

Stanislawski's system

This system is also called *Method Acting* and was adapted by New York teachers such as *Stella Adler* and *Lee Strasberg*. Some of the world's most famous actors and actresses use this system, such as: Robert de Niro, Marlon Brando, James Dean, Dustin Hoffmann, Julia Roberts, Meryl Streep, Russell Crow, Leonardo di Caprio and Kim Basinger.

Some of the main points of the Stanislawski System are:

- The magic 'if'. The actor knows that the play and the setting are 'unreal', but he asks himself, 'How would I behave if they were real?' Asking this question helps him to transform the imaginary world of the play into a real one.
- To help the magic 'if' an actor needs a strong imagination. He must ask himself questions about the part he is playing and in performance fully understand what he says and what he does.
- An actor must concentrate his attention on what is happening on the stage and not be distracted by the 'black hole' where the audience is.
- It is essential to relax muscular tensions, particularly in moments of strong dramatic emotion.
- Small physical actions on the stage are very important. The actor must *believe* in them and do them as consciously as possible.
- To bring truth and conviction to his portrayal of the character, an actor should draw on his 'emotional memory', that is, the store of emotional experiences lying dormant in his subconscious mind.
- Good communication between performers on the stage is achieved by activating the senses, particularly by listening attentively and looking directly and consciously.
- An actor must use his intellect to understand the text of the play. He must have the will and determination to follow his part through. Also he must have enough feeling for the part to make it convincing and truthful on stage.
- An actor does not identify with his part completely. He 'lives', weeps and laughs on the stage, and while weeping and laughing he observes his laughter and tears.
- 'Love art in yourself, not yourself in art.'

Remember: You must not only act but to be convincing you must also react.