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Acting Through Song

Resource Materials:

Musical Theory by Stephen Sondheim

Francois Delsarte Method

Konstantin Stanislavsky System

This course will introduce alternative methods used in the Musical Theatre to achieve fuller and more meaningful characterization through song. Musical Theatre performers use these techniques during their preparatory work and continue to use them throughout the rehearsal process to develop a clearly defined character. We will focus on three core techniques and examine how their marriage can provide a richer field of options for student of *Musical Theatre*.

Sondheim: Musical Theory

- Intellect = Rhythm
- Emotion = Harmony
- Vitality = Combination or Pattern
- All three exist in all songs – but the song is primarily anchored in one
- Must identify where the song is anchored – Intellect/Emotion/Vital - where does it live
- What a character *does not say* is as important as what they do say

Francois Delsarte:

- Intellectual Plains – Movement initiated by thought
- Aesthetic/Emotional Plains – Movement initiated by feelings
- Vital Plains – Movement initiated through space
- Characters engage in combinations of all three
- Helpful to find which plain is being initiated to clarify the *character* – in doing so, the *actor* has maximized communication with the audience

Konstantin Stanislavsky System:

- Goal/Intention
- Obstacle
- Tactics
- Enthusiasm/Positive outcome
- Bases of Modern Acting – all require an intellectual goal/an emotional result/a vital action
- Must examine the lyric to discover subtext
- In Musical Theatre, the song is usually the character trying to resolve a problem
- Applied to a song the same as applied to a scene and/or Monologue