



# DISCOVER THE METHOD

**WITH LOLA COHEN (USA)**  
**EDITOR OF "THE LEE STRASBERG NOTES"**

**LOLA COHEN (USA)**

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# SHARING THE METHOD

ON THE ART OF ACTING...

MASTER CLASS IN MELIKHOVO & MOSCOW...

ON THE THEATRE...

WHY THE METHOD OF LEE STRASBERG IS  
SO IMMENSELY POPULAR...?

WHEREIN LIES THE SECRET...?

WHAT JOY MEANS IN OUR PROFESSION...

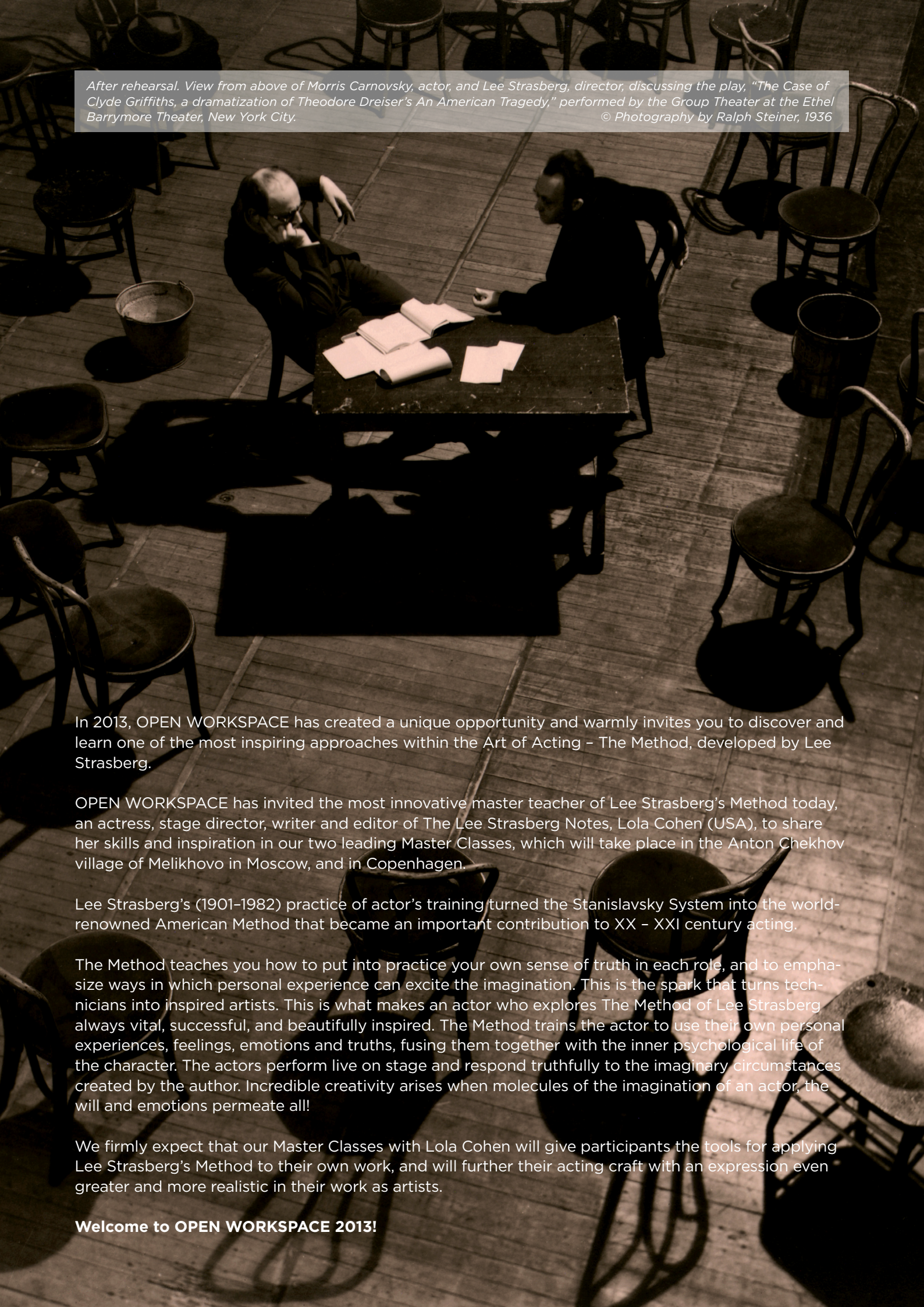
MASTER CLASS IN COPENHAGEN...

WHAT IS OPEN WORKSPACE...?

**OPEN WORKSPACE**  
nurturing artistic creation since 2011

**TELLTOJOY**  
ART THEATRE





*After rehearsal. View from above of Morris Carnovsky, actor, and Lee Strasberg, director, discussing the play, "The Case of Clyde Griffiths, a dramatization of Theodore Dreiser's An American Tragedy," performed by the Group Theater at the Ethel Barrymore Theater, New York City.*

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In 2013, OPEN WORKSPACE has created a unique opportunity and warmly invites you to discover and learn one of the most inspiring approaches within the Art of Acting – The Method, developed by Lee Strasberg.

OPEN WORKSPACE has invited the most innovative master teacher of Lee Strasberg's Method today, an actress, stage director, writer and editor of The Lee Strasberg Notes, Lola Cohen (USA), to share her skills and inspiration in our two leading Master Classes, which will take place in the Anton Chekhov village of Melikhovo in Moscow, and in Copenhagen.

Lee Strasberg's (1901-1982) practice of actor's training turned the Stanislavsky System into the world-renowned American Method that became an important contribution to XX – XXI century acting.

The Method teaches you how to put into practice your own sense of truth in each role, and to emphasize ways in which personal experience can excite the imagination. This is the spark that turns technicians into inspired artists. This is what makes an actor who explores The Method of Lee Strasberg always vital, successful, and beautifully inspired. The Method trains the actor to use their own personal experiences, feelings, emotions and truths, fusing them together with the inner psychological life of the character. The actors perform live on stage and respond truthfully to the imaginary circumstances created by the author. Incredible creativity arises when molecules of the imagination of an actor, the will and emotions permeate all!

