# B. An Ideal School for Professional Training

In this workgroup, existing schools were discussed: Pomona College (USA), Die Etage (Berlin), Mime-opleiding Amsterdam, Moscow, Vancouver Studio (Can).

As far as the ideal school is concerned, there is a distinction between a private and a public school. They are organised in a different way and whether a school receives a subsidy or not, whether students can get scholarships or not, also makes a difference. The ideal school should not offer just one technique, but a multitude of methods. In Die Etage, five different stage methods are taught. A stage play is also on the ways with three different directors: one for dance, one for mime and one for acting. Claire Heggen of Théâtre du Mouvement added that you should mix technique (such as Alexander, Feldenkreis, mime corporel) with the character and ability of the student. Very often, an education alone is not sufficient to make the students ready for the stage. They need to practise for at least another two years to attain the desired quality. Schools fail in bridging this gap between studies and practice.

The following methods are used in the existing schools:

In Moscow, technique and psychology of the actor are the central issues. External acting as well as internal motivation of the actor are being trained at this school. In Amsterdam, the first year is fairly rigid. Mornings are for trainings, afternoons for play and workshops. This system continues in the higher years, but then the years are subdivided in ever changing groups and there is more freedom with respect to the choice of a project.

For Michael Pedretti (USA), a six/seven years school seems to be ideal. The first years are used for basic training, during the sixth year a solo is made and a tour organised. The last year is spent back in the school. The school is only meant for performers who make their own art. Mark this, such a school is still a utopia!

In Vancouver the studies can be divided into four phases: first, attention is given to free and spontaneous movement, second, punctuation of movement and thoughtful movement are introduced, then, the musicality of movement is dealt with and finally, form is brought in.

Mirna Zagar mentioned the notion of balance in order to shape a training; there should be a balance between the school and the personal freedom, between technique and creativity, between tradition and history.

It was also noted that teachers should not teach year after year, but that they should leave for a sabbatical year after approximately six years.

Chairman Thomas Leabhart concluded as follows: 'Fall in love with what you have and it will grow. Don't copy. Develop your own things.'



6

# C. The Importance of Dramaturgy and Scenario

Chairwoman: Natalja Tabachnikova of the Theatre Union in Moscow. She came to the conclusion that there are not enough Tsjechovs and Shakespeares in mime. Everyone in mime and pantomime makes their own performances and that makes it difficult to create the necessary distance from those works. Very often, there are too many 'movement words' on stage.

The discussion in the group was about: What does a dramaturge do and what is his/her function in the movement theatre. Marco de Marinus was quoted:

'1. dramaturgy - the set of techniques/theories covering the compositions of the theatrical text.

2. theatrical text - this is no longer meant to indicate the dramatic literary text but rather the text of the theatrical performance, the performance text. This is conceived as a complex network of different types of sign, expressive means or actions- coming back to the etymology of the word text, which implies the idea of texture, of something woven together.'

The classic idea of the dramaturge:

- The dramaturge is the outsider, does not partake in the process itself, but only observes. He/she places the work in a social, political and intellectual context.

- The dramaturge controls the progress of the process during rehearsals.

- Controls the process of improvisation and collection of material, helps with the analysis and the rendering of meaning to it.

- The dramaturge continues to refer to the theme when working with the players. The dramaturge in the mime and movement theatre is situated in the field of 'subjective dramaturgy':

Dramaturgy offers several angles: the play, the actor, the director, the performer and the audience. Everyone looks at a performance in a different way. Furthermore, the dramaturgy in mime and movement theatre differs from group to group. There are different opinions as to what is theatrically important. Some will focus on the figurative, others on abstraction and form, a third on musicality etc. Semiotics, literature, film theory and painting can also serve as a basis. Already at the beginning of the working process, these differences come to light. Is a scenario important or is what happens on the stage floor of influence? In this way, numerous working methods can be distinguished. It is considered to be important that new ways are to be found to think about movement, how we can use language to talk about meaning instead of assuming that through the use of language meaning will automatically be given. The workgroup made the comparison that the search for a common heading for

dramaturgy ressembled the painting by Rembrandt, 'The Anatomical Lesson'. In this painting, student surgeons each examine another part of the human body which they try to nominate, whereas in fact everything falls under one and the same heading: the human life.

## D. Networking

Introduction Yves Marc: Very often, mime players are more than just players; they are also teacher or organiser and it is important to gather information which has to do with the own fields of operation. What we have to ask ourselves is what a network means, how it should function and who it is aimed at.

The following issues were mentioned in the discussions: There is a distinction between:

- artistic items
- practical needs and questions arising from the profession.

There is a need for an exchange in all sorts of areas; where to play, what are the present organisations, courses, training possibilities, funding.

The need for exchange will manifest itself mainly in practical matters. More possibilities for exchange will reinforce the position of mime.

A databank should be set up. Mime players need information about: who is playing, who are my colleagues, media contacts, outline financial sources, festivals, sponsors, training facilities. At the same time, another question is raised: how do we bring in more groups in the EMF, how can we reach as many people as possible, what methods do we use in networking. Meetings! There needs to be a place where everybody can meet. Networking also means that the discussion must be stimulated, that the finances are taken care of in order to come to a real exchange. It is important for the EMF to link up to other, existing organisations and to examine what is already present in the field of networking.

Every country should have its own mime centre. It is not the intention to copy existing mime centres such as the Nederlands Mime Centrum. The situation in each country and what can already be found present should be looked at. Very often there is more than one might think.

In short: the tasks of the EMF can be summed up as follows: development, education, publicity, information and innovation.

Who can become members of the EMF? Membership should be open to all mime artists. The EMF is an organisation in which members themselves need to invest by way of actions, workgroups and membership.

Ruud Engelander: Only after something has been put in, can something come out.

CONTRIBUTION

Contribution for membership comes to \$500 for (mime)centres, \$250 for schools, organisations and companies and \$100 for individual members. Payment in US dollars poses a problem for the East European countries. It is, however, the intention to stick to this proposal. The political situation at this moment is rapidly changing and it is very well possible that in a few years time, the amount can be raised. In the mean time the possibility should be considered of one centre adopting another, of one organisation adopting another one, of one member adopting another member.

It is not necessary for mime players to become individual members in order to obtain information. It is in fact more economical to join an organisation within the EMF which

will distribute the information further among its members (pyramid structure). Ruud Engelander: 'The IETM knows only organisations as its members and sometimes a few individuals who are at the verge of changing work.' Elzbieta Pastecka (PL): In Poland, an individual membership has much more status than

membership through a national organisation. Besides, there are hardly centres in the country which would qualify as such.

It is advised to keep trying to set up an organisation, even if that would consist of only one person manning a desk and a telephone. This would also be the most profitable with respect to the contribution that has to be paid in US dollars. Organisations in such countries will have major problems in raising this money, let alone individuals.

# ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION

Article 9 must receive the addition 'theatre companies'.

It is not the manager of these companies, but the companies themselves which should become members.

There were many questions on the manner of joining the federation and this item will be revised.

In any way, the board of management will now concern itself with minor changes in the articles and with the question of who is to join the board.

The first appointments have already been made:

The board will meet in Amsterdam on October 31. On November 20, there is a meeting of the German members of the EMF in Hannover.

Amsterdam, October 1991 Marjolein Bierens

#### translation: Lot Smilde

9