an umbrella.*

*From under my umbrella  
rivers gush.  
They want to take everything  
off the road.  
(...)*

Throughout the rehearsals an objectification of horse movement and sounds appeared, which I implied in a situation before this one. Eventually, I stretched the poem with the rhythm words can have when they are divided. An additional level of the structure looked like this:

- Lines, found from the poetry world
- Movements/**stage actions**, supporting what is found from the poetry world

This is the part which is concerning the open contact with the audience, in a form of addressing them, commenting my actions or supporting certain moment with additional lines.

*\*Example:* in order to come to the stage action of a poem titled “Whore’s dictionary”, in which the stress is put on words that people use to address a woman, I created a situation with a stick I had as a main prop throughout the whole performance. In this situation, the stage action was me being on a boat in a river full of feces in order to indicate the type of importance words could have and I was addressing the audience by asking what do they think about people’s words, such as “whore”. Additionally, I used a line “They destroy countries with words” while using the stick as a weapon.



Figure 2: Master Performance

All of this was primarily being done to help connecting the poems’ pieces in one dramaturgical logic. Nevertheless, after some time, these actions arising from the poetry world became something with a strong connotation, they were poetry “translated” in lines and had their own language and meaning connected to the words from the verses. For this reason, I put the structure’s explanation in two parts, since one is connected to the exploration of what the poems are bringing as theatre language and the other one is how does that language communicates with the viewer. For all of this, I had my poetry and its words, the cleaning movements and their dance.

An earlier exploration about the connection between a rhythm from my culture and the one in my poems that I had in a presentation in front of an audience was not finished yet, but I created a part inside where my expression was supported by a rhythmical play with the breath and the stick. Poetics appeared to be everywhere. Lyricism, even though maybe not an image of how my poetry sounds like, became an inseparable part of my stage expression. What have changed on the way?

### *III*

#### ***Moving body and mind***

In 2017, while I was still a student, Eugenio Barba came to DAMU (Theatre Academy of Performing Arts in Prague) to have an open class and sort of a short lecture. He was accompanied by Julia Varley, who joined the Odin Teatret in 1976 and has been his collaborator since then. Julia was assisting Barba in his open class where he gave an example of how the work with poems could be an initiator and a wheel for the actor's creative process. They were using Edgar Lee Masters' poem, "*Willard Fluke*". Here is an excerpt from it:

*My wife lost her **health**,*

*And dwindled until she weighed **scarce** ninety pounds.*

*Then that woman, whom the man*

*Styled **Cleopatra**, came along.*

*And we **married** ones*

*All broke our vows, myself among the rest.*

Julia was given a task to make simple body movements as part of her imagination and interpretation for a certain word from the poem. The bolded words marked above were the ones they used in this case. By adding one interpretation movement at a time, and later by repeating them in a loop, she brought the poem up in a completely different language. Evidently, what is important here is the process of physical transformation that the actor goes through, as part of the ability to visualize an idea. What the writer is able to transform into words, the actor, as Barba was commenting, is able to transform into physical action. The

capacity of transforming something which belongs to the mental process into the free skill provocative action, is part of the actor's body and mind work, brought to a level that frees up the inside impulses. In this way, he/she composes a structure through *plasticity* work, something that belongs both to body and mind<sup>23</sup>. Barba was saying that in their/his way of work they would afterwards add the whole text to the structure created out of the actor's movements. Moreover, he was saying that it is not necessary for the actor to have his/her interpretation in a conceptual way, because by doing it, he/she is already interpreting. What can we withdraw from a simple example of work with a poem like this? It is obvious that the topic of a poem is not what one could seek for in the transformation process on stage. It is the notion inside, the creation that certain word or verse can provoke, the rhythm carried along that can endure in the actor's existence. Barba was commenting that an important part of what one is seeking for in this case of work (the poem example given) is the dynamics. In my understanding, the dynamics consists of what words can bring up as an action, how the created movements pulse through the space and how does the tempo of what one is creating look like. All of it is closely attached to impulses coming from the inside, but also to the ability of *following what I am already doing*. The dynamics can be *piano* or *forte*, but by practice and attention it can become *mezzo piano*, or *mezzo forte*, and a play between *pianissimo* and *fortissimo*.

