The Next Stage
Notes: Week Six

What we covered

1. Warm-up
The blob - warming up, building cooperation and team communication

2. Vocal Warm-up
See vocal warm-up sheet (I’ll add it to the Facebook page) I still haven’t done this yet, sorry. I’ll get it sorted soon, I promise.

3. Movement Warm-up (Yoga for Actors)
Cooling breath, fire breath, imaginary sun salutes, shoulder stands and headstands!!! Thanks Jessie!!!

4. A summary of Stanislavsky so far...
   - **Concentration**: sight, touch, hearing, smell, taste, emotion, circles of attention (building our ability to focus on specific aspects of experience)
   - **Imagination**: visualisation, the magic if (building our capacity to imagine in specific ways, changing very specific aspects of memories using our imagination)
   - **Communication**: rays of energy, non verbal communication (focusing on aspects of communication that are non-verbal, building team communication, building 360 awareness)

Next week we’ll look at Stanislavsky’s scoring of actions (you might have come across this as finding the ‘bits’ or ‘beats’ in scenes)

5. Monologues – what we learned

   **Visualise your space**
   Where you are? What room? Are you sitting, standing? Where's the furniture? What are you wearing? What's your name (full name)? Where are the other people in the scene? What’s around you? Keep adding to the picture in your head. Keep asking questions to help make your scene more real to you.

   **Staging**
   Instead of standing, sitting in centre stage and facing directly - use angles. Think about diagonal lines as well as straight lines. Think about how stage reality is different in order to ensure that the audience is able to see the actors.
   *For example: Fidelma’s table and chairs angled out to the audience.*

   **Finding clues for how to act**
   See your text as a series of clues about your character's behaviour.
   *For example: Ross’s character is unhinged (both mentally as he has had a nervous breakdown and killed a number of people, but also physically as he is disembodied – a ghost). He is ‘off centre’ as a character so maybe he should be ‘off centre’ on the stage. He is not in control or has lost control,*
he’s not the hero, so perhaps he’s effectively banned from centre stage, banned from having that kind of control and status. We should get a sense of this in how he moves and behaves.

**The language of behaviour**

There is a code/language of behaviour that we all understand. Evil characters move and speak in a different way to the good characters. We may only need to see a character on stage or in a film for a matter of seconds and we instantly understand their relationship to the story. So if you are wondering how to convey something complicated to an audience very quickly (like, that you are a ghost) look at examples of how it is done in films or on stage.

**For example:** Claire and I played a scene where Claire’s character was not human (she was my character’s alter ego). So we began the scene with Claire behind me and her back turned to the audience. She spoke her first lines like that. Instantly there was an understanding that Claire’s character was not natural. Because Claire’s character was a voice inside my character’s head – embodied for the purposes of the play – we avoided eye contact throughout to convey that idea.

**Don’t let an accent get in the way**

Accents aren’t necessarily helpful to creating characters (and certainly can get in the way early on in rehearsals). It’s important to distinguish between accent and voice - accent can be cliche whereas voice is much more about how someone sounds - tone, rhythm of their speech, type of language used etc). Accent is generic, whereas a characters voice is specific (I have a Dublin accent as do many people in the class but my voice is very different from anyone else’s). As an actor you are aiming for the specific instead of generic. So instead of a Southern accent you should be aiming for Blanche’s voice. Find the authenticity or the truth of the words first then add the ‘window-dressing’ of the accent (and only if you want).

But of course, some people might find accents a useful way to get into character - which is fine - you have to find your own way as an actor.