



# The S Word: Stanislavsky's Many Faces – Then and Now

An International Symposium  
6-9 November 2025



L-Università ta' Malta  
School of Performing Arts

Department of  
Theatre Studies



# THE S WORD: STANISLAVSKY'S MANY FACES – THEN AND NOW

## Conference Theme

Stanislavsky's work touched so many areas of practice that simply referring to him as a 'theatre-maker' seems to be reductive. An actor skilled in character transformation; a highly creative director famous for compelling stage creations; a pedagogue and teacher of many performers; an experimenter who brought seismic shifts to the art of performance, in Russia and across continents; a theorist of acting and performance; book author; collaborator; public speaker; political figure; and scientist – these are among the many 'faces' which today we attribute to Stanislavsky. At its core, the symposium tackles these or even other faces of Stanislavsky, either in isolation or in interaction with one another.

Moreover, in its subtitle of 'Then and Now', the symposium is offering a second prompt for further discussion. Contributions that tackle the 'then', i.e. which seek to unravel Stanislavsky's own ideas, productions, methods of work, etc. form an important part of the programme; so are those which consider the 'now', or our own interpretations and applications of Stanislavsky in a markedly different, twenty-first-century performance context. In this way, the Symposium develops a dialogue between past and present, at a time when we are steadily moving forward into ever-more contemporary understandings of the System. The 'now' is also extended to the research methods used today to study a historical figure like Stanislavsky. While rigorous historical study will always be important, the Symposium considers other methodologies which can be used to extend our knowledge of Stanislavsky.

Topics for discussion include:

- Stanislavsky's many faces, their negotiation and interaction
- Relatively obscure work, sources, or practices within Stanislavsky's oeuvre
- Reappraising the System: how and why
- Stanislavsky and his collaborators
- Stanislavsky today – issues of international transmission, appropriation, and adaptation
- Teaching Stanislavsky and pedagogical perspectives
- Stanislavsky and contemporary performance (e.g. postdramatic theatre, digital performance, etc.)
- Stanislavsky and contemporary concerns including gender, race, well-being, intimacy, etc.
- Methodologies used in researching Stanislavsky today: history-based; practice-as-research; use of theory, etc.
- Interdisciplinary connections with other fields, such as Psychology, Cognitive Science, Cultural Studies, Philosophy, History, etc.
- Provocations that critique or offer a 'risk-taking approach' towards Stanislavsky.

Co-Convenors: Prof. Stefan Aquilina and Prof. Paul Fryer

Creative Consultant: Prof. Bella Merlin

*Special thanks go to Creative Europe for their generous support.*

## **PROGRAMME**

### **THURSDAY      6 NOVEMBER**

**15:00                      Registration desk open**

**16:00-17:30              Preliminary Presentation: VCT  
Stanislavsky and Research Methods**

Editors:

Stefan Aquilina, University of Malta  
Alisa Ballard Lin, Ohio State University  
Chris Hay, Flinders University

Speakers:

Michaela Antoniou, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens  
Bella Merlin, University of California (Riverside)  
Alys Daroy, Murdoch University  
Liza-Mare Syron, University of New South Wales UNSW  
Dassia N. Posner, Northwestern University  
Jake Roberston, Tisch Drama (NYU)  
Diego Moschkovich, Universidade de São Paulo  
Nicol Cabe, Flinders University  
[More speakers to be announced]

**18:00-18:15              Symposium Opening**

**18:15-19:30              Keynote Speaker: VCT**

**The Role of the Subconscious in the Actor's Creative Process: The Influence of the  
Demidov School of Acting on the Stanislavsky System**

Andrei Malaev-Babel, FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training and International  
Demidov Association

**Chair:**                  Stefan Aquilina, University of Malta

**19:30-21:00              Reception**

## **FRIDAY                      7 NOVEMBER**

### **9:00-10:30    Panel Session 1: Room 5**

**Chair:**                      Vladimir Mirodan, University of the Arts London

**On Stanislavsky's Early Acting and Direction Training: Alexander Ostrovsky's Legacy and the Key Influence of Savva Mamontov's Method and Experimentation**

Donatella Gavrilovich, Department of Literary, Philosophical and Art History Studies, University of Rome 'Tor Vergata'

**Pre-Method Stanislavsky in Hollywood: The System meets the Actorly Virtue of Concentration**

Dan Leberg, University of Groningen

**Stanislavsky as Orthodox Christian, Stanislavsky as Acting Teacher: Belief, both Theatrical and Christian**

Alisa Ballard Lin, Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures, Ohio State University

**These were not Imaginary Circumstances: 'The Magical If' in Portraying Holocaust Survivors**

Anthony Hostetter, Department of Theatre and Dance at Rowan University, USA

### **9:00-10:30    Panel Session 2: Room 6**

**Chair:**                      Bella Merlin, University of California (Riverside)

**To What Extent Do Actors – Being Trained in Stanislavsky's System – Need to Understand Dramaturgy?**

Julian Jones, Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance, UK

**Science and Mystery in the UK Conservatoire**

David Jackson, Anglia Ruskin University

**Shakespeare through Stanislavsky: A Vocabulary for a Practice-First Pedagogy**

Benjamin Archer, Southampton Solent University

### **9:00-10:30    Panel Session 3: VCT**

**Chair:**                      Michaela Antoniou, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

**The System as Scaffold: Training Autonomous Actors Through Responsive Pedagogy**

Siiri Scott, University of Notre Dame

**The Power of Public Solitude: Fostering Inclusion and Diversity in Education**

Markéta Machková, Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy, Academy of Performing Arts in Prague

**From Ensemble to Individually Tailored Acting Training Techniques:  
Mediating the Stanislavsky School and Australian Sensitivity in Actor Training**  
Inga Romantsova, Actors Centre, Torrens University, Sydney

**10:00-12:00 Workshop 1: SHCR Room, Msida Campus**

**Scaffolding Consent and Intimacy in the Rehearsal Room: A Practical Workshop**  
Joelle Ré Arp-Dunham, University of Kansas

*This workshop is for students of the Department of Theatre Studies only.*

**10:30-11:00 Coffee Break**

**11:00-12:30 Panel Session 4: Room 5**

**Chair:** Julian Jones, Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance, UK

**Cultivating Active Analysis**  
Tamur Tohver, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

**Teaching the Method of Action Analysis in Drawing**  
Nataliia Dniprenko, University for the Creative Arts and the Kyiv National I. K. Karpenko-Kary Theatre, Cinema and Television University in Ukraine

**Translating Stanislavsky's *An Actor's Work on the Role* – The Greek paradigm**  
Michaela Antoniou, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

**11:00-12:30 Panel Session 5: Room 6**

**Chair:** Benjamin Archer, Southampton Solent University

**From Stage to Studio: Applying Stanislavsky's Acting Principles to Instrumental Music Performance and Pedagogy**  
Andrea Johnson, University of Northern Iowa

**Building Caretakers: Using Stanislavsky-based Acting Exercises to Help Future Doctors Practice Physical Presence and Foster Empathic Indicators in Patient Encounters**  
Elisabeth Hostetter, Department of Theatre and Dance, Rowan University, USA

**Ungiven Circumstances and the Dramaturgy of Light**  
Valentina Tamiolaki, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

**11:00-11:45 Workshop 2: VCT**

**The Need for Words: Shakespeare and the Contemporary Performer**

Gerald 'Jay' Paul Skelton, The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

**11:45-12:30 Workshop 3: VCT**

**Dialogical Acting (with the Inner Partner)**

Hana Malaníková, Markéta Machková, and Maryana Kozak, Academy of Performing Arts in Prague