A structured sequence of this kind, that one can work on without treating the body as a puppet and having obstruction in expression, in Grotowski's work is known as the 'score'.

Jana Pilatova used these 'scores' as part of the seminars and workshops for theatre anthropology that I visited. When we met with Jana on the first seminar she gave us a poem from Vladimir Holan ("*Hamlet*") out of which we took simple "moment" saying "imagine life's terminus..." and we had to make it into short partitures on our own, out of our own imagination for "the last stop of life". I remember a character of mine, an old lady appeared in the score I created, metamorphosing through some wings' movement.

---

<sup>23</sup> Sequence of exercises known as *plastiques*, underlined the training in Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre. They were meant to enable the actor reach spontaneity within a structure, by mastering its elements and rediscovering his/her personal impulses. Barba worked and had contact with Grotowski, therefore it is evident that a continuation of these ideas and their usage in work has happened.

Why is the work with poetry important to these practitioners? Poetry conveys different language. It cannot be reconstructed in a scene as other type of literature could. It provokes different type of perception and evokes different type of response to that perception. Therefore, it consists the potential of a *play* in a specific way, being close to the actor in sort of an intimate relationship, enabling him/her to get closer to his own creation. Practically speaking, is together the connection of rhythm, dynamics and impulse what makes it specific?

In my case, I was using my own poetry and its means/words were not just a provocation for physical transformation, but a subject on its own. If something has already come out of me as creation in a written form and now it is in front of the quest to be transformed into another one, a stage form (and both of them are part of my creation in a different way) – the language of expression would certainly be “influenced” by the verses’ essence. That is why, I believe, among the other things, the lyricism in the form appeared. Feeling poetic cannot/should not be an aim, for it appears on the way due to an intimate relationship with the text. Playing poetic cannot be described by words, cannot be under linguistic system of explanation, but what it can be is “to be gone through”; challenging modules of your perception and receiving ones as well could be a provocation for creation.

#### IV

##### ***Words, music and language?***

Lyricism is rather poetic. Poetry has rhythm inside. Rhythm is beat. Beating is life. Stage portrays life. In all of this, there is some music inside (the piece itself has its inner music) which obviously is very hard to describe with theoretical terms. It is hard to describe how you feel the rhythm in a situation, what makes you sing when saying some words, what kind of sounds you hear from the words spoken... All of this is connected to a certain type of musicality. When Grotowski’s actors worked on songs they were aiming at finding a voice, which is rooted in the body, because a song is not conversation, it reaches range that goes beyond talking. As such, physical and empowered “tool”, the impact of energy that a song can have, could be described as seizing a moment from one’s inner life, as Thomas Richards describes. Here, the voice plays a crucial role, for it is that which makes a connection with the body. Finding an absolute connection between the body and the voice is another level of perceiving your

actions and it pushes the process forward, because you become more sensitive towards your expression.

During the first rehearsal for my master performance, when I was really exploring what is going to be born out of all this, I have written a note: *"I am afraid to read on my mother tongue because it brings me back in some form that only provokes seriousness in me now"*. Then, *"I am looking for the music. I begin with my poetry"*. The sentence coming afterwards, probably describes type of awareness for this issue, meaning that I have not been interested for portraying different emotions depending on language, nor worried about how serious (or even lyrical) I am in my poetry, but diving in the quest of this simple thought that I am looking for THE music. Of course, that sounds very abstract, as the poetry itself. What music? Where? In what? Perhaps in everything. But if *"I begin with my poetry"*, then I have given myself some track.

Having a sensitivity means that something you have experienced stays with you as an "alarm" afterwards and it makes you understand and experience things deeper or in many ways, from many angles. It is in a way, sharpening the sensors and preparing them for an action. Perhaps, "looking for the music" means finding a different path, one that is not dependent on the language nor forms of expression, but brings another level of perceiving your own work and finding yourself inside that. Sharpening the sensors in such a way that your body (your instrument) and your being are ready to go through a path which is not dependent on narration or dramaturgical structure, but rather opening space for them.

