



Urban Research Theater Newsletter – January 2009

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1) THE YEAR OF GROTOWSKI

UNESCO has declared 2009 the “Year of Grotowski”: “Jerzy Grotowski (1933-1999), Polish theatre director, theoretician and writer, was one of the greatest reformers of twentieth-century theatre, especially in the field of acting. In 1959 he created the Laboratory Theatre led in cooperation with Ludwik Flaszen. Grotowski’s research undertaken in the Laboratory Theatre had a definitive impact on contemporary theatre at an international level, more particularly through the investigation of the nature of acting, its phenomenon as well as its meaning. Jerzy Grotowski created the concept and the artistic form of ‘Poor Theatre’ in which the mental, the physical and emotional processes [of the actor] are intensively put forward.” – UNESCO

Year of Grotowski events in New York City (February – July):

- <http://www.urbanresearchtheater.com/yog/yognyc.pdf>

Year of Grotowski events in Wroclaw, Poland (January – December):

- <http://www.urbanresearchtheater.com/yog/wroclaw.pdf>

Year of Grotowski conference in Kent, England (June):

- <http://www.urbanresearchtheater.com/yog/kentconf.pdf>

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS for a panel and symposium in Kent, England (June):

- <http://www.urbanresearchtheater.com/yog/kentcfp.pdf>

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS for a summer workshop in Wroclaw, Poland (July – August):

- <http://www.urbanresearchtheater.com/yog/RemarkableWomen.pdf>

Urban Research Theater will have regular SHOWINGS and WORKSHOPS between February and June. The schedule will be announced in the next newsletter. We hope to see you there!

NOTES FROM THE STUDIO

2) BEN: JOURNAL EXCERPT, JANUARY 30, 2005

There are two kinds of time, fast time and slow time. In fast time you try to accomplish tasks, and these tasks can be named. In fast time you can talk and think about what you are doing. Pretty much everything in university life and politics, actually most of everything in my whole life, has been in fast time. Theater in New York is definitely based in fast time. Slow time is something else: it's when you connect to your animal brain and work within a single idea. From the perspective of fast time, slow-time work doesn't make sense, because it looks like a person repeating one thing over and over. But actually, this repetition leads to a subtle evolution that is invisible to the fast eye until it crosses a certain threshold and manifests itself as mastery of a skill. Playing sports happens in slow time. Dance happens in slow time when you get into it, but not as long as it remains task-based, i.e. assembled from aspects of a symbolic / formal library.

Slow time is the time of flowers and animals. Presence. Buddhist time. The time of enlightenment. And the old question: Is it some kind of goal to permanently inhabit this time? Do the Masters permanently inhabit this time, or is it just that they are capable of entering it regularly and can do so whenever necessary? Or perhaps it's that they always inhabit this time *while teaching*, and therefore appear to permanently inhabit it from the perspective of their students, who don't see them in the other parts of their lives.

What I understand now is fundamentally something about patience, although that's not quite the right word. The word "patience" is a word spoken from the fast-time perspective when it tries to describe the slow-time perspective. Trying to describe the Slow in the language of the fast. But in fact, when you are inside the Slow you don't need patience because there's nothing that you are waiting for. It's not that you're postponing the jump to the next task but rather that you are deeply and fully present to the current task. It's not that I'm going to be in New York City next year and be all "patient" and wait for something to happen. Of course not! I will start immediately! But the thing I am starting is a slow craft – nothing that can be described in words.

I can't say for sure what the project(s) will be or who they will involve, where the will take place or anything of that nature. All I can say is that there will be projects and they will follow out of my current path and eventually they will lead somewhere. I see expeditions, theater craft, singing and moving, travel, grant applications, artistic residencies, workshops and classes, networking, regular practical work, ensemble building, traditional plays, etc. But these are just words. The language of the Slow is a language of what is actual. I do not know what I will do in NYC next year. Right now I have to concentrate on accomplishing my current tasks. Everything follows from the present moment.

As always, comments and feedback are welcome.

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