We firmly expect that our Master Classes with Lola Cohen will give participants the tools for applying Lee Strasberg's Method to their own work, and will further their acting craft with an expression even greater and more realistic in their work as artists.

**Welcome to OPEN WORKSPACE 2013!**



# SHARING THE METHOD WITH LOLA COHEN

In 2013, OPEN WORKSPACE is thrilled to invite participants to a unique opportunity to experience, discover and work with today's legendary master teacher of Lee Strasberg's Method, Lola Cohen (USA).

Especially for OPEN WORKSPACE, we asked Lola to share her thoughts on the art of acting, the theatre, why Lee Strasberg's Method is so immensely popular throughout the world, what's the secret to its success, and what JOY means in our profession.

OPEN WORKSPACE is incredibly grateful and honored to have Lola Cohen join us at our Fall 2013 edition in Copenhagen, and in August at Anton Chekhov's village of Melikhovo in Russia. Russian and Danish actors and stage professionals from other countries will gather with Lola for our leading Master Classes on Lee Strasberg's Method. We are all looking forward to it. Lola has graciously agreed to share some of her thoughts with us here.

## **What are your expectations as you share your teaching with us on the Method?**

First, I am beyond honored to be serving as the Theatre Artist for TELL to JOY's OPEN WORKSPACE Master Classes in the wonderful city of Copenhagen and in the important Village Melikhovo where Anton Chekhov lived and produced among

the greatest dramatic works of all time. The classes will maintain a level of excellence in keeping with the spirit of this iconic and historic venue.

I intend that Master Class participants will be left with an even more passionate love and commitment to their chosen profession by understanding Lee Strasberg's exercises, ideas and philosophy. My hope is that participants will leave with a sense of accomplishment -- that by advancing their artistic pursuit and recognizing both the rewards and the discipline and dedication it takes, they will have learned to go further, act better, and bring more of their own feelings and experiences to acting.

I also hope that the actors leave class with an informed point of view about how applying Lee Strasberg's Method to their own work which may further their craft and careers. My wish is that a fire will be lit in their imaginations -- that they are delighted and surprised by what they are able to accomplish in their acting, and that through learning and practicing the sensory and emotional exercises they will become more fully alive and expressive human beings and actors.

Another expectation is that through the Masters Classes we will be celebrating, reuniting and keeping alive the work and genius of Strasberg, Stanislavski, Chekhov and others in the acting world. In the Master Classes, we will be keeping



the work and passions of these great theater legends ignited, relying on their works' continued contributions to quality and beauty in acting.

**For the 2012 edition of OPEN WORKSPACE, participants immersed themselves in discovering and learning one of the most inspiring techniques within the Art of Acting – the technique of Michael Chekhov. Lee Strasberg and Michael Chekhov were both inspired by the discoveries of the great Russian actor and director Constantin Stanislavski. Lee Strasberg's practice of actor's training turned the Stanislavski System into the world-renowned American Method that became an important contribution to 20th-21st century acting. What are the parallels in Strasberg's and Stanislavski's methodology of acting?**

Lee frequently stated that there would be no Lee Strasberg if there had not been the brilliant Russian, Constantin Stanislavski, and that Lee stood on Stanislavski's shoulders. In "The Lee Strasberg Notes," Lee comments that Stanislavski identified the problems of the actor, which had not been addressed until then, and attempted to solve them. The resulting training work and the development of an inner craft are the great discoveries of this genius, and his approach eventually evolved into the Stanislavski System and the Method.

Lee Strasberg first saw Stanislavski's work with

the Moscow Art Theater (MAT) during the 1923-24 seasons in New York. Lee said, "I recognized his genius and felt responsible to carry on this work. In the MAT productions of plays by Chekhov, Gorki and Dostoyevski, there was an unusual level of achievement by all the actors in the ensemble company."

Lee Strasberg added to Stanislavski's legacy based on his own insights, experience and broad knowledge of the arts. Strasberg designed the exercises based on Stanislavski's ideas; he gave them a sequence and invented new additional sense and emotional exercises which enabled the actor to nurture the imagination by developing a sensory-based technique encouraging creativity, discovery and spontaneity. Lee systematized the exercises and these Method techniques allowing for the building of craft by training the concentration and the will, and making possible a more honest expression of human behaviors.

While they functioned in basically different times and had different exposures, cultural influences and technology available to them, both men sought to solve the actor's problems and dedicated their lives to understanding the creative process. They both relished and loved the world of theater, the imagination, literature, music, poetry and art. Both men were fascinated by the nature of inspiration and created a rigorous

training of the mind, body and the imagination to further the craft of acting.

**“THERE IS GREAT JOY IN PERFORMING WHEN THE ARTIST’S JOB IS TO REFLECT BACK TO THE AUDIENCE HUMANITY’S SUFFERINGS, TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS, GREAT LOVES, IRONIES, DISAPPOINTMENTS, GREAT LAUGHS ETC., AS DICTATED BY THE PLAY.”**

Both were informed by human psychology and the mystery of the subconscious. They both sought truth in acting and expressive gestures with an inner content. They both warned against mechanical speech and the cliché saying of the line leading to the loss of meaning, and that the subtext must be related to the speech.

Both Stanislavski and Strasberg knew that actors had to rid themselves of unnecessary gestures, tensions and habits, and that the muscles and nerves must be relaxed in order to become fully expressive. They understood that the actor’s problems don’t usually derive from

the interpretation of the text, but rather, they derive from the actor’s own personal problems and issues. Both understood and believed that relaxation is tantamount -- the foundation from which to begin.

**How and when did your own artistic connection with Lee Strasberg and The Method begin?**

My association with The Method started when I began to study with Lee Strasberg in 1977, during the last five years of his life in LA and NY. How it began is a longer story starting with my birth in Brooklyn, NY.

My family revered the New York theater scene, its actors, directors and playwrights, including: Lee Strasberg and The Group Theater, Clifford Odets, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Marlon Brando, Chaliapin, Kim Stanley, Rodgers and Hammerstein, and other composers and lyricists from the Broadway Stage. I saved and cherished the playbills from many productions. My first small role was in “Renaldo and Clara,” which was filmed on Bob Dylan’s 1975-76 Rolling Thunder Review, and which practically no one ever saw.

