

Drama

Twentieth-Century Theatre: Vsevolod Meyerhold

Annotated Bibliography

[ADVANCED HIGHER]

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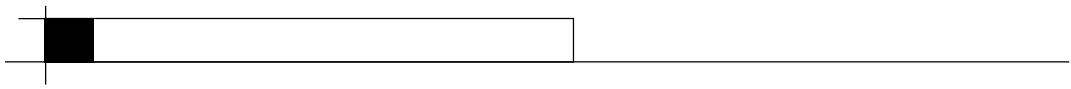
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INTRODUCTION

Meyerhold is not as familiar a theatre directorial name among the general public as, for example, Stanislavski, Brecht or Brook. Indeed, his student, Eisenstein, has perhaps eclipsed him in the public consciousness because of his cinematic work. But Meyerhold is one of the most influential figures in modern theatre. He is often referred to in passing, with little detail, and his influence has not always been recognised. Modern 'physical' theatre can trace its roots to Meyerhold, and he was the first to acknowledge his debt to the Commedia dell'Arte. While it is only in the last twenty years that there has been a revival of interest in his work, his influence has been felt for the last hundred years.

Vsevolod Emilievich Meyerhold (1874–c.1940) was born in Penza, Russia. He joined the Moscow Art Theatre as an actor, and was appointed by Stanislavsky as Director of the new Studio in 1905. He later became Director of the Theatre of the Revolution (1922–4) and of the Meyerhold Theatre (1923–38). He was arrested in 1939 after delivering a defiant speech at a conference, and was executed by shooting.

Meyerhold was influenced by Constructivist ideas and he developed 'Biomechanics', where acting was seen as a mechanical process with actors functioning as components of an efficient machine. In his political plays, he dispensed with the curtain and his stage consisted of bare scaffolding and machine parts, which called for unusual physical discipline and agility on the part of the performers.

Modern scholars enjoy a growing access to Russian theatre history and to Bolshevik and Soviet archives. A pivotal feature of twentieth-century theatre is its debt to Meyerhold and to his belief in the power of the director. It could be argued, too, that the importance of the roles of the author and the producer is on the increase. And overt 'political' theatre is also gaining in importance all over the world. Brecht's influence on twentieth-century theatre, and the roots of his ideas about performance, can already be seen in Meyerhold's work.

There are few published works about Meyerhold himself, certainly in comparison to many other important theatre directors of the twentieth century. Many are available only in the original Russian and so are not accessible to most western students. The principal periods of theatre study were the 1920s and 30s, and the last twenty years. Works dating from the first of those periods offer interesting contextual insights, but have to be read with an appreciation of the censorship and political pressures prevailing at the time. It is, of course, true that all the texts studied will have some form of political bias, but in modern texts, especially

since the collapse of the Soviet Union, there is a much more balanced study of Russian and Soviet theatre, along with an understanding of how radical it was for its time. Indeed, many of the ideas would challenge an audience today, to the extent that one might be tempted to question how 'modern' a modern audience really is. Is it perhaps stuck in the ideas of the nineteenth century?

Meyerhold not only directed plays but felt free to alter the texts, even to reinvent them. This bibliography does not list published editions of the plays he directed, but Section 3 gives the titles along with the names of the original playwrights. Students can find the published texts, but need to remember that they will be reading translations, and that these versions are often radically different to those staged by Meyerhold.

Section 1 recommends key publications that will be of most use to students.

Section 2 lists a wider range of available works. Some are specifically about Meyerhold and offer insight and detail about a particular aspect of study. Others offer a critique of Meyerhold's work, but can be extremely challenging and limited in the amount of relevant knowledge they convey. Some contain information that is available elsewhere, and some contain detail complementary to a study of Meyerhold though they are not about him.

Section 4 is a brief guide to sites about Meyerhold on the World Wide Web. It has been kept short as the Web can be a dangerous place for the student to go. The content is neither refereed nor edited for quality. There are various different spellings of Meyerhold's name on the Internet and there is a lot of repetition from site to site and from the publications listed in earlier sections of this pack. Taking due note of the above caveats, it is recognised that the Web is part of everyday life and one that students are familiar with and many prefer to use in their research.

My selections and comments were dictated by the requirements of Unit 2: Twentieth-Century Theatre: Theories of Performance (AH). The students of Stonelaw High School have been my guinea pigs and I thank them. No bibliography can be exhaustive and can only reflect the preferences of the compiler. I had the assistance of the Glasgow University Library, Lisa Eaglesham, and my wife, Karen, in my research. I have offered many personal opinions about the publications listed and, while my students' responses to texts had an influence, I take full responsibility for my comments. I hope they are helpful; feel free to disagree.

SECTION 1

Most departments have limited budgets and many needs. The following works are the most highly recommended for a department to purchase in the study of Meyerhold. They have been listed alphabetically by author.

Braun, Edward, *The Director and the Stage*, London: Methuen, 1982

This is a wonderful text on directing in general and has two chapters dedicated to Meyerhold. It also has chapters of interest and context dealing with Stanislavski and Chekhov, Edward Gordon Craig, Piscator and Brecht. As a general text for all Advanced Higher students, this should have a priority place on Drama Department shelves.