In the chapter *Sacrificing*, Jacques Attali describes how "music cannot be equated with a language", because music itself has no meaning. He implies that its origin should not be sought in linguistic communication. He quotes Derrida who says that there is no music before language and Rousseau who talks about the accuracy that music does not have for it would be "a transcribable, thus readable, discourse" and it would have to be judged as "degenerate". In this way, "the musical message has no meaning, even if one artificially assigns a (necessarily rudimentary) signification to certain sounds, a move that is almost always associated with a hierarchical discourse" (Attali, 1985: 25).

Thus, looking for the proper words, the proper sentences, the proper narrative form also becomes a sensitive thing, because once you reach the point of expressing through words,

you have come to the state of using language, which has coded linguistic system. Therefore, the type of words I use and their constellation (as a rhythm?) is important for what I want to reach further, for enabling me to still stay in touch with myself and not lose contact with the surrounding.

By analysing processes and experiences of mine and translating them through simple theatre language, I have come to the following basic list, helping one to come closer and stay with the inner self:

1. **Breathing** – establishing a starting point, natural way towards feeling a rhythm
2. **Words** – continuation of feeling a rhythm (or an impulse), followed by natural reaction with listening
3. **Movements** – manifestation through physical actions supported by both feeling a rhythm and listening to words, a free and own creation in space

Translated with simple musical language, it might look like this:

1. Breathing = Beat
2. Words = Sounds
3. Movements = Melody

If I try to untangle this process through the perspective I am trying to follow in this thesis, I would say that the inner rhythm placed in/supported/provoked by the words' beat (the beat of the poetry in this case) and the beat of the movements support the structure's language. For me, that is not an actual music consisted of sounds, but rather an inner one, which now could be visible, because it has gained its shape, it has its manifestation in the actor's expression. What is essential in actors' case, is that words are necessary so that the music could come out through the body. Unless there is no answer that could be heard, maybe music stays just as an 'essential violence' in the body.

## **Chapter 5: *MUSICAL RESPONSES AND THEATRE CONCLUSION(S)***

The music I might hear, or rather feel when performing is never of a linguistic type. There is no message that aims to be conveyed, there is just beating existing in a big silence, something that moves my fingers, triggers my movement, says no “pardon” to anything, for it simply exists.

When the inner music touches upon the body, there is a channel appearing, one through which indomitable energy begins to make its stream and the channel itself becomes even more clear. It is an energy that connects the inner and the outer world. There are no lies existing there, the stream moving gives meaning to the whole body and its existence. The body and every expression we possibly perceive as physical is simply a manifestation of that open, unstoppable channel. I believe, in those moments one is capable of hearing his/her own breathing and witnessing his/her own nourishment through it. Let us imagine the body as a big ball through which something is circulating all the time. The circulation ME – AUDIENCE – ME is a continuation of the channel. The ball spreads and a cycle appears. In fact, this whole invisible movement (or rather notion) consists of: *the performer’s presence, the road to the audience, the audience, the road back to the performer, the performer’s reaction initiated from this whole road of circulation.*

Musicians experience something similar when they are performing. This simple explanation of vivid presence is an essence which both actors and musicians share. Furthermore, I would say, it is applicable in all forms of performing, where alive connection happens. It is a moment of stage existence where the personal input is extremely important, for only by being open true impulses can arise and enrich expression, which is part of another truth – *me, existing on stage*. In terms of the authorial acting, where the expression practically depends on “always being open to what I am creating”, this means reaching freedom and gaining responsibility at the same time. Since, in the authorial acting this circle is so open (in terms of communication) that becomes even fragile sometimes, caring for me and caring for the audience transforms sensitivity into somewhat of exchange of beats. At least, I see it like that. Of course, everything depends on the performer again.