Since Lee Strasberg had been a household name, I interviewed at the Lee Strasberg Theater and Film Institute in New York, and was



**“MY HOPE IS THAT PARTICIPANTS WILL LEAVE WITH A SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT - THAT BY ADVANCING THEIR ARTISTIC PURSUIT AND RECOGNIZING BOTH THE REWARDS AND THE DISCIPLINE AND DEDICATION IT TAKES, THEY WILL HAVE LEARNED TO GO FURTHER, ACT BETTER, AND BRING MORE OF THEIR OWN FEELINGS AND EXPERIENCES TO ACTING.”**

lucky to get into Lee's class. I was immediately fascinated by the work. After Lee died in 1982, I then had the great fortune of continuing Method-based study with two phenomenal teachers. They are the enigmatic actress Kim Stanley (who developed the Needs Exercise which I still teach and which will be demonstrated in the upcoming OPEN WORKSPACE Master Classes) and also the director Jose Quintero, both of whom were brilliant and inspiring, and who also taught the Method, but with their own styles.

**Could you tell us what is The Method of Lee Strasberg?**

Building on the system of Stanislavski, Lee Strasberg's Method is an approach to acting that emphasizes the internal approach as opposed to emphasizing the external. The Method exercises encourage actors to use their own personal experiences, impulses, feelings, emotions, sensations and truths -- fusing them together to create the inner psychological life of the character. This process enables actors to live on the stage and respond truthfully to the imaginary circumstances created by the playwright. We train the actor's imagination, will, concentration, senses and emotions to re-create - not imitate - logical, believable and truthful behavior. This will further the actor's craft, including being able to repeat their performances. The techniques learned are equally

useful for acting and directing in theater, film and television.

**In your many years of work as a teacher at the Lee Strasberg Film and Theatre Institute, both in LA and in New York, you met many actors - perhaps even three generations of actors. What are your thoughts on how the actor-human is different today versus say 10 years ago?**

Actors now are either less able to, or just do not want to, spend time alone and in the present moment. Even in class or when people are just standing around waiting for someone or for a train, today's actors seem compelled to have their mobile device out texting. It is a reticence or inability to be solitary, composed and within themselves. On stage or doing a scene, you are always alone in the life of the character. If you cannot do it for yourself, it will be very strange and treacherous territory to try to enter into believably and poised characters and behavior, particularly in front of an audience or crew, and especially when the characters or period of the work are not anything you are familiar with from your own life.

What is also different from 10 years ago is the state of the economy and young people's reasonable career options and expectations. Actors frequently have to contend with nay-saying parents or friends who may urge a more sensible, or

at least more conventional, career choice. However, with the change in economic circumstances around the world, many of those typical career options are even less attractive, so the choice for young people to try a creative acting career seems less crazy. Acting, a career through the ages, has never gone out of style, and in fact has demonstrated a kind of stability and continuity.... a new begrudging respect, if you will.

Young people's attention spans have changed because of the Internet and constant social networking, a kind of narrowing of experience. Therefore, the ability to focus internally, relax, perform exercises and read broadly, as I direct them to do, is difficult for them. Learning to focus for what can be grueling work and preparing them to deal with the problem of repetition, rehearsals and performances, or take-after-take in film-making is unlike anything they have experienced before and may be at odds with their images or dreams of immediate 'celebrity, glitz and bling.'

### **Why do you think this change is happening?**

Life goes on. Changes evolve; growth, culture, technology, economic expectations, politics, values with styles, habits and mores are growing and deteriorating, ebbing and flowing. Many changes can be limiting to the actor's potential for having a full range of acting skills and choic-

es available to draw from.

**The past 10 years offered us huge developments in technology, social media and the strong arrival of immediacy in our pop culture -- where five minutes of fame is so important and the real, pure art seems less so. It appears that there is no time for contemplation in our profession, as now it seems to be more about creating quick energy of expression by an actor. What are your thoughts on this?**

Among the elements of pop culture you describe in your question as "contemplation-destroying," I would emphasize that 'overly-violent content' may be the most destructive to acting sensitivities. In fact, as much as I recommend that my students seek out and experience art in all forms, such as photography, fine art, music, literature, I also advise them to avoid pure action movies where car chases and gratuitous violence are the principle elements and where there is little or no intelligent or well-reasoned character development or story line.

On a more positive note, the immediacy of pop culture does engender a kind of energy and intensity, which when brought under the actor's own self control through learning and practicing The Method exercises, can result in 'full-energetic,' high-commitment and nuanced acting. Some of my best students have been in the last 10



**“THE METHOD EXERCISES ENCOURAGE ACTORS TO USE THEIR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, IMPULSES, FEELINGS, EMOTIONS, SENSATIONS AND TRUTHS -- FUSING THEM TOGETHER TO CREATE THE INNER PSYCHOLOGICAL LIFE OF THE CHARACTER.”**

years, and their work has been wonderful. They all were open to seeing what their own current styles and habits were, how that could be used, how that could be an obstacle, and how they can change themselves at will to portray what they have chosen for each moment or role.

Acting is one of the most challenging and daunting professions. Students have difficulty believing that there are not shortcuts to their fruitful and successful careers. They are hard-pressed to realize that they need to be driven, committed and love the craft in order to be able to handle the ups and downs, or the applause and critiques – and to understand that their chosen profession is not for the faint-of-heart.

Our work takes years to learn and must be practiced daily, with continuing classes and instruction even after acting careers have begun. It cannot be done in three months. There is no quick fix or easy way to learn Strasberg's Method. It takes hard work and a strong will. Actors must make a commitment to work on their craft throughout their lives, or as Lee says, “you will go backwards.”

In our ‘units’ or classes at the Lee Strasberg Theater and Film Institute, actors must learn how to concentrate and perform in front of other people no matter what else is happening on the

stage, the film set, or in class. Being in a group class gives us that opportunity and is crucial in learning how to concentrate at will while being part of a collaborative art form and getting one-on-one feedback in all types of situations.