The two chapters on Meyerhold divide his life into two, his early years as a director and his later theoretical developments. The book details the origin of his development as a director and offers the student areas for further study and research. While it is brief in detail and facts, they are stated with such conciseness and are of such a quality that it is hard not to agree that, for the student, Braun is an exceptional source.

The other chapters on directors also allow the student a good understanding of both the context of Meyerhold's ideas and the influence they had on others. For students who wish what might be called an expanded version, Braun's *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre* is needed (see below).

Braun, Edward, *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre*, London: Methuen, 1995

Originally titled *The Theatre of Meyerhold* and published in 1979, this is the most informative of all the texts for the student. Braun is a renowned expert on Meyerhold and his work. He is also the translator of Meyerhold's own *Meyerhold on Theatre*. Braun claims not to have written a biography of Meyerhold but, in essence, that is what this is. It is, however, more a biography of his work rather than the person, though it is difficult to separate the two.

Chapter 1, 'Apprentice Years', takes us through Meyerhold's early development as a performer and director. It leads us to his initial experiences and feelings of limitation being away from Moscow and St Petersburg. Chapter 2, 'The Theatre Studio', details the development of The Theatre Studio Company at the Moscow Art Theatre in 1905 until its demise later that same year.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 cover Meyerhold's increasingly experimental ideas and his falling out with his contemporaries over them. Meyerhold's increasing interest

in the physicality of space and performance while searching for inspiration in the traditional form of the Commedia dell'Arte, are also outlined here.

Chapter 6 focuses on the Revolution and its effects not only on Meyerhold but on Russian theatre in general and the growing forms of Constructivism and Futurist ideas. Meyerhold became the first Bolshevik director and here lay the seeds for his theories of 'Biomechanics' in performance. Braun details this in Chapter 7 and offers a synopsis on the ideas of biomechanics, while also offering some of Meyerhold's own notes on the subject.

Chapters 8, 9 and 10 give the student information about various productions staged by Meyerhold between 1923 and 1931. Braun devotes an entire chapter to *The Government Inspector* (also known as *The Inspector General*), often seen as the pinnacle of Meyerhold's work.

The final two chapters detail Meyerhold's last eight years of life between 1932 and 1940 when he was eventually shot under Stalin's regime. It was only in 1955 that the true date of his death was known and in 1987 Marie Valentia was finally given an actual certificate confirming his execution.

In the Conclusion, Braun offers some discussion of the influence of Meyerhold on modern theatre. While citing Brook as an example, Braun stresses that Meyerhold's influence was mostly on the work of his contemporaries in the first half of the twentieth century.

This is an excellent text for the student of Meyerhold, and studied alongside Rudnitsky's *Russian and Soviet Theatre* (see p. 6) will be of obvious benefit to the successful student.

Law, A and Garder, M, *Meyerhold, Eisenstein and Biomechanics*, London: McFarland, 1996

A daunting work if only because of the title and initially off-putting in its Introduction. The text is split into four sections: I Meyerhold and Eisenstein; II Biomechanics; III Documents; IV Appendices.

Section I has clearly laid out chapters with information written in a style that the student should find fairly accessible. While offering context, it focuses on the development of Biomechanics as an acting/performance form and in doing so approaches the study of Meyerhold from a new and refreshing perspective. Similar to Eton's *The Theatre of Meyerhold and Brecht*, it facilitates a comparative study of the influence of Meyerhold on Eisenstein.

Referring to history and records, Section II details the development of Biomechanics and its reconstruction by leading modern Russian theatre

groups. This gave it a detailed yet clear methodical style, although it must be stated that it is assumed to be accurate as it is based on reconstruction.

It offers both considerable detail about the theory of Biomechanics while also offering a clear overview for the student who wishes to study the ideas of Biomechanics in less depth.

Section III is possibly the most fascinating of all, with translations of documents discovered since the break-up of the former Soviet Union. This gives further insight into Meyerhold's ideas and methods and can be viewed as a companion piece to Braun's earlier *Meyerhold on Theatre*.

This is an expensive work but worth having. The photo-montage offered shows the connections of Meyerhold's Biomechanics system to Commedia dell'Arte from which he drew such inspiration.

Leach, Robert, *Vsevolod Meyerhold*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989

There are many reasons for recommending this over the definitive Braun text. It basically deals with all aspects of Meyerhold that a student needs to know about, by breaking them down into digestible chunks and separating the different topics clearly.

The first chapter, 'A Life', deals with Meyerhold's life from birth to death in twenty-nine pages. It is a simple, matter-of-fact telling giving relevant detail and avoiding extraneous facts.

Chapter 2, 'The Fourth Dimension', focuses on Meyerhold's ideas about the use of space, the audience, and actors; and their interaction with each other and the building around them. It does so in a sophisticated way but using clarity of language.

Chapter 3, 'The Actor's Business', covers the introduction of Meyerhold's use of styles in performance. It comments on his use of Commedia dell'Arte although it does not attempt to offer detailed insight into Meyerhold's research in this area. It does show how students and actors of Meyerhold put their studies into practice. It then goes into greater detail and explores the development of the ideas behind Biomechanics. There are some excellent illustrations throughout.

Chapter 4, 'The Mise-en-Scène', then starts to apply the theories outlined in Chapters 2 and 3 to the reality of how Meyerhold dealt with the problems of staging the mise-en-scène in the theatre. There is an interesting progression of information on his set design and staging ideas, with very good illustrative

material to back it up. Leach comments on the lighting and even the projection of slogans used during performances.