For the purpose of this study, I delivered a short questionnaire among musicians, aiming to understand better their perception when performing with their instrument. It was supposed



to help and clarify certain “performing moments” from the inner input, shared or being different among actors and musicians. Actually, I was driven by the metaphor which I introduced at the beginning of this thesis – the instrument and the actor. Musicians got to respond to the following questions:

1. *Do you think that your body acts differently when being in contact with the instrument? Could you describe how?*
2. *Do you think that when playing on your instrument your inner rhythm is connecting to the rhythm of the sounds (or the melody) that the instrument is producing? Could you, please, explain in what way?*
3. *If you sing, what do you feel is different in your body from when you play on the instrument?*
4. *Could you briefly describe in what way you care about the sound of your instrument when you are performing? Or more likely, how do you connect with it?*
5. *Can you feel and recognize if and when your whole attention, body, mind and attitude change because of the contact with the instrument?*

Fifteen musicians responded to the questions. It is not a number enough to be included as a “relevant research” and be taken statistically (nor it was my aim), but I consider that its results are important to be shared. I cared about the individual responses and the experiences brought into words, rather than their quantity. First of all, it was interesting to observe how the responses were different from each other due to the age of experience of the musicians and not due to the different type of instrument they play on, or the style of music. In fact, concerning the nature of my questions, only few of them briefly mention the style of music as a condition for different experience.

The first question was intended to point out the type of awareness musicians have about their body when they perform or practise on their instrument. The answers were moving from: “*I am not sure*” or, “*It depends on the time and space*” to “*My body can move by itself to play*” or “*It is a partner and mask at the same time*”. In between this range, the answers were driven by the physical understanding of the posture implied by the concrete instrument. Some of them are pointing out different parts of the body and the efforts and engagement they need to make in order to play properly. They even comment on how they think they look like when they are in a close contact with the instrument. The second part, which in general connects

many of the responses is more of an inner feeling - the body which connects with the music. *Energy* (all over the body), *vibrations*, *resonance*, expressing *emotions*, feeling *lighter* or *comfortable* were terms which they used. More experienced players, talk about conscious “decisions” in including the body as part of the expression, such as “it is good to dance when you play”, or “I have a direct mental control”.

The second question practically implies understanding that circle of communication between the performer and the audience. Also, for me it was important to understand whether musicians have the awareness of the connection between the internal and the external, since their instrument naturally helps them to establish this relation of “certain rhythms”. One thing is the inner rhythm and another thing is the rhythm that can come out of an instrument. What connects them, or rather makes them one is the creation. Two people did not understand/respond to this question. The others, by no doubt, were leading towards certain identification with the rhythm of their instrument. *I am the rhythm of my instrument* – could be an adopted phrase for all the answers. For most of them, this was even something clearly obvious. What I would withdraw as a conclusion is that all share the understanding of departing from the inner rhythm. One of the musicians even mentions that his inner rhythm is rooted in the ones of his culture (Turkish), giving a concrete example of beats. “If you do not have an inner rhythm, you cannot play”, says another one, a trumpet player. For them the inner rhythm is the rhythm they express through their instrument and that practically becomes the same. Additionally, that connection is a wheel to establish relationship with other instruments and musicians in the space.

Following this, the feeling of “inner” expressed by the instrument for musicians is something completely normal, actually it is “the way to be”. For actors, this feeling of the inner moving towards “outside” is slightly more sensitive, because they do not have an actual object in front of them and their means of expression are different. On the other hand, the actor has bigger freedom to express him/herself, he/she is not dependent on an object, his/her space for action is not limited. Nevertheless, what connects both of the experiences, is the initial impulse to go forward, to materialise an essence through creation in space (being brought in movement and sound).

In terms of “explaining how this might happen”, a keyboard player answers that before playing he turns towards himself and by watching his instrument he understands/feels what

he “should” play. In other words, seeing and feeling the connection with the instrument with an “inside eye”. Being able to breath and observe. Isn’t it the same for actors? This is a response from a girl who plays percussion (dervish circle drum – *bendir*, Persian *daf*) and string instruments (*tambura*, exploring *oud*):

*“When you are playing you subdue yourself and you are absolutely focused on the present time of creation and in one point you can achieve no mind state, so the whole body is at ease and everything becomes more vivid, you become the emotion that is being expressed in its nature, the understanding of essence is more clear.”*

I am going to move to the fourth question. Sound is vibration on a certain frequency. When a human hears it, there is a natural reaction to it. Performers must be able to hear properly, to understand what is happening while listening and feel how does that affect them. It is in this “understanding” that another reaction comes afterwards. By no doubt, every musician cares about the sound of his/her instrument, but the question is how does he/she connect with it? I am aware that it might be difficult to explain something that happens beyond our visual perception, a glimpse that occurs in a millisecond, or a continuous landscape of moments, as if in the earliest motion picture. I specifically posed this question because the sound is something which is already materialized. Once it comes out of the instrument, it becomes part of a shared creation. For musicians, the sound which becomes a melody (becomes music) is an essence. That is their materialized expression. Actors do not have such a clear and actual melody to hear, since their means of expression and the focus of it is different. To put it shortly and not get into theory of sound or body senses - for musicians, connecting with the sound is connecting with their creation.

It seems that the perception of that connection varies among them, and here the difference between the kind of musical instruments being used possibly (not in overall) plays a role. Drummer players talk about relationship on dynamics (which is sort of expected, since the drums are an instrument which in its base coordinate/keep/take care of rhythm). Guitar players talk about feelings being expressed through, producing “colours”, sensibility or force, or even retelling a story. Furthermore, they care about the energy going out and mention that it is good to sing what one plays. My own conclusion would be that the body listens to the sound, which is more than just *the intellect listening*. Caring about the sound is something

that one practices with years – many of them point out this. “When I am happy with the sound that I am producing, then I connect with it”.

From all of the answers I would withdraw the ones talking about more profound relationship with the sound when performing. If, someone talks about connection happening by trusting what he plays (*I trust what I play, therefore I am connected*, meaning that he listens and leans onto it), or everything that has meaning disappears because “the sound expresses what words cannot” (is there another meaning then?) - the task of the sound goes beyond its primal quest of existence (to be heard), it becomes an allowance for connection with the music in overall. In my understanding this is a type of perception that moves the things forward. In this sense, the instrument and the sound are no longer the same thing. The musical instrument might be just a tool and the sound – a partner that depends on me and I depend on it. Could the sound be an invisible partner of the musician (more than the instrument)?

Some of the answers put me down to earth from my thoughts as I continue onto the fifth question. *By caring of the overall sound (of the band), I care about my sound...*

The fifth question is connected to both the first and second one and it continues onto the fourth one. It is practically a continuation of the awareness what happens with the body, but also mind, and even feelings when the contact of communication with the instrument is being established. For I believe that a constant exchange happens between the musician and what he/she is creating on the spot. He/she hears the sound of the instrument and then reacts to it, he/she gives another impulse from the inside and continues playing, and so on, back and forward. It is that circle and it means communicating. Here, all of them answer with more freedom in expressing, they talk about habits they have, (re)actions they might repeat and how does the act of performing changes them. Almost all of them respond positively, they certainly agree that “something” changes when they play and they know it happens. What I was interested in, is whether they use this knowledge in their expression or they “let go and enjoy the ride”. In other words, until what extend the changes are “controlled”, is the instrument my tool, or I am the tool of my instrument? Or maybe none of those, or maybe both of them. I did not imply asking for an explanation here. In fact, many of the answers from the previous questions go hand in hand with this one. Musicians themselves “offered” to share experiences, or to talk about their perception in this manner.

*“When I devotedly play on an instrument I feel like I activate something that shuts down and blocks the normal thinking and feeling processes of my existence. I’m sure that there is another medium of functioning other than feeling and thinking, that we hold in our bodies inactive, that activates, at least in my case, whilst playing, and fortunately or not, blocks the previous two, and makes me dumb and insensible to emotions.”*

Is it possible that a “surrender” happens in this case? Some flow that we trust and thus allow it “to intervene” in our existence. Or perhaps, “surrender” is not the right word. If the whole psychosomatic state changes due to a contact with the instrument, and thus transforms that person’s attitude in expression, the instrument, again, IS a tool, for the whole transformation is conceived by the way how the person connects with his/her creation. In this sense, the musician is no longer limited by space due to the physical conditions with the instrument, but it is rather, the instrument accompanying him/her in the changes. Therefore, there is a dialogue. There must be. Only, of what kind? If we erase the instrument in our visual perception, simply as an object, not as a tool producing sounds and helping in expression, wouldn’t the musician seem as sort of a dancer to us? Would we still trust his/her creation?

Would we trust an actor who does not speak, but talks through rhythm? Where does the voice in this sense belong? Where is ‘its place’ if there is no musical instrument to accompany the presence?

When I was singing on classes during my studies in Prague under the guidance of pedagogues, I felt that I started understanding my words better, not only on stage, but in everyday life. The nuance of movement in my actions started to sing out its meanings. The musicians’ answers about the singing question were evidently talking about bigger embodiment but in the sense of a more *intimate, natural* and *powerful* feeling. We should bear in mind that they are first of all players, not singers. Some mention that there is bigger body awareness, that they feel the whole song better. Quite few use the word *freedom*.

The voice is not a tool. It is more than that. Grotowski knew it, Meyerhold knew it, Artaud knew it... I am copying an answer again:

*“For me singing is a moment of no-body state. Meaning, there are no more limitations and barriers that you have to cross. You are everywhere and here at the same time. Time is an illusion when the voice is present. What is vibrating is you and you are the magic of creation.”*

Nevertheless, in a performing sense, if we do not follow the circumstances around us and the whole constellation of 'instruments' adding to the creation, we might lose track. In my opinion, performing is not about reaching *no-body state*, but rather bringing that body into function - as a composer, and reaching different mind state.

## CONCLUSION

/

### *To conclude or not*

Towards the end of my writing process of this thesis, or more concretely, at the very end when I was supposed to finalize it, I encountered with a short text about Meyerhold's work with music. Short as it is, it gave me an insight of an understanding, of someone's point of view which establishes firm columns for future work in this direction. It confirmed distant thoughts I have had, even neglected doubts when I was at the very beginning of this whole idea about writing about the actor and the music. It was as if a voice from the past is approaching, trying to reach my thoughts, sometimes blurry, sometimes clear as morning light. A feeling of happiness and nervousness started to mix up - I am happy to discover something which is so close to my thoughts without even knowing about it before, and I am frustrated to discover it now, for I know that many streams of writing here would shape their course differently and perhaps would have been a material of even sharper observation, leading to more precise focus in overall. I also felt sad to a certain point, is my work here pointless? What have I discovered? But by discovering, I mean, first of all, something for myself.

When seeing the road of development of this writing process, nothing is as precious as the experience I went through, trying to untangle my thoughts and feelings with a precise language, trying to articulate points I want to make, discovering even deeper meanings in meanwhile, untangling forms of experience, standing up from my chair to check my thoughts for real, crossing borders of my own understanding...

After all, what are we if not reproducers? What does that move in my feeling as an artist, as an actress, as an authorial performer?

Did I hear Meyerhold's teachings in life and did I witness those explorations which are now put into words by someone? Was I part of the time and space he lived and fought? What do I really know?

There is always a gap between what we are reading and being taught about someone's work, and what we are actually doing with that material, how do we understand it. Unless there is no mutual sharing of time and space, we cannot say that *we are doing exactly the same thing*. Art technics could be seen through mathematics, but art is not mathematics. Theatre could be meta-physical, but theatre is not born to be a physics science. What is left, is to keep trying to make symbioses between our own experiences and the knowledge given. And what is important, and even crucial, is to lean onto our own beings, as persons, as life rhythm, as intimate beats. Isn't it that being authorial? Only in this way we contribute as artists-makers, as actors-musicians, as performers-creators – both to life and to history. Even though that might be forgotten, or unnoticed, passed away in silence, as Meyerhold's work did in this field for many years in Russia.

I know about my own thoughts. I try to listen through my own experiences, both as a performer and as an audience (watching someone else's work).

Meyerhold's discoveries remain as material for exploration and future work for the development of many ideas delivered here. And not only him, many other 'alchemists' as well. Some of them, we have not even heard of yet. Following the belief that my "intellectual" understanding is dependent on my own experience first of all (and the ability of observation), and as such, becomes an essence for creative work, I am going to try putting an end of this journey – making a conclusion through simple language. I believe that many of the points already made throughout are part of that conclusion. Furthermore, I would like to leave space for breathing of that structure, whatever shape/form it has taken.

## II

***Finally – an end***

Could the music be the path to freedom in expression for the actor? Meyerhold has said that he works ten times better with an actor who loves music. He used terms such as, *the actor-musician* or *the actor-composer*. Stanislavski had tried to draw a mutual line between the actor-who-speaks and the actor-who-sings, a crucial point for symbiosis in the world of *performing and being*. Grotowski has expressed himself that the voice is an extended arm of our inner self and for that, actors had to sing. To sing and be. Brook has found a way how to musicalize a language, how to invent a language through means of music. The actors working with Barba have essentialized a body dance which you can sense being inside their bodies when you see them performing. Many of these explorations are glimpses of Artaud's actor, the one that sings and dance, moving between the 'metaphysical' and moving borders of theatre.

I believe that "the inner rhythm" is connected to something that us as human beings have inside, something as beat, as an impulse, a certain flow moving which in the performer's case has its manifestation in the expression or in the way how he/she feels things when working and performing. If words are beating and the body is pulsing alongside, our instrument turns into a wheel for (re)creation. My own inner dance shared with an eye which can see (and watch) is a road for peeling off layers, becoming possibly 'transparent', reaching possibly 'a total act'.

My fragile explorations - looking for the beats in my poetry, seeking for an expression through that language, discovering the eye of my director through work with sounds, trying to manage an articulation by finding the narrator of my stories, moving between cultural and personal... - they are part of some musical and theatre journey and ideas which have found their shape at the time, but what is important is that they stay in the body and they are a seed for widening the authorial perception and deepening the performing expression. Moreover, putting them on paper - here, allowed me to understand better the type of sensitivity one needs while working with himself/herself, but also with others.

Trying to carefully listen to the music echoing around does not make any harm. It might lead us towards discoveries that we might not knew, or reveal 'secrets' we did not know we are capable of.



If we do, perhaps our bodies and minds will become a versified version of our own creation.

The following passage, with which I end this writing, is an excerpt from a text of mine, which did not reach its stage 'realization' at the time.

(...)

*Jazz and theatre. Music... and music.*

*(Music goes) It starts like a remembering, doesn't it?*

*(Music continues.) And now again, the same sequence. Listen. Listen carefully. It is the same sequence, but every time something changes. Can you notice? Some tiny new moment happens. Because it's jazz.*

*This tiny moment changes the whole structure form from the inside, but makes the picture even more colourful from the outside, without breaking the beauty created. **It is a journey of fulfilling gaps and discovering every time something new!** – breaking rules without having the fear of destroying the melody, the sounds, the sensations created, the illusion... (whispering) it's jazz...*

*Am I already creating a character? You don't know, right? I'm going to tell you a secret: Neither do I. Or maybe I do. (Beat) Did you get it? Never mind – jazz.*

*Repeating: It is a journey of fulfilling gaps and discovering every time something new! – breaking rules without having the fear of destroying the melody, the sounds, the sensations created, the illusion... it's theatre. (Beat)*

(...)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Artaud, Antonin. *Theatre and Its Double*. Skopje: EVRO BALKAN PRESS, 2009 (*Театарот и Неговиот Двојник*)

Attali, Jacques. *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*. London/Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985

Barba, Eugenio and Savarese, Nicola. *A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: Routledge, 2006

Brook, Peter. *The Empty Space*. New York: Touchstone, 1996

Brook, Peter. *With Grotowski: Theatre is Just a Form*. Wroclaw: The Grotowski Institute, 2009

Hodge, Alison. *Twentieth Century Actor's Work*. New York: Routledge, 2007

Houseman, Barbara. *Finding Your Voice: A Step-By-Step Guide for Actors*. London: CPI Group (UK) Ltd: 2002

Schino, Mirella. *Alchemists of the Stage: Theatre Laboratories in Europe*. Wroclaw: Icarus Publishing Enterprise, 2009

Silverman, Carol. *Macedonia, UNESCO, and Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Challenging Fate of Teshkoto*. Journal of Folklore Research, Vol. 52, Nos. 2-3. Bloomington, Indiana: Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, 2015

Stanislavski, Konstantin. *An Actor Prepares*. Skopje: AZ-BUKI, 2003 (*Самоизградба на Актерот*)

Wilson, Dave. *Teshkoto and National Sentiment in Macedonia: Ascribing Meaning, Experiencing Tradition*. [publish. missing/anonym.]