**What is your advice on how a professional actor can survive in this fast-growing pop culture?**

I reiterate and will expand on what I just mentioned above about experiencing other art forms. I advise against seeing meaningless violence, BUT I do recommend emphatically, not just to survive but also to advance, that students watch many other great films from all genres -- the films of other inspirational contemporary and classic directors and actors of world cinema. One starting point is watching films, which win or are nominated for Academy Awards, Golden Globes and international film and festival awards.

Art museums should be visited and all styles of art experienced. Selecting paintings, which particularly move you can be the focus of doing the Painting or Sculpture Exercise, where you learn to experience the painting through each of the five senses, creating skills and sensibilities, which can be very useful in expanding the acting repertoire. Likewise, with music. I also assign students to go to the zoo and observe the animals, to study their characteristics, sounds, movements, smells, etc. The Animal Exercise can

### **Lee Strasberg words of wisdom:**

"Art is longer than life."

"Art is in the choice; the choice is that which conditions art."

"The character comes alive if you believe in what you're doing."

"Use the relaxation to eliminate fear and tension that interrupts expression."

"The imaginary realities you create must force the scene to happen."

"The thought comes before the line, not the line before the thought."

"Words are a lifeline the actor desperately tries to hold onto; don't, you must sink or swim."

"Take your time, be specific and force your attention into the details."

"When left high and dry by a director, the actor must fill the directorial void themselves."

create physical and emotional sensibilities very useful for acting. These Method Exercises will be taught in the OPENWORKSPACE Master Class. I recommend that actors read literature of all genres, poetry, plays, theater, history, and artists' biographies. Reading should be broad and purposeful; for example, not just "Long Day's Journey into Night," but also everything Eugene O'Neill wrote. As the students read more, their acting gets richer. They learn more and have more exposure to situations, characters, places, emotions and life, as their ability to experience and be inspired is learned through their five senses when they practice the Method Exercises.

Best of all though, I tell them that having those kinds of enriching experiences are part of what it means to be a creative artist. They slow you down and enable you to figuratively and literally "wake up and smell the coffee." To be great, an immersion into the world of art is necessary. What could be more inspiring than having your career and chosen profession benefit from the experiencing of art in all its forms?

### **What are the biggest issues and concerns on the minds of your students?**

The biggest issue, understandably now, but also always has been, is "will there be acting work for me and can I earn a living acting?" It is not easy now; however, it has never been easy. The

current industry may have fewer acting opportunities for reasons such as: there is not the extensive network of community and repertory theaters; new plays and independent films have difficulty getting produced; Hollywood's technical and financial love of animation and computer generated characters; and reality TV -- all of which reduce acting opportunities. However, many young people's desire for a meaningful, non-traditional career in the arts still results in a continuing worldwide flow of acting students.

They know that there is still a huge industry hiring actors, directors, etc. and particularly throughout the world in national theaters, film and TV industries. Students come from all over the world to the Lee Strasberg Theater and Film Institute, where I have been teaching The Method in NY and LA for 27 years. They come from all of Europe, Scandinavia, Japan, China, Russia, Africa, Denmark, South and Central America, India, Sri Lanka, the Caribbean, South Korea, Thailand, practically everywhere.

It never ceases to amaze me how wonderful and diverse the student body is.... passionate, earnest and enthusiastic; they come with their dreams and they work incredibly hard. We have college-age students, working actors and directors, career changers, amateur actors, or just those seeking an enriching and deepening experience. Many go back to their home coun-



tries and develop or continue successful professional careers.

The students want to work in theater, film or TV. Some come to just grow as human beings. Others want to teach. Many establish careers in the industry in other capacities, such as producing, writing, directing, casting, etc. The training is a great background for many theater arts professions where acting and communication skills can enhance performance and effectiveness.

After we begin our work, I observe that some students may be concerned with whether they possess the strength and will or the talent to continue the work. If their loved ones are skeptical or unsupportive, they may begin to wonder if the 'doubting Thomases' are, unfortunately, in the cold light of day, right after all about the reasonableness, or even the sanity, of attempting to make a career in acting. I tell them it may be true; however, for certain, the lack of will and confidence will be fatal to their dream.

### **What is your definition of what it means to ACT in our profession?**

To 'act,' the actor starts with the given circumstances created by the playwright and director, and determines how 'to live' on the stage as such. The character comes alive if the part is acted with truthful motivations, with the actor

getting into the head, body and skin of the character through each of the five senses. To 'act' is to live the truth of each moment honestly, revealing the inner psychological life of the character, and allowing the audience to connect with the experience in the service of the play or film. Acting this way is taught by The Method. Learning and practicing the Method Acting Exercises can be an important next step in your learning to do so also.

**This summer you will give and share your experience and your inspiration in the leading Master Class for Russian actors in what is certainly the heart of Russian drama and theatre, in the village of Melikhovo, at the estate where Anton Chekhov lived and worked from 1892 to 1899. This is such a unique, and possibly the greatest, historic setting and opportunity to fully receive the journey of opening and unfolding for each actor's artistic discovery of Lee Strasberg's Method. What are your expectations?**

The Masters Classes will be both a celebration, reuniting, and practicum of the work and genius of Strasberg, Stanislavski, Chekhov and others. The Masters Classes honor them by keeping their work and passions alive in the 21st Century, still contributing to the creation of quality, discovery and beauty in acting; and if in some way they were aware of what we were doing, they would likely be very pleased.

With the work of Strasberg, Stanislavski and Chekhov being so closely identified with The Method, and the Master Classes being very true to that form, it is expected that students will be better able to discover and know from an informed point of view, if applying the Method to their own work might lead them to go further in their acting.

Actors today generally know too little about the world of theater, acting and the other arts. They're interested, but they just don't know what it is or how to obtain it. They've never heard of Eleonora Duse or John Barrymore, and don't know the history of any of it. In fact, the last part of the "The Lee Strasberg Notes" is all about great world figures in theater and film. Lee Strasberg always urged his students to become voracious in their interest and pursuit of experience and knowledge of the other arts. I expect that Master Class Participants will get a great deal of that type of rich material and appreciation from the class.