Chapter 5, 'Rhythm', moves on to the subject of noise and sound in performance. Dealing with dialogue, silence, music and effects, Meyerhold approached the directing of a performance almost the way a conductor would an orchestra, going as far as using musical notation such as 'allegretto' to describe episodes during a performance.

Chapter 6, 'Meanings', questions the significance of Meyerhold's work. It looks not just at what it meant to an audience but how its meanings were derived.

Chapter 7, 'Masquerade', is a detailed analysis and study of Lermontov's play of the same name. Leach introduces reasons for Meyerhold choosing it, a scenario detailing Meyerhold's stage movements and diagrams, and descriptions of the action, set, music, costumes, and a brief considered reaction to the play.

Chapter 8, 'Meyerhold and Mayakovsky', explains the partnership between Meyerhold, 'the director' and Mayakovsky, 'the writer'. This chapter looks at the twelve years and three plays that their partnership spanned. It also studies the other key partnerships Meyerhold had with designers and composers.

Chapter 9, 'The Legacy', is the conclusion to the text. It offers a brief analysis of how Meyerhold has influenced his own and other countries' performance ideas. This is perhaps the weakest part of the book because it is all too brief.

The Appendices are useful in offering a chronological production list, notes on the text, a select Bibliography and an Index. Altogether this is a fantastic resource as a text for the classroom.

Rudnitsky, Konstantin, *Russian and Soviet Theatre*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2000

A stunning reference work, even if initially appearing to be a glorified 'coffee table' book. It is lavish in its photographs and illustrations, while the text itself is absorbing. It takes the reader through the basic context of Soviet theatre in the first chapter. It communicates the author's ideas and enthusiasm offering maturity yet still being accessible to the layman and student alike. The sub-chapter 'Stanislavski and Meyerhold: Two Studios' offers an interesting and ultimately rewarding comparison of these collaborators, and eventual rivals, in terms of their different styles. It has beautiful photographs from Meyerhold's *Masquerade* as well as of some stunning costume and set designs.

The theatre of Russia, immediately post-Revolution, is detailed clearly. Indeed, it is the concise text liberally complemented by illustrations that makes this such a rewarding resource. It also allows for a visualisation of the period and an increased awareness of the importance of space and design not only in Meyerhold's work, but also in that of his contemporaries.

There is a beauty and complexity to the designs. Of all the works in this bibliography, this one is visually the most stimulating. It has the merit of not only informing the student about Soviet theatre but design ideas in general. The text deals succinctly with Biomechanics and the initial production that introduced the concepts to the wider public, *The Magnanimous Cuckold* (also known as *The Magnificent Cuckold*). It also follows on with Eisenstein's Circuscization ideas.

It is in the third chapter that the illustrations focus on several of Meyerhold's productions and ideas. What is fascinating to follow is how each director and designer of the period was influenced by contemporaries. They all fed their fellows ideas for the future, in particular with the use of Constructivist sets.

Konstantin Rudnitsky matches the text with images by clearly outlining in words how the theatre developed visually, and giving meaning and period reaction to those developments. This is a highly informative and indeed no mere 'coffee table' book. It is rich in language and visual illustrations. It is a refreshing theatrical text to offer to students and should be seen as a complementary partner to Edward Braun's distinguished works on Meyerhold.

Symons, James, *Meyerhold's Theatre of the Grotesque*, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge Rivers Press, 1973

This book focuses on the time when Meyerhold was thought to be in his artistic prime, in full authority in his own theatre, and free to go as far as his creative impulses would take him – the 1920s to early 1930s.

It was one of the first books to look seriously at directors as innovators in the twentieth century, and as such is a very good grounding for new readers. At the time of writing new material, previously unavailable in Stalin's time, is referred to.

The opening chapter, as most well structured books do, places Meyerhold in a context of family upbringing and the political upheaval of the time. It very quickly moves to Meyerhold's introduction to the Moscow Art Theatre and analysis of his earliest productions.

Chapter 2 leads the modern western reader to a clearer understanding of the impact of theatre on the whole of society, something somewhat lost in

twentieth-century Britain. Here we focus on Meyerhold's political involvement. It does seem to skim lightly over his ideals and reasoning, not even suggesting any selfish motivation for being a 'party' member. It does, however, look at the early politicisation of Meyerhold's theatre style.

Chapter 3 contains a linear account of productions and events, but Symons continues to drop in interesting details and comments, while using a developed yet not complex language style. This chapter also introduces Biomechanics and Constructivism.

It is in Chapter 4 that the real focus on Meyerhold's innovative ideas is presented. It looks at the productions from *The Magnificent Cuckold* through *The Death of Tarelkin* (a Russian classic reintroduced by Meyerhold in his own style) to *The Court Rebellions*.

In Chapters 5 and 6 Symons concentrates on following through various productions and offering brief analysis, while still showing the development of Meyerhold's theatrical ideas.

Rightly, Symons spends most of Chapter 7 looking at Meyerhold's production of *The Inspector General*. Considered the height of Meyerhold's achievement, it was a pinnacle that he never reached again. Symons accurately reflects this.