**12:30-13:30 Lunch Break**

**13:30-15:00 Panel Session 6: Room 5**

**Chair:** Jan Hančil, Academy of Performing Arts in Prague

**Ethics and Practice, or How to Reconcile Teamwork with the Actor's Well-being?  
Stanislavsky's 'Ethics' in a Polish Context**

Joanna Ostrowska and Juliusz Tyszka, Performance Studies Laboratory, Cultural Studies Institute, Adam Mickiewicz University at Poznań, Poland

**The Multifaceted *sverkhzadacha*: Does Stanislavsky Contradict Himself?**

Tomasz Kubikowski, Akademia Teatralna in Warsaw

**13:30-15:00 Panel Session 7: Room 6**

**Chair:** Stefan Aquilina, Department of Theatre Studies, University of Malta

**'To Breathe the Role': From Respiration to Anása —Tempo—Rhythm and Scenic Presence in Stanislavsky**

Panagiota Panagi, Collaborator, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Theatre Studies

**Stanislavsky and Opera: The Musico-Dramatic Text and the Development of Performance Dramaturgies on the Operatic Stage**

Mario Frendo, Department of Theatre Studies, School of Performing Arts, University of Malta

**Stanislavsky and the AI Actress: Can Algorithms Replace the Human Soul of Performance?**

Natali Chavez, Film School of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH)

**13:30-14:15 Workshop 4: VCT**

**Unlocking ‘The Art in Yourself’: Active Analysis as a Solo Practice in Professional Rehearsal**

Abigail Killeen, Bowdoin College, US

**14:15-15:00 Workshop 5: VCT**

**Harmonising Technique and Spirit: A Journey through Demidov’s School of Acting and Stanislavsky’s System**

Gabriela Curpan, University for the Creative Arts

**15:00-15:30 Coffee Break**

**15:30-16:00 Plenary: VCT**

**Rethinking the Room: Practical Shifts Toward Equity in Actor Training**

Siiri Scott, University of Notre Dame and Gerald ‘Jay’ Paul Skelton, The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

**16:00-17:00 Featured Speaker: VCT**

**Contemporary Now/Contemporary Then: ‘New forms are what we need, and if there aren’t any, then we are better off with nothing’ (Konstantin in *The Seagull*, Chekhov)**

Richard Gough, Centre for Performance Research

**Saturday 8 November**

**9:00-10:15 Keynote Speaker: VCT**

**Stanislavsky from the Outside: Networking and Re-working the Self**

Frank Camilleri, Department of Theatre Studies, School of Performing Arts, University of Malta

**Chair:** Mario Frendo, Department of Theatre Studies, University of Malta

**10:15-11:00 Coffee Break**



**11:00-12:30 Panel Session 8: Room 5**

**Chair:** Frank Camilleri, Department of Theatre Studies, University of Malta

**An Actor Creates: The Moscow Kamerny Theatre School**

Dassia N. Posner, Northwestern University

**Maria Knebel: A Woman at the Crossroads of the Transmission and Transformation of Stanislavsky's Pedagogical Legacy**

Cristiana Minasi, University of Messina

**Stanislavsky and Charles Jehlenger: A Case of Parallel Evolution?**

Eric Hetzler, University of Huddersfield

**11:00-12:30 Panel Session 9: Room 6**

**Chair:** Annelis Kuhlmann, Aarhus University

**The System in the Shadow: Performing Shakespeare through Karagöz and Stanislavsky**

Burak Urucu, Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa

**Stanislavsky Albanian-Style**

Anxhela Çikopano, Centre of Art Studies, Academy of Sciences of Albania

**Accessing Active Analysis from Written Sources**

Stefan Aquilina, Department of Theatre Studies, University of Malta

**11:00-12:30 Workshop 6: VCT**

**The Demidov School in Practice: Unlocking the Actor's Subconscious Creativity**

Andrei Malaev-Babel, FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training and International Demidov Association

