



## **PHYSICAL on STAGE**

### **A PHYSICAL THEATRE Workshop**

*«The body is not any more an obstacle that isolate mind from itself.»*  
Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, 1989



**PHYSICAL on STAGE** is an introduction to the use of Physical Theater techniques focused on performers –both dancers and actors– who aspire to transgress the definition of the conventional performance and get into the field of experimentation. It aims to establish the basis for a physical language training understood as the main driving force for the dramaturgy of a postdramatic staging. It intends to make the performer aware of his role in the creative process of an inclusive performance. To do this, we offer a guide that can help the performer to explore and develop his initiative and creativity and try to motivate him to deepen into his knowledge & skills.

## **GUIDE LINES**

### **Introduction**

---

The concept of contemporary staging explores the limits of theatricality and dance. More and more we see choreographers incorporating theatrical elements in their dance performances or stage directors who work on the text and the creation of characters and dramatic situations from the viewpoint of body and movement techniques. This requires a deep review of the training for new performers. The key is the physical, understood as the totality of the human being. The mind or emotions are also physical processes. The mind is one more member of the body and we must understand the corporeal as a whole. The intentions, ideas, thoughts, emotions and feelings of the performer show up on the stage through a body trained for that purpose.

The body is not only the instrument of the performer, it is the performer itself.

A body movement is a thought, just as an idea or an emotion can only be expressed physically. The text is an idea and the word, its way of communication, can only be reproduced physically.

We must work not only with the idea of eliminating the boundaries between different scenic languages, but also of getting use to staying on the borders, educating our sense of risk and constantly questioning our work.

**The performer**  
***A driving force of artistic creation***

The core of the creation of a new performance is necessarily the performer who must be involved intellectually and emotionally in the creative process, through the physical. Only then do we have a chance to recognize true authenticity.

The performer must be understood as a creator who communicate the concept of the play and not just as a mere participant or performer under the will of somebody else.

**The training**  
***A strategy for the performer development***

The main strategy for the development of the performer is training. Training understood as a research tool. A research into the possibilities and limitations of the performers and for a suitable technique to express their own needs. The training should offer the widest possible range of mechanisms to the performer through the implementation of certain skills and their subsequent analysis.

The movement should be thought to provoke the imagination and the emotions of the audience and go beyond its visual or aesthetic form, as well as the technical skill. The training of the performers, then, must incorporate strategies to not only shape the movement but also to find its content and express it entirely. In optimal conditions, each performer must find his own identity, his own voice. And training should serve this idea.

It should focus mainly on a certain internal energy that the performer needs to generate and develop on stage, and in the control of it through his body, time and space.

The training is organized around two axes: one is the specific consciousness that the performer needs to develop in his body and his

body on stage and the other the dialectic that appears within the physical score of the actions that displays on stage and in his imaginary.

Any form of training is based on the understanding that certain basic elements of the performer's creative individuality can be trained as a preparation for his work. The three basic expressive tools: the body, the ability to project in the distance the scenic expression and the cooperation with the rest of the team.

The training must be constant and accompany the performer throughout his professional life, thus facilitates a much more expressive body and above all keeps all the achieved skills permanently active.

### **Physical Theatre** *The total show*

Beyond definitions more or less appropriate, we understand the concept of physical theater as a performance that encompasses all the scenic languages, from text and word to body and movement.

The emphasis is always on the performer-creator rather than on the performer-executor. The working process is based on collaboration. The working practice is physical. The actor-spectator relationship is open and in permanent review. The vitality of this theatrical form is enormous.

Thus, physical theater, not only refers to a type of performance, but to a way of understanding knowledge, training and rehearsal process.

### **Expression y reception** *Complicité with the audience*

The performer must develop the ability to connect with the audience and control at all times his strategies of expression and communication.

Consequently, he has to fight permanently against mechanization and train so that each performance is a new and unique two-way communication with a specific audience.

## Objectives

---

The main objective of the workshop is to show participants the possibilities of a new approach to developing and completing their training, as well as raising awareness of their role as co-creator in the process of staging a postdramatic performance.

As parallel objectives we can mention:

- Guide the performer in the research of his own goals and help him to drive the work that will lead him to his own style, to his own expressive needs.
- Give the performer as many suggestions as possible for the development of his creative skills.
- Facing him with his limitations for the optimal management of these with the aim of assimilate or overcome them.
- Develop his power of concentration, find a special quality of his commitment to the action score, and seek the involvement of the deeper layers of his personality.
- Show him the possibilities of a coordinated teamwork subject to permanent revision.