Chapter 8 and the Epilogue detail Meyerhold's decline in fashion amongst the new political powers of Russia, and his theatrical ideas finishing in 1939.

As in other works, a very useful Appendix on Meyerhold's productions is offered; listing authors, plays, designers, locations, and first performance dates in full.

This is an excellent text and highly recommended for all students of Meyerhold's life.

SECTION 2

Benedetti, Jean, *Stanislavski, His Life and Art*, London: Methuen, 1998

An outstanding book on Stanislavski, peppered with references to Meyerhold. It offers quotes from his daily involvement in the Moscow Art Theatre and details his influence on modern twentieth-century theatre.

Bradshaw, Martha (ed.), *Soviet Theatres 1917–1941*, New York: Research Program of the USSR, 1954

A series of articles from the early 1950s, that try to bring a balance to studies of Soviet theatre. Pages 20–1 give a brief summary of Meyerhold's influence on Soviet theatre practice, while there is a more detailed study of his production of *The Inspector General* on pp. 42–8. The article on Moscow theatres 1917–41 dips in and out of Meyerhold's work, offering a linear biography of theatre's progress in Moscow during this time.

The book has a clear structure and language accessible to students, and it would be a useful tool to use in conjunction with other texts that are more specifically related to Meyerhold himself. It also takes an interesting viewpoint, as it neither venerates nor condemns Meyerhold's ideas. Taken in the context of the time when it was written, it does set out to make Meyerhold more respectable after the Stalin years.

Unfortunately, other than the article mentioned, little else in the book is relevant to the student, except an outstanding introductory chapter that gives a context to pre-1950s writings in Soviet theatre.

Braun, Edward, *Meyerhold on Theatre*, London: Methuen, 1969

Now becoming increasingly hard to obtain, this is considered one of the principal authoritative works on Meyerhold's ideas as it is a direct translation of his own text with additional 1930s material. As such it is an invaluable academic source, if not the most useful text. Braun offers his own commentary throughout on the areas being discussed, thus giving context to the thoughts of Meyerhold.

However useful, it is a difficult text for the student who will need help to discover its gems, particularly Part Five which deals with Meyerhold's specific theatrical theories.

Meyerhold's thoughts on cinema are also very valuable to today's students, helping them to contextualise and make connections with Meyerhold through further research. Indeed, Meyerhold's comments on Chaplin in particular and

the interest and influence that Chaplin's performances had on him should be the most accessible part of this book to the student.

This is an outstanding text but with a cautionary warning. It appears daunting and difficult at first, but is ultimately highly satisfying.

Carneche, Sharan Mevie, *The Theatrical Instinct*, New York: Peter Lang Publications, 1989

A book about Evreinov, although this time more a biography than a philosophical analysis. Easier for the student to access, it is still only of some relevance to Meyerhold's earlier works. Personally I found it useful because it gave a different perspective in context by looking at a dissident. I feel Evreinov to have been one of the forgotten greats of twentieth-century Russian theatre, and he was a strong influence on Meyerhold's work.

Carniche, Sharon N, *Stanislavski in Focus*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998

A modern work that focuses on Stanislavski's earliest influences on American theatre with some reference to criticism and involvement by Meyerhold.

Carter, Huntley, *The New Spirit in the Russian Theatre 1917–1928*, New York: Benjamin Blom Press, 1928 (reissued 1970)

This book contains an interesting review of Meyerhold works within the context of the time when they were written. The author is unashamedly pro-Meyerhold. This is shown in the amount of text devoted to Meyerhold in comparison to other major players of the late 1920s Soviet theatre scene. Meyerhold was at the height of his political respectability and, given the propagandist nature of the text, this must also be taken into account when reading it. It contains some good illustrative material.

Carter, Huntley, *The New Theatre and Cinema of Soviet Russia*, London: Chapman & Dodd, 1924

This is a dense work and it is difficult to locate relevant information, but it contains excellent illustrative examples of work from the period, and references to Meyerhold's relationship with Eisenstein.

It is a disappointing book, compared with Carter's later text (see above). He appears to have less direction, style or structure here. There is little of worth here that is not included in other, better written books. That said, it does offer a very clear introduction to the history of early twentieth-century Russian theatre as it focuses on no particular practitioner. Unfortunately it also fails to focus on any particular anything!

Clayton, J Douglas, *Pierrot In Petrograd*, Quebec: McGill–Queen’s University Press, 1994

While this is not a book specifically about Meyerhold, it is an excellent text that offers a highly detailed study for the analysis of the influence of Commedia dell’Arte on the Biomechanics system of acting that Meyerhold promoted. It is a large tome and offers a depth of analysis on Meyerhold’s earliest work with reference to critical comments of the time, as well as a more detailed history of the use of Commedia dell’Arte in early Russian theatre. It looks at how Commedia dell’Arte inspired Meyerhold in both practice and theory.

Meyerhold’s work in cinema is also focused on. This is a dense text but ultimately highly rewarding. Meyerhold is continually referred to throughout. It is also a fantastic text to use as a reference for the teaching of mask work, Commedia dell’Arte, influences on Russian theatre, the work of Dario Fo and the revival of Commedia dell’Arte in the twentieth century.

There are fascinating illustrations at the front of the book. It also contains a full translation by Meyerhold of his scenario for *The Lovers*, and for this alone it is worth looking at.