**12:30-13:30 Lunch Break**

**13:30-15:00 Publications Panel: VCT**

***Theatrical Consciousness: The Actor's Mind in Russian Modernism***

Alisa Ballard Lin, Ohio State University

***The Actor's Revolution: Art and Politics at the Moscow Kamerny Theater***

Dassia N. Posner, Northwestern University

***Stanislavsky and Screen Acting***

Evi Stamatiou (co-ed.), University of East London

***Stanislavsky's Use of Improvisation and Stanislavski Studies***

Stefan Aquilina, Department of Theatre Studies, University of Malta

**15:00-15:30 Coffee Break**

**15:30-17:00 Panel Session 10: Room 5**

**Chair:** Eric Hetzler, University of Huddersfield

**Super-Stanislavsky: On Superconsciousness, Supertasks and Truth from a Semiotic Perspective**

Aleksei Semenenko, Umeå University, Sweden

**Fools at School: Stanislavsky's Masks**

Annelis Kuhlmann, Department of Dramaturgy and Musicology, Aarhus University

**'Lures' of Stanislavsky, 'Deconservation' of Moreno, and 'Dialogical Acting' of Vyskočil as ways of Awakening the *Creative State***

Martina Musilová, Department of Theatre Studies, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, Brno

**15:30-17:00 Panel Session 11: Room 6**

**Chair:** Alisa Ballard Lin, Ohio State University

**The Beautiful Risk of Acting Pedagogy: Stanislavsky, Vyskočil, and Biesta**

Jan Hančil, Academy of Performing Arts in Prague

**Stanislavsky and Demidov: A Forgotten Encounter**

Gabriela Curpan, University for the Creative Arts

**The Acting School of Nikolai V. Demidov at the Crossroads of Acting Pedagogy**

Marianna Kozak, Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, Czechia

**15:30-16:15 Workshop 7 – Dramatic Reading: VCT**

**A Dramatic Reading of the chapter 'The Voice' from *Stanislavski in Art***

Branca Temer, Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro

**16:15-17:00 Workshop 8: VCT**

**Truthfulness Through VR Immersion: A Vakhtangov-Inspired Pedagogy**

Evi Stamatiou, University of East London

**20:00-22:00 Jean Benedetti Annual Lecture: VCT**

**‘If You Will’: A Performance-based Marriage of Methodologies from Stanislavsky and Shakespeare**

Bella Merlin with Miles Anderson

**Sunday 9 November**

**9:00-10:30 Panel Session 12: Room 5**

**Chair:** Siiri Scott, University of Notre Dame

**Holistic Stanislavsky: Why Modern Theatre Acting Fails to Match the MAT**

Arvind Pandey, Whistling Woods International, India

**Grotowski’s Re-Composition of Stanislavsky’s Studio and Method of Physical Actions**

Tsu-Chung Su, National Taiwan Normal University

**Stanislavsky and the Question of Truth: Belief, Sincerity, and Gnosis in Actor Training**

Giuliano Campo, Ulster University

**9:00-10:30 Panel Session 13: Room 6**

**Chair:** Gerald ‘Jay’ Paul Skelton, The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

**Stanislavsky and Postdramatic Theatre**

Narges Yazdi, Iran University of Art

**‘Stanislavskian Psychology’ Today: Stick or Twist?**

Vladimir Mirodan, University of the Arts London

**The Stanislavsky System and Artificial Intelligence: Towards a Participatory Methodology for Role Creation in the 21st Century**

Elena Stamatopoulou, School of Drama, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

**9:00-10:30 Workshop 9: VCT**

**The Final Face: Active Analysis brought to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Practice**

Michael Shipley, University of Memphis and Joelle Ré Arp-Dunham, University of Kansas

**10:30-11:00 Coffee Break**

**11:00-12:00 Conclusion: VCT**

## THE S WORD PARTNERS



*The Stanislavsky  
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