#### **Have you visited Russia before?**

No, never, unfortunately! However, my connection to Russia is many faceted -- starting with the DNA I inherited from my grandparents who came from that part of the world. I have taught many Russian actors in my classes; and lastly, and perhaps most significantly, I know Russia

from its art and its theater artists, starting with Stanislavski and the MAT, Vakhtangov, Chekhov, Meyerhold, Boleslavski, Ouspenskaya and others.

Ironically and meaningfully, it is the Method Exercises themselves which have taught me how to experience and know in my heart real, imagined and described places and cultures through the use of each of the five senses. I was taught to do that by The Method Exercises, and that, combined with my working familiarity and love for the art of Russia, means that in my heart and mind I know that having our 2013 Melikhovo WORKSPACE is a perfect Russian happening.

#### **Have you worked with Russian actors before? And if so, are they different to work with than actors from America or Europe?**

I have in the past and currently do work with Russian actors and students at the Lee Strasberg Theater and Film Institute, and more recently with Russian law students at my Brooklyn Law School Communications Class. I have found my Russian acting students to be passionate, serious and strong-willed.

#### **What do you hope our participants will take away from their study with you that will help them on their artistic path?**



**“THE GREATEST JOY IS PERHAPS TO KNOW AS AN ACTOR THAT YOU HAVE REACHED INTO THE HEARTS OF AN AUDIENCE EMOTIONALLY AND TO KNOW THAT YOUR ACTING MADE THEM FEEL WHAT THE PLAYWRIGHT OR DIRECTOR INTENDED. ACTING WITH THAT SENSITIVITY ENRICHES THE AUDIENCES’ EXPERIENCING, UNDERSTANDING AND ENJOYMENT OF THE PLAY, FILM OR ANY PERFORMANCE.”**

I expect actors to learn and begin to experience the benefits of knowing and understanding the Method Acting Exercises. Lee Strasberg has stated that nervous tension; habits and fears are among the greatest obstacles to true expression in acting. One of my intended ‘take-aways’ is the student’s ability to recognize this and learn to deal with tension through the Relaxation Exercise. The actors will practice relaxing at will and learn a series of sense and emotional memory exercises designed by Lee Strasberg. These exercises stimulate thinking and feeling to help the actor attain the skills needed in breaking down scenes, building a character, understanding the sub text, and achieving those moments of intensity, again and again, for repeated performances and takes.

**The Theatre is a journey into the soul, a soul’s research in it; it is the search for the ideal, the eternal pursuit of perfection. In our modern day, with more technology available, which tools or paths do you think the contemporary actor will need to keep in focus? Which are the right choices for the next generation of actors?**

Your question expresses a poetic and beautiful depiction of the Theater and acting. I leave the question of modern technology to my answer that follows concerning the ‘Theater of the Fu-

ture.’ I will comment though on the tools, paths and choices that you mention in your question for the contemporary actor to keep in focus by providing words of wisdom and admonitions which always inspired me that I remember hearing Lee Strasberg say which also address the spirit of your question and which my teaching of the Method Exercises helps actors understand and use in their work...

**What important personal qualities are necessary for an actor and director for the truest performance on stage?**

I believe among the most important qualities are willingness to work hard, being open to change, taking yourself seriously (but not too seriously), spending time unplugged from the digital universe, and having the bravery to explore elements of human behavior and emotions which may not be a part of your upbringing or known world. Other qualities I find in my best students are: having a courageous nature, tenacity, intellectual curiosity, guts, grit, tenderness, confidence, compassion, wit, and an inner-connectedness to themselves. Lastly, yet perhaps most importantly, are the abilities to concentrate, focus and relax at-will.

To refine and develop other qualities, I also recommend reading material on the other arts and biographies of artists which portray the trials

**“OUR WORK TAKES YEARS TO LEARN AND MUST BE PRACTICED DAILY, WITH CONTINUING CLASSES AND INSTRUCTION EVEN AFTER ACTING CAREERS HAVE BEGUN.”**

and tribulations of the artistic creative life. I also advise the reading of world literature and the classics, which will provide a broadening of the student's understanding of world history and the everyday realities of life and customs in different parts of the world and eras.

**How do you see the theatre of the future -- the Theatre of the 21st century?**

In the earlier question, which started with the thought that “The Theatre is a journey into the soul”, you made the connection to how modern technology will impact the tools, which may aid actors in keeping their focus. The Theater of the 21st century may incorporate new technology or multimedia applications and may have to evolve past the tastes of the rapidly aging baby boomers. I do not know how that may change things. The impacts of the potential immediacy of communication and social media are yet to be known. The theater and film industries may feel continuing financial pressure, which can be obstacles for new materials to be written and produced, and for there to be a wide variety of types of productions available as acting jobs, as I stated in the question above.

To me, the Theater of the future will have to address many of the same basic questions and age-old problems that all actors have faced. These include the problem of repetition -- which

has to create genuine emotions and truthful behavior for the character in performance after performance, or take after take, while keeping the work fresh and vital time and time again. This is known as the ‘Illusion of the first time in acting.’

Will the 21st century's actors be capable of developing heightened imaginations and sensitivities? Maybe. Modern technology may help to broaden an actor's awareness or curiosity about the world, human behavior and the other arts. Time will tell. For now however, we know that continuing Method Exercise work will provide actors with a solid base for whatever they may face.

**“TO ‘ACT’ IS TO LIVE THE TRUTH OF EACH MOMENT HONESTLY, REVEALING THE INNER PSYCHOLOGICAL LIFE OF THE CHARACTER, AND ALLOWING THE AUDIENCE TO CONNECT WITH THE EXPERIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF THE PLAY OR FILM.”**

**What does JOY mean for you, with regard to our profession?**

The greatest joy is perhaps to know as an actor that you have reached into the hearts of an audience emotionally and to know that your acting made them feel what the playwright or director intended. Acting with that sensitivity enriches the audiences' experiencing, understanding and enjoyment of the play, film or any performance. Good notices, fame, money or awards are ultimately merely derivatives of that joy.

It is best if joy also comes from the knowledge that your commitment to acting is a lifelong journey of new and energizing discoveries. Your work cannot be static; you cannot be complacent; you must continue to train and grow, knowing how to evaluate your own work objectively. The joy is in knowing that you will find ever-new discoveries and acting performances, which will long be sought after and of value in the acting and directing world.

It is often said about Lee that he didn't teach us how to act; he taught us how to live. There is great joy during the training when the actor begins the sense memory work, having spontaneous discoveries and innovation, becoming more expressive and truthful, and gaining a deeper understanding of their own nature.

There is great joy in performing when the artist's job is to reflect back to the audience humanity's sufferings, trials and tribulations, great loves, ironies, disappointments, great laughs etc., as dictated by the play. Being part of that collaboration to entertain and educate the audience, by creating living breathing characters for the audience to empathize with, is very exciting. There is joy in making the playwright's work of art come alive.

Thank you so much for your time and willingness to share. Clearly, our OPEN WORKSPACE Master Class participants are very lucky to have the opportunity to study with you, not just once, but on two occasions, in 2013!

**Thank you for your thoughtful and knowledgeable questions, which hopefully with my responses, have created a highly interesting, useful, and hopefully inspiring conversation for your readers to help them choose how they may want to move forward with their acting careers.**

*Edited by Elise Fee, (USA).*

# JOIN US!

## **MASTER CLASS IN MELIKHOVO & MOSCOW**

August 2013 (54 teaching hours in a residential setting, followed by a presentational performance).

This Master Class program will take place in what is certainly the heart of Russian drama and theatre, in the village of Melikhovo, at the estate where Anton Chekhov lived and worked from 1892 to 1899. This is a unique, and possibly the greatest, opportunity to fully receive the journey of opening and unfolding your artistic discovery of Lee Strasberg's Method in the most authentic, beautiful, inspiring and artistic surroundings.

## **MASTER CLASS IN COPENHAGEN**

November 2013 (52 teaching hours in a non- residential setting, followed by a presentational showcase) It is also possible to enroll in this Master Class as an observer.

This Master Class program will unfold in the Danish performing arts environment in Copenhagen, through comprehensive training in Lee Strasberg's Method and lectures with the opportunity to discuss, explore and present the masterful best of contemporary acting today.

**For more information and registration visit [www.telltojoytheatre.com](http://www.telltojoytheatre.com)**



The village of Melikhovo is one of the greatest monuments of Russian culture. Here, from 1892 to 1899, lived and worked the greatest Russian writer, Anton Chekhov. During his stay in Melikhovo, Anton Chekhov wrote more than forty literary works, among them his greatest plays: "The Seagull" and "Uncle Vanya." The State Literary and Memorial Museum of Anton Chekhov in Melikhovo has carefully and uniquely preserved the pure memory of the greatest Russian writer Anton Chekhov. Melikhovo offers you the chance to dive into the spiritual atmosphere of Chekhov's time. Once in Melikhovo, you will see Anthon's house, the wing where he wrote "The Seagull", and a school built at the initiative of Anton Chekhov. You will see Melikhovo itself and what will learn what Anton Chekov accomplished during his stay there.

**In collaboration:** Theatre Training and Education Committee ITI / TECOM, Chekhov International Theatre School in Melikhovo, Moscow (Russia), Continuing Education at The Danish National School of Performing Arts, The Danish Actors' Association (DSF), The Danish Arts Agency, Posthus Theatre in Copenhagen





## LOLA COHEN

Lola Cohen trained with Lee Strasberg during the last five years of his life and has taught acting for 26 years at the Lee Strasberg Theater and Film Institute in New York City, Los Angeles, and in private classes. After Lee's death, Lola continued her training with Kim Stanley and Jose Quintero.

She coached Chris Rock, trained Tony-Award-nominee Kelli O'Hara, and has taught and directed hundreds of actors in scenes and plays during her career in the theater. As a member of Bob Dylan's Rolling Thunder Review, Lola made her film debut in "Renaldo and Clara" in 1975, and in 2009 played Judge Kaplan in Rik Cordero's "Inside a Change," which won best film in HBO's Latino International Film Festival. Lola's directorial credits include "A Midsummer Night's Dream" for the Woodstock Youth Theater; Jean Genet's "The Maids" at the Strasberg Institute, and Lewis John Carlino's "Snowangel" while she was the 2009 Artist-in-Residence at SUNY-Ulster.

Lola contributed to and appeared in the American Masters documentary, "There but for Fortune," about folk singer and political activist, Phil Ochs. Lola was a source for and consulted on Liz Garbus' Marilyn Monroe Documentary,

"Love Marilyn," and has consulted on and will appear in a Kim Stanley documentary "The Needs of Kim Stanley," currently in production. Lola is also an adjunct associate professor of law at Brooklyn Law School, where for the last thirteen years she has taught her class "Relaxation, Concentration and Communication Skills for Attorneys". Lola has also taught Master Classes at American University and NYC's Pratt Institute.

In 2010, Lola Cohen compiled and edited The Lee Strasberg Notes, which were published by Routledge Publishing House. The book is based on unpublished transcripts of Strasberg's own classes on acting, directing and Shakespeare. The Lee Strasberg Notes recreates his theoretical approach, as well as the practical exercises used by his students, and brilliantly conveys his approach and personality. For the very first time, The Lee Strasberg Notes reproduces the original teachings of a unique voice in actor training. The book is a stunning document on the history and ongoing practice of Strasberg's Method.

Lola Cohen lives in Woodstock, NY and continues to teach at the Strasberg Institute in NYC.



## LEE STRASBERG

November 17, 1901 – February 17, 1982

Building on the System of the great Russian director Constantin Stanislavski, Lee Strasberg created his “Method” to train actors to use a revolutionary sequence of physical and emotional exercises to “understand the nature of their own instrument” in order to fuse the actor’s own personal experience with a character’s psychological inner life.

Born in Austria-Hungary (Budzanow, Poland) in 1901, his family emigrated to NYC where as a youth he was exposed to the great stars of NYC’s Yiddish Theater. Strasberg joined Students of Art and Drama and appeared in their amateur productions at the Chrystie Street Settlement House.

In 1923, Strasberg’s imagination was fueled by the arrival of the Moscow Art Theater and actor/director Constantin Stanislavski. During the two

seasons the Moscow Art Theater appeared on Broadway, Strasberg saw most of their productions including Chekhov’s *The Cherry Orchard* and *The Three Sisters*, Gorki’s *The Lower Depths* and Dostoyevski’s *The Brother’s Karamazov*. At that same time Italy’s great tragedian, Eleanora Duse, performing in Ibsen’s *Ghosts* and *Lady from the Sea* also made an impression on Strasberg. He saw John Barrymore “leap across the stage” in *Hamlet* and also witnessed the thrilling Russian opera singer, Feodor Chaliapin sing Boris Godunov. Chaliapin’s naturalistic performance is credited with fundamentally altering acting in opera. Strasberg began to dream of a life in the theater.

In 1924, Strasberg joined the American Laboratory Theater in Greenwich Village founded by Richard Boleslavsky and Maria Ouspenskaya, both of whom remained in New York to teach

after the Moscow Art Theater ended their run. The two actors had worked closely with Stanislavsky and his pupil Eugene Vakhtangov. It was here that Strasberg learned the Stanislavsky System, which guided his development of the Method carrying on the work of Stanislavsky, Vakhtangov and Meyerhold.

Although Lee Strasberg worked as an award-winning director and Oscar nominated actor, Strasberg was first and foremost a teacher. At the famed Actors Studio, where Strasberg served as Artistic Director for 31 years, his teaching matured, and the emergence of Strasberg as the teacher of the Method grew to prominence.

At the world-renowned Lee Strasberg Theater and Film Institute founded in 1969 in NYC, Strasberg refined his exercises with increasingly rigorous attention to relaxation and emotional memory. Many of these classes between 1975-82 were video taped and the edited transcripts were published as, *The Lee Strasberg Notes*, edited by Lola Cohen.

In 1931, in the midst of the Great Depression, Strasberg, along with Harold Clurman and Cheryl Crawford co-founded the Group Theater, an ensemble of actors, writers and directors who through a progressive political perspective created an original American theater utilizing the acting techniques of Stanislavsky mounting productions which dealt with the social and political controversies of the Depression Era.

Strasberg left the Group Theater in 1937 and taught at the American Theater Wing and the New School, directing in New York, working in Hollywood, and supporting a young family. On Broadway, he directed Hemingway's, *The Fifth Column* and in 1941, Clifford Odets's, *Clash by Night*. He moved to Los Angeles with his wife, Paula Miller Strasberg, a Group Theater actress, where he directed screen tests for Twentieth Century Fox learning everything he could about film making such as camera angles, cutting, and lighting.

In 1948, Strasberg joined the famed Actors Studio founded by Elia Kazan, Cheryl Crawford, and Harold Clurman, and, in 1951, became the Studio's Artistic Director, a position he held for thirty-one years. Here Strasberg refined the Method and participated in the launching of a generation of

post World War II actors including Patricia Neal, James Dean, Geraldine Page, Marilyn Monroe, Montgomery Clift, Kim Stanley, Eva Marie Saint, Marlon Brando, Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Shelley Winters, Eli Wallach, Anne Jackson, Rod Steiger, Sidney Poitier, Maureen Stapleton, Ben Gazzara, Martin Balsam, and Julie Harris.

In the '60s and '70s, many of the young actors Strasberg worked with at the Actors Studio and in his private classes at Carnegie Hall rose to prominence including Anne Bancroft, Jane Fonda, Al Pacino, Ellen Burstyn, Dustin Hoffman, Estelle Parsons, Steve McQueen, Gene Wilder, Robert DeNiro, Sally Field, Ron Leibman, Harvey Keitel, Christopher Walken, and others.

Strasberg's contributions went beyond his work as a teacher and director. He published articles in newspapers, magazines and books, and his article, "Acting Directing and Production," appeared in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. In 1964 Strasberg at the Actors Studio edited by Robert H. Hethmon was published.


Strasberg also was influential in European theater. He conducted an International Seminar on Acting at the Spoleto Festival of Two Worlds in 1962, represented the American Theater at the Stanislavsky Centennial held in Moscow in 1963, and lectured on the Stanislavsky System of acting in Paris in 1967. He also held seminars in Argentina and Germany and lectured at Harvard, Brown, and Brandeis Universities and UCLA.

Beginning in the 1970's, Strasberg also acted in films. Most notable, in 1974, his Oscar nominated role as Hyman Roth in Francis Ford Coppola's, *The Godfather II* and other roles in *The Cassandra Crossing* in 1974, *And Justice for All*, *Boardwalk and Going in Style* in 1979, and he appeared in two made for TV movies *The Last Tenant* in 1978 and *Skokie* in 1981.

Lee Strasberg died in 1982. Lee Strasberg's book, *A Dream of Passion*, was published in 1987 and *The Lee Strasberg Notes*, edited by Lola Cohen was published in 2010 and is in its second printing. Lee Strasberg's Method continues to be taught today at the Institute in NYC and LA and his legacy continues to grow through out the world.

*Excerpted from, The Lee Strasberg Notes, edited by Lola Cohen.*





Julia Khamitova  
Actress, Russia

Photography by  
Carlos S. Alvarez

# “DISCOVER THE HEART OF ACTING WITH THE MICHAEL CHEKHOV TECHNIQUE”

with Lenard Petit (USA), Lev Durov (Russia), Slava Kokorin (Russia) and Zoja Zadoroznaja (Russia)

## OPEN WORKSPACE - 2012

*It has been nearly two weeks since I left Moscow and lovely Melikhovo, and still it is in my thoughts many times each day. What a wonderful experience it was! I was trying to observe my thoughts and feelings in the days after returning home to Ireland, and to observe what I had learned and experienced at “OPEN WORKSPACE on Michael Chekhov” in Melikhovo. I can’t put my thoughts into words at this time. I only know the master class has opened up many new things in me and hopefully these are things I can use in my day-to-day life and my acting work. Something is more alive in me and I don’t know what that is. This may sound a little strange, but I was trying to observe where I feel this sensation and it feels like it is coming from somewhere below my right shoulder. Thank you to the team of TELLtoJOY for encouraging me to come to Anton Chekov’s “Melikhovo” in the first place,*