Corngin, Robert W (ed.), *Theatre in the Twentieth Century*, New York: Grove Press Inc., 1963

‘Form’ by Vsevolod Meyerhold (p. 192) sets out Meyerhold’s ideas on the use of form and relates to what he believes should be a return to the primary focus of theatre that he feels has been lost by the ‘modern actor’. While challenging for students (Meyerhold is a highly articulate writer), this direct commentary by Meyerhold is of immense value in giving a direct insight into his ideas and form of thoughts. It links directly to his use of Russian Folk Theatre, Commedia dell’Arte, and his development of the Biomechanics theories.

Edwards, Christine, *The Stanislavski Heritage*, London: Peter Owen, 1966

This is a general work with Chapter 3, ‘Masterbuilders’, being of the greatest relevance.

Eton, Katherine Bliss, *The Theatre of Meyerhold and Brecht*, London: Greenwood Press, 1985

Eton’s self-described ‘monograph’ is essential reading not only for the student of Meyerhold but also, as the title suggests, the student of Brecht. Here is a text that contextualises fully Meyerhold’s work and that of Brecht, and draws the roots of Brecht’s work from Meyerhold.

To many a student it might appear that little specific mention of Meyerhold's influence on European theatre is detailed in many other texts. Eton changes this. Her clear prose and sharp analysis leave no doubt as to Meyerhold's influence on Brecht and thus most of modern European theatre.

The logical progression of the text will also aid the student. Chapter 1 is not, however, a simple account of Meyerhold's work and ideas, but it continues to make reference to how Brecht and his associates developed ideas from Meyerhold's work.

Chapter 2 compares and contrasts the staging techniques of the two men. Meyerhold's stylistic development is clearly shown to have been taken forward by Brecht. Eton does not limit herself to Meyerhold but refers to Piscator's development from Meyerhold, and Brecht's development from Piscator. The process and connections are shown to be complete.

Chapter 3 looks at the ideals and themes of the two, with Constructivism (formalism) being shown to be a linking style through devices such as montage and the juxtaposition of images. Eton also manages to evaluate critically the differences in style.

In Chapter 4, the politics of Meyerhold and Brecht and their challenge to the establishment is thrown into focus through the use of music. Chapter 5 looks at how the lives of Brecht and Meyerhold were subtly intertwined. Brecht's ideas were used to 'smuggle' Meyerhold's ideas back to the Soviet Union when Meyerhold was no longer an acceptable part of the Soviet past.

This is an outstanding text that will not only inform and develop the student's knowledge but also lead her/him into new avenues of study.

Fisher, James, *The Theatre of Yesterday and Tomorrow*, Dyfed: The Edwin Mellor Press, 1992

Key to the study of Meyerhold is Chapter 4. This looks at Meyerhold's theories and how Commedia dell'Arte related to them. It focuses in depth on Meyerhold's staging of *The Fairground Booth* (by Alexander Blok) and continues with information on other Commedia performances that Meyerhold was involved in. It then discusses other Russian performers who involved Commedia in their work and were obviously influenced by Meyerhold's interest. These include Evreinov, Tairov and Vakhtangov. There are two good illustrations (fig. 15) of Meyerhold and illustrations of his version of *The Fairground Booth* (fig. 16). There is little else in the text for the student of Meyerhold except the chapter notes in pages 251–4. This is still a hugely useful text. It is well written, clear and focuses specifically on actual performances that Meyerhold was involved in.

Frick, John W and Vallillo, Stephen M (eds.), *Theatrical Directors: A Biographical Dictionary*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994

A very good reference for students. Not only does it give a good, concise biography of Meyerhold but also a simple summation of his work and theories. It includes a reference to the dates of different productions he undertook.

Gladkov, Aleksamahi (translated by Alna Law), *Meyerhold Speaks, Meyerhold Rehearses*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997

Alna Law's Introduction is a fifth of the text in length, and is a rundown of Meyerhold's life. In many ways it is a summary of Braun's *Meyerhold: a Revolution in Theatre* (see p. 3). Gladkov's actual text comprises his recollections of working with Meyerhold and the unpublished writings of Meyerhold that Gladkov edited. His opening chapter, 'With Meyerhold', is possibly one of the best recollections of day-to-day working with Meyerhold by someone who was a contemporary and friend, and for this reason makes the text a valuable resource for students.

The text is divided into two main sections, 'Meyerhold Speaks' is the first, and 'Meyerhold Rehearses' is the second. As in other works, Meyerhold's actual words and writings, though interesting, are translated into terms that can be difficult for students to work through. He is almost too articulate in his prose style. Writing as if he were directly speaking, he develops the various theories and ideas he has about theatre, making asides throughout. Consequently, the book appears less well structured than might have been the case if an editor had been involved. It does offer some excellent material for research, although appearing to spring from Meyerhold's free-flowing thoughts.

'Meyerhold Rehearses' is fascinating because the author writes as an observer commenting not only on the method of Meyerhold's directorial techniques but also on his style and manner. This is a key element missing in many texts that deal with at Biomechanics and Meyerhold. It is here that the invaluable personal knowledge and intimacy that Gladkov had with Meyerhold comes to the fore.

To assist the reader, a very good contents list is included, showing the many sub-headings contained within the two main sections of the text. This allows the reader to search quickly and browse through the material. This book is recommended for serious students of Meyerhold.