## Methodology

---

The methodology is based on the exploration of the limits and determinants of the performer when addressing certain aspects of the creative process, as well as the inherent abilities that each one possesses.

Propose the maximum possible resources to the performer so that he is able to find his own individual technique and can depend less and less on fixed methods or systems for creation.

### **The practice** *Instructions to build up creation*

An exercise is not only a practice [physical movement, muscular, respiratory, motor, vocal] that helps the performer to better know his body and his mind, to recognize and explore them, to strengthen the relationship with other performers, as a tool to try out gravity, space-time, object, dimension. This approach is important and points to a better knowledge of the body, its mechanisms and atrophies, its capacity for reaction and recovery.

But besides that, an exercise is a physical reflection of the performer. An inside monologue. An introspective search that engages creative responses, explores his abilities and limitations.

The exercise is based on a *consigna* [instruction], which is a proposal that should encourage the performer to explore the top of his initiative and will and face a specific aspect of work. It is always a point of departure, –never a target to achieve– which proposes a basic approach, whose development and goal only has the limits that the performer fixes.

## **TIMING**

### ***Development of a session***

The sessions, normally lasting 4 hours [with a maximum of 6], are structured in three basic parts: a physical-emotional warm-up, a thematic part with concrete proposals on specific aspects and its practise and analysis/evaluation of what happened during the session.

The workshop –which we consider intensive because of the complexity of the approaches– is always an introduction and a guide to the work that should follow after on. It can be developed in a minimum of three sessions and a maximum of six.

## **Techniques**

---

***Body expression.*** Creative activity that uses movement as a medium and the development of body language as an end and which main target is to research the body in motion, (its processes of perception and thought, playful attitude, development of creative capacity, spontaneous search in a team group) from the space, where these processes get sense.

***Improvisation.*** Considered as the most solid and useful tool of exploration, in addition to a technique of de-structuring the work set. It is also a way of understanding the performance itself from the idea that it is a more or less elaborate improvisation too.

***Imagework.*** Psycho-physical training based on images, technique for the development and control of the imagination understood as the basic axis of the performer's work. It is also a road to Chekhov technique.

***Mikhail Chekhov and the Physical Actions method.*** Synthesis of both strategies to lay the groundwork for acting from the physical.

**Clown & Butoh.** Exercises inspired by these languages as a complement to the priority training.

**[Un]Masking.** Work with neutral mask to promote control and body tracking skills.

## Practical Issues

---

**Length of the workshop and working sessions.** We suggest the following basic models taking into account whether the workshop is specifically aimed at a group of specific performers [dancers & choreographers or actors & directors] and depending on a more or less intensive approach.

### MODEL I: Physical on Stage for dancers o actors (3 x 4 hours)

hour	session 1	session 2	session 3
1	Preparing the body	Preparing the body	Preparing the body
2	[Un]masking	Imagework	Choreography The Physical Text [Improvisations]
3	Body & Space	Choreography The Physical Text	
4	Body & Emotion		
	Discussion	Discussion	Discussion

### MODEL II: Physical on Stage for dancers o actors (6 x 4 hours)

hour	session 1	session 2	session 3	session 4	session 5	session 6
1	Preparing the body	Preparing the body	Preparing the body	Preparing the body	Preparing the body	Open-door Session
2	[Un]masking	[Un]masking	Butoh & Clown	Choreography The Physical Text [Improvisation]	Ritual & Transgress	
3	Body & Space	Body & Emotion	Choreography The Physical Text		Mute Monologue	
4	Discussion	Discussion	Discussion	Discussion	Discussion	Discussion

**MODEL III: Physical on Stage for dancers and actors (6 x 6 hours)**

hour	session 1	session 2	session 3	session 4	session 5
1	<b>Common Work</b> [actors & dancers]	<b>Common Work</b> [actors & dancers]	<b>Common Work</b> [actors & dancers]	<b>Common Work</b> [actors & dancers]	<b>Open Session</b> [actors & dancers]
2					
3					
4					
5	<b>Specialised Work</b> [actors]	<b>Specialised Work</b> [dancers]	<b>Specialised Work</b> [actors]	<b>Specialised Work</b> [dancers]	<b>Discussion</b>
6					

NOTE: Breaks will be agreed with each concrete group.

**Working Place.** Wide and illuminated room with windows and proper floor.

**Technical needs.** The room must be provided with a sound equipment.

**Workshop participants.** The workshop is addressed to those performers who, whatever their goals, come from any technique based on movement [dance, physical theater] and also to those choreographers, directors or dramaturgs who long to explore the performer's experience from inside, becoming participants of their creative process. The dancers and choreographers who are usually interested are those from contemporary dance although any dancer who has another type of training with the appropriate motivation and who understands the type of work we propose is welcome. Although recommended, experience in the theatrical field is not compulsory. As for the actors, there is no restriction regarding their speciality. All the aspirants to participate in the workshop will be asked for their background education and experience, as well as their motivation to be able to advise them better.





## **UNIT I: Physical Theatre for Dancers & Choreographers**

---

Dance performances are more and more incorporating elements that have traditionally been considered theatrical. It's been experimenting with a multiplicity of bodies, which are constantly being constructed and interrogated in each new proposal.

The body lives in a permanent questioning and traces a relationship with the subjective that marks the aesthetic, ethical and political experience of a performance. Body and subjectivity are the axes that generate the formation of the contemporary subject, through images and speeches of the aesthetic experience. This is materialized in the production process, through choreographic forms, intensities, and extreme emotions, present and interrogated bodies. The aesthetic experience arises from the intricate relationship between images of different dimensions. We tend to compose a choreography to face a multitude of approaches, that is, to determine a sensitive point of view that allows us to translate into a language that can reach the audience in one way or another.

The aesthetic experience allows us to make images of ourselves and of reality; Provides parameters to see and understand the things, images and speeches with which we take part in reality. The expressive language of the body, the movement, is action. Dynamic and dramatic action that communicates from the internal force, present in each inside space of the body.

Therefore it is urgent to propose a dramaturgic work in which the performer can take part.

### **Issues**

*Narration & Abstraction*  
*Multiple Meanings & Provocation*  
*Emotion, Presence and Scenic Projection*  
*Dance & Dramaturgy*  
*Text, voice, word & Movement*  
*Me and the Other. Role & Character*  
*Me & Space-Time*  
*Communication & Expression*  
*Choreography*



## **UNIT II: Physical Theatre for Actors & Directors**

---

Perhaps the most controversial question –and therefore maybe the most important– in the field of physical or post-dramatic theatre is the function and relationship with the dramatic text.

The performer goes beyond the director, the playwright, the choreographer, even beyond his own text. It is then that the imagination (the most powerful tool of the creative process) and the work on the character become its basic tools.

The body and movement are present as sources of inspiration for artistic emotions and are shaped as a more perfect system of preparation of the actor as well as a more perfect style of communication with the audience.

The performer must find external, incentive, regardless of his personal experiences that could fuel his emotions and his imagination. Sensory stimulation comes from the creation of atmospheres and qualities, or external expressions that, when added to the movement, provoked the feelings represented by the gestures. The actor's work is then conditioned by an external stimulus and his ability to internalize it.

It is necessary to observe and to nourish the creative process, to investigate the interaction between the psyche and the body, to find simple and clear tools for the resolution of the great challenges of the actor: the character, the text and the scenic truth.

In order to open the door to one's own potential creativity, it is necessary to go beyond the technique, the intellect, the personal experience and the practical circumstances of the professional life.

### **Issues**

*The Physical Text*  
*Acting Dramaturgy*  
*Characterization & Character*  
*Psychological Gest*  
*Image & Imagination*  
*Atmosphere & Sensation*  
*Improvisation Physical Techniques*



## **UNIT III: Common Physical Theatre for Dancers & Actors**

---

The main feature of this proposal is to propose a coexistence and creative ex-change between dancers [choreographers] and actors [directors], as well as the chance of incorporating dramaturgs.

Exercises, tasks and goals are exchanged, and collaboration between performers from different backgrounds is promoted so that both are enriched by the experience and skills of each other.

From these general lines the timing and content of each workshop is elaborated taking into account the concrete and unique characteristics of each group, as well as other practical details.

Each of these workshops has its own personality and is tailor-made.

You can find this information in the following [link](#).

### **Contact us**

**MISERO PROSPERO Project**  
Carlos Rodero

[miseroprosperso@gmail.com](mailto:miseroprosperso@gmail.com)  
+36 70 536 07 54

[www.miseroprosperso.com](http://www.miseroprosperso.com)  
[facebook page](#)