*for interpreting all those words from the greatest Russian stage masters who have inspired me, and for the openness you showed me which made me feel very welcome. Most importantly, my deep thanks for inventing TELLtoJOY, because if it wasn’t for TTJ, we all would not have met. - Nigel O’Neill, Actor, Ireland*

*Attending OPEN WORKSPACE in Copenhagen with Slava Kokorin and Zoja Zadoroznaja was such a privilege. It was wonderful for me to see how the Michael Chekhov Method inspires creative artists and how it manifests through individual practitioners in such a unique way. This is Chekhov-inspired teaching brought to a very high and sophisticated level. - Graham Dixon (United Kingdom), Theatre Director, Teacher of Acting and Co-founder of the Michael Chekhov Centre UK*



*So much authenticity, truth, beauty, lightness, openness and joy! At OPEN WORKSPACE in Copenhagen I discovered that my own intuition could be trained, and I discovered the infinite joy of being present and open to the magic of the moment.* - **Natalie Yalon, Actress, Belgium**

*I am so thrilled to have been chosen to give a master class for OPEN WORKSPACE on the Michael Chekhov Method. For me it is very exciting to join you were different teachers inspire different points of view on the same method. I think that all actors can be enriched by of this kind of continuing education that you are offering. To experience the different influences on the same method — that's quite unique. It was such a joy to work with an international group of professional actors from France, Switzerland, Denmark, and Portugal. All actors were so open, so curious and it is nice to work with professionals who are interested in finding new ways to work and discover.* - **Lenard Petit (USA), Actor, Stage Director, Acting Teacher and Artistic Director of the Michael Chekhov Acting Studio in New York City**

*If you are an actor who cares about the truest theater, cares about being on stage giving the audience the ultimate experience, than you must join this amazing opportunity to work and experience this genius stage master, Slava Kokorin, at the OPEN WORKSPACE in Copenhagen, November 2012. Kokorin is an outstanding artist, and the teacher who knows what it means to have a good theatrical heart and to lose yourself in artistic development.* - **Per Brahe (Denmark), World-renowned Mask Teacher and an expert in Balinese Mask, Master Teacher of Michael Chekhov technique and Artistic Director of "Studio 5" in New York**

*Slava Kokorin's knowledge of acting, his experience as a teacher, and the combined rigor and joy that he radiates when he works, are infectious. Slava is a generous artist and a friend to the Chekhov Community, large and small. I know many of us wish we could jump on an airplane and join him in Copenhagen. All my love and my best wishes for OPEN WORKSPACE work!* - **Jessica Cerullo (USA), Actress, Managing Director of the International Michael Chekhov Association, MICHA**

*What a great series of events TELLtoJOY is organizing with OPEN WORKSPACE — especially your extraordinary and important work to further Michael Chekhov's creative approach to the theatre. I am sure they are very well attended! Congratulations!* - **Sarah Kane (United Kingdom), Theatre Director and Teacher of Acting and Co-founder of the Michael Chekhov Centre, UK**

*Master Classes at OPEN WORKSPACE, developed by TELLtoJOY, provide the unique opportunity for sharing, art communication and a lively exchange of ideas between people from all over the world. This is giving strength to the worldwide theatre community and is helping theatre practitioners to widen their horizons of understanding. I do believe that the future of theatre practice lays in such projects which are able to reach out for the performing arts and which help to build mutual understanding and collaboration — both of which are so important in this changing time.* - **Tatjana Ažman, (Slovenia), President of the Slovenia Centre of the ITI, Member of the Executive Council ITI Worldwide – World Organization for the Performing Arts**

*I am very pleased by the TELLtoJOY initiative and the OPEN WORKSPACE you organize. I think these kinds of initiatives will become increasingly important in the current atmosphere of the arts in Europe. It shows the strong motivation and creativity of artists that do not depend on outside support to do what they think is good. I really admire this and I think this research is extremely inspiring and highly important.* - **Myra Eetgerink, Actress, Nederland**

*My time with Slava Kokorin and Zoja Zadoroznaja, doing work based on the Michael Chekhov Approach, opened for me a new understanding about the imagination of the actor, on personal space, partnerships, and the work on a role in the theater. I hope this experience will allow me to become more confident in the work and a variety of approaches to acting. I was happy to learn again, to start from scratch, to forget what I know and can do. It was not easy, but was very interesting! My play space opens in Copenhagen!* - **Julia Khamitova, Actress, Russia**



## OPEN WORKSPACE – NURTURING ARTISTIC CREATION

Since 2011, OPEN WORKSPACE has provided continuing education within the performing arts, providing artistic knowledge, inspiration, artistic skills and new discoveries to the international professional theatre environment. Every year, OPEN WORKSPACE offers Master Classes (in both Residential and Non-Residential settings) with the world's leading experts presenting their methods and approaches, significant international symposiums, and highly artistic events in different parts of the world.

The main aim of OPEN WORKSPACE is to help develop artistic and craft-based skills, to find new tendencies and methods in the international field, and introduce these, not only to the Danish field of performing arts, but also to artists internationally. Based on our values at OPEN WORKSPACE, we also create performances directed by the theatre masters. The performances serve as documentation of the methods and principles, and are presented for audiences through TELL to JOY Art Theatre — both nationally and internationally.

OPEN WORKSPACE strives to open borders, and to inspire and enrich the international performing arts for the benefit of both audiences and artists. It is our deepest desire that performing artists of all kinds may enhance their skills and uplift themselves by discovering, learning, sharing, networking and connecting with each other and with the greatest theatre masters of our time.

OPEN WORKSPACE has been a international success, with registered participants coming from countries such as Italy, Norway, Switzerland, Russia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Sweden, Ireland, United Kingdom, USA, Netherlands, Finland, Portugal, and many others.



**TELL TO JOY ART THEATRE  
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nurturing artistic creation since 2011

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OPEN WORKSPACE 2013

MASTER CLASS  
**DISCOVER  
THE METHOD**

WITH LOLA COHEN (USA)  
EDITOR OF "THE LEE STRASBERG NOTES"

Melikhovo & Moscow, August 2013  
Copenhagen, November 2013

Info and registration at [www.telltojoytheatre.com](http://www.telltojoytheatre.com)