Golub, Spencer, *Evreinov: The Theatre of the Paradoxical Transformation*, Michigan: University Research Press, 1984

This is a study of the use of Commedia dell'Arte imagery and Evreinov's work with Meyerhold (Mejerxl'd in the text). Of interest if only to show the

perspective of the writer working with a director who rejected the status of the actor, as promoted by Stanislavski. There are references to Meyerhold throughout, although all of them are brief.

Griffiths, David, *Acting Through Mask*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998

A short section on Meyerhold's training methods is very concise and direct, and would be useful to the student in quickly grasping Meyerhold's complex ideas about Biomechanics and Constructivism. As a whole the text is also very useful to the Drama teacher offering ideas and theory, practical usage and creating for mask work.

Hoover, Marjorie L, *Meyerhold and his Set Designer*, New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 1988

Written in a linear time-line structure, this accessible text does more than its title suggests and offers a highly detailed account of the productions of Meyerhold. Hoover comments on audience responses to the productions as well as giving a detailed analysis of the content of those productions in terms of both set design and staging. Written in a flowing prose style, this text is the non-fiction equivalent of the fictional 'page turner'. However, the conclusion is all too brief in looking at how Meyerhold has influenced the generations coming after him.

Hoover, Marjorie L, *Meyerhold: The Art of Conscious Theatre*, Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974

Hoover has an obvious love of Meyerhold's work. In this dense text his life and work are revealed chronologically. This means that finding specific information is more difficult for the novice student who is uncertain of the time scale involved.

This warning aside, it is a good general reference text. It is full of illustrations, interesting side comments, and has excellent appendices. The best chapter in the book is Chapter 5, 'Meyerhold and Other Arts and Artists'. This looks at Meyerhold's relationship with and influence over others. The author's final section, sub-titled 'Meyerhold's Legacy' (pages 271–80) is a gift to students even though it is now obviously lacking the last twenty-five years of theatrical development.

Kiebuszinska, Christine, *Revolutionaries in the Theatre: Meyerhold, Brecht and Witkiewicz*, London: UMI Research Press, 1988

This would be a very difficult text for students without substantial support from the teacher. It revels in all the language of theatre and film where an understanding of semiotics, symbolism, mise-en-scène and Constructivism theory would be useful. This said, it is a fantastic study looking at the

theatrical presentations of Meyerhold and their meaning to an audience. It uses a comparison of the styles of staging Meyerhold adopted and comments on particular designers. It gives meaning and depth to the development of ideas by Meyerhold during his search for a theatrical satisfaction in expression.

It refers not only to his development in ideas but also the inspirations he took from and gave to others. It places Meyerhold in a context without devoting the majority of the text to a biographical study. It is more a discussion of the meaning and form of Meyerhold's work. It is difficult even though short, but as a reference text invaluable to a serious study of Meyerhold.

Kleberg, Lars, *Theatre as Action 'Soviet Russian Avant-Garde Aesthetics'*, London: Macmillan, 1993

A 'literary' work with some chapters devoted to looking at Meyerhold's style both in Biomechanics and in areas that influenced him. It is a rewarding text to read, without being too long. The style of writing will challenge and develop the student's own skills. The text also benefits from the inclusion of Eisenstein's work with Meyerhold and the influence on Brecht.

Leach, Borovsky (ed.), *A History of the Russian Theatre*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999

This is a collection of articles about Russian theatre, with chapters on 'Stanislavski and the Moscow Art Theatre', and 'The Silver Age', with reference to Meyerhold and his involvement in Russian theatre. It is, however, Leach's own article 'Revolutionary Theatre 1917–1930' that focuses on Meyerhold. It is written from the viewpoint of rehabilitating Meyerhold in Soviet theatre history and his influence in the west, although none of the articles are specifically about Meyerhold. Although a fascinating collection, it may not offer the student much that is relevant.

Leach, Robert, *Revolutionary Theatre*, London: Routledge, 1994

Leach attempts to give a factual account of the early twentieth-century Russian theatre. He offers interesting reviews of performances, and takes us on a linear journey through the times, often focusing on Meyerhold and his work.

However, I found it bland. It seemed to lack enthusiasm for any of its subjects. It had no revolutionary zeal. Leach does consider Meyerhold to be a master, but then seems to fail to follow up with any explanation of why.

MacLeod, Joseph, *Actors Cross the Volga*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1996

This work offers a pre-Revolutionary background to nineteenth-century Russian theatre. Originally published during World War II, while the Soviets were

allies, it offers a fascinating trawl through the development of 'people's theatre' and the decline of Imperial society.

Chapter VI, 'The Seagull and the Petrel', deals with the development of the Moscow Art Theatre and is of most interest for the student of Meyerhold. Although, like many texts, it makes scant reference in detail to Meyerhold's work, it is of good, general background interest and is written in a concise, informative manner.

MacLeod, Joseph, *The New Soviet Theatre*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1943

Another interesting piece of Russian propaganda that offers a critical balance of views. It is highly critical of Meyerhold, particularly pp. 96–9. Indeed, on p. 99 MacLeod clearly denies the rumours of Meyerhold's imprisonment or death, although we now know that he was executed three years before this book's first publication. An interesting read, it fails to offer any real depth of analysis. It does, however, offer an insight into the Stalinist revision of history, art and culture. Like Markov's text *Soviet Theatre* (see below), it has one or two interesting illustrations.

Magarshiak, David, *Stanislavski: A Life*, London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1950

This has an excellent Chapter 22, 'Search and Fulfillment', that deals with Meyerhold's relationship with the Moscow Art Theatre and Stanislavski.

Markov, P A, *Soviet Theatre*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1934

This work offers solid, basic facts from a communist perspective. It was written as Meyerhold was directing. It offers a lot of information about to the context of the times of Meyerhold and of the Moscow Art Theatre.

Markov never expresses any real preference as to styles of theatre, but is more uncritical of all Socialist Soviet theatre, with a slight, subtle bias to Meyerhold. It must be remembered that this text was written with the agreement and support of the Soviet authorities for consumption by the West in the 1930s and so must be read with the understanding that it is political propaganda. Personally, I feel that this makes a more interesting text from that standpoint. That stated, it is limited in actual information, which can be more readily found elsewhere. It does contain a few interesting visuals.

Nemirovitch-Dantchenko, Vladimiro, *My Life in the Russian Theatre*, London: Geoffrey Bles, 1937

One of the most important influences in twentieth-century Russian theatre, Nemirovitch-Dantchenko only makes four brief references to Meyerhold in this work, but one cannot overstate the importance of this book within its context. While of great interest, it must be of limited real use to the most

conscientious students studying Meyerhold and wishing to gain a full grasp of Russian theatre theory and practice.

Schmidt, Paul (ed.), *Meyerhold at Work*, Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1980

A collection of articles, quotes and recollections that focuses more on the work of Meyerhold than on the cultural, political and artistic context in which his work was produced.

After a brief biography, the book refers to letters and quotes from Meyerhold's students and contemporaries with some comments by Meyerhold himself. The text focuses more on Meyerhold's later work, but has some fascinating chapters such as 'Meyerhold and Pushkin' and 'Zinaidi Raikh and Camille'. *Camille* was a very popular production of the Meyerhold Theatre. A short chapter also focuses on the topic of 'Meyerhold and Music' based mainly on some letters exchanged between Meyerhold and production colleagues. It offers insight into the use of music by Meyerhold and the influences on him of musicians. This is developed by taking the theories and thoughts through to productions in the following chapters.

While this seems to be another very useful text, it will be difficult for the student to handle.

Segel, Harold B, *Pinocchio's Progress*, Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995

A book about the role of puppetry and Commedia dell'Arte, it refers on pages 226–34 to Meyerhold's production of *The Fairground Booth*, although it is not as detailed as Fisher's text *The Theatre of Yesterday and Tomorrow* (see p. 12). It does stand on its own though due to its analysis of the symbolist nature of the piece.

Slonim, Marc, *Russian Theatre*, London: Methuen, 1963

In the chapter 'From 'The World of Art' to Meyerhold', Slonim creates a strong contextual analysis from his roots through to the development of his ideas, and to his conflicts with Stanislavski at the Moscow Art Theatre. By not going into specific detail nor focusing purely on Meyerhold, but choosing instead to focus on this point of Russian theatre history, he places the reader fairly in the situation without too much bias to either party. There is also an interesting reference to Kommissarzhevskaya and her theatre in St Petersburg. Indeed, it is an excellent chapter. Details about Meyerhold's career development can be found in pp.243–58.

The text does jump between topics throughout, but this makes for a more rounded knowledge on the times and influences. It is written in a flowing

style and does not make continual references to Meyerhold until near the end. This is a satisfying read and, although not containing the depth of some other texts, it is a useful introduction to Russian theatre for students.

Von Geldem, James, *Bolshevik Festivals 1917–1920*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993

Commenting on Meyerhold's challenge to the mainstream theatre of Russia by using the folk style of Russia, this work charts the development of the propagandist usage of theatre by authorities or individuals in creating 'event' theatre as shown by the Bolsheviks in early Revolutionary Russia. This text focuses on a particular period of Meyerhold's life that is often skimmed over in other texts. There are many references to Meyerhold throughout, but again it focuses more on the influences rather than the outcomes of his work.

Worrall, Nick, *The Moscow Art Theatre*, London: Routledge, 1996

A highly detailed reference book on the repertoire of the Moscow Art Theatre. It focuses mainly on the works of Stanislavski and would be indispensable in any study of him. From the perspective of a study of Meyerhold, it gives accounts of Meyerhold's criticisms of the theatre and the involvement of Meyerhold as an actor.

Zdotnitsky, David, *Sergei Rudlev: the Shakespearian Fate of a Soviet Director*, Luxembourg: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995

A fascinating book looking at one of the less well-publicised contemporaries of Meyerhold, Sergei Rudlev. Both of them developed under the teachings of Stanislavski and Nemirovitch-Dantchenko. Full of interesting comparisons to and references about Meyerhold, it is in itself an interesting read and brings a fresh context to any serious study of early twentieth-century Russian theatre.

SECTION 3

I have listed the performances directed by Meyerhold under the sub-headings of the year they were performed. Included is the author and title only.

Between 1902 and 1905 Meyerhold worked as an actor with the troupe he formed with A S Kosheverov. They were called the 'Comrades of the New Drama'. His first directorial work was in 1905 at the Moscow Art Theatre.

1905

Maeterlinck, M, *Death of Tintagiles*

Hauptmann, G, *Schluck und Jau*

Przybyszewski, S, *Snow*

Ibsen, H, *Love's Comedy*

1906

Ibsen, H, *Hedda Gabler*

Yushkevich, S, *In the City*

Maeterlinck, M, *Sister Beatrice*

Przybyszewski, S, *The Eternal Story*

Ibsen, H, *Nora (A Doll's House)*

Blok, A, *The Puppet Booth*

Maeterlinck, M, *Miracle of St Anthony*

1907

Gerberg, G, *Love's Tragedy*

Ibsen, H, *Love's Comedy*

Von Hofmannsthal, H, *Wedding of Zobyedy*

Andreyev, L, *Life of Man*

Andreyev, L, *To the Stars*

Wedekind, F, *Spring's Awakening*

Maeterlinck, M, *Pelleas and Melisande*

Sologub, F, *Death's Victory*

Maeterlinck, M, *Sister Beatrice*

1908

Blok, A, *The Puppet Booth*

Wedekind, F, *Vampire*

Von Hofmannsthal, H, *Electra*

Ibsen, H, *Hedda Gabler*

Sologub, F, *Death's Victory*

Andreyev, L, *Life of Man*

Hauptmann, G, *Prisoners of Karl The Great*
 Ibsen, H, *Builder Solness (Master Builder)*
 Hamsun, K, *At the Gates of the Kingdom*
 Wilde, O, *Salome*
 Potemkin, P, *Petrushka*
 Trakhtenburg, V, *The Last from Waysberov*
 Sologub, F, *Welcome, Have a Seat*

1909

Gogol, N, *A Lawsuit*
 Wagner, R, *Tristan and Isolde*

1910

Merezhkovsky, D, *Pavel I*
 Khardt, E, *The Jest of Trantise*
 Calderón, P, *Adoration of the Cross*
 Schnitzler, A, *The Scarf of Columbine*
 Molière, J, *Don Juan*
 Znosko-Borovsky, E, *The Transfigured Prince*

1911

Mussorgsky, M, *Boris Godunov*
 Belyaev, Y, *The Red Cafe*
 Tolstoy, L, *The Living Corpse*
 Solovyev, V, *Harlequin, the Marriage Broker*
 Gluck, C, *Orpheus*

1912

'Dr Dapertutto', *Being in Love*
 Balmont, K, *Three Blossoms*
 'Dr Dapertutto', *Being in Love*
 Solovyev, V, *Harlequin, the Marriage Broken*
 Calderón, P, *Adoration of the Cross*
 Strindberg, A, *There Are Crimes and Crimes*
 Shaw, G B, *You Never Can Tell*
 Sologub, F, *Hostages of Life*

1913

Strauss, R, *Electra*
 D'Annunzio, G, *Pisanelle*
 Nozarre, F and Muller, G, *Seville Cafe*

1914

Pinero, A, *Halfway (Mid-Channel)*
 Blok, A, *The Unknown Woman*

Blok, A, *The Puppet Booth*
 de Maupassant, G, *Mademoiselle Fifi*
 Wolf-Ferrari, E, *Secret Susan*
 Bobrishchev-Pushkin, A, *A World Festival*

1915

Lermontov, M, *Two Brothers*
 Hippius, Z, *The Green Ring*
 Calderón, P, *The Constant Prince*
 Shaw, G B, *Pygmalion*
 Wilde, O, *Portrait of Dorian Gray*

1916

Ostrovsky, A, *The Storm*
 Glinka, M, *Argonsky's Desire*
 Schnitzler, A, *The Scarf of Columbine*

1917

Przybyszewski, S, *The Strong Man*
 Merezhkovsky, D, *The Romantics*
 Sukhovo-Kobylin, A, *Krechinsky's Wedding*
 Dargomyzhsky, A, *The Stone Guest*
 Mussorgsky, M, *A Marriage*
 Lermontov, M, *Masquerade*
 Wilde, O, *An Ideal Husband*
 Sukhovo-Kobylin, A, *The Case*
 Sukhovo-Kobylin, A, *The Death of Tarelkin*
 Rimsky-Korsakov, N, *The Snow Maiden*
 Ibsen, H, *Lady from the Sea*

1918

Tolstoy, L, *Peter the Baker*
 Stravinsky, I, *The Nightingale*
 Ibsen, H, *Nora (A Doll's House)*
 Ober, D, *Fenella*
 Mayakovsky, V, *Mystery-Bouffe*

1920

Ibsen, H, *Nora (A Doll's House)*
 Verhaeren, E, *The Dawns*

1921

Mayakovsky, V, *Mystery-Bouffe*
 Ibsen, H, *League of Youth*

1922

Ibsen, H, *Nora (A Doll's House)*
 Crommelynck, F, *The Magnificent Cuckold*
 Sukhovo-Kobylin, A, *Verturnaf*

1923

Martinet, M, *The Earth Rebellious (Night)*
 Ostrovsky, A, *A Lucrative Post*
 Faiko, A, *Lake Lyul*

1924

Ostrovsky, A, *The Forest*
 Ehrenburg, I, *D E (Give Us Europe!)*

1925

Faiko, A, *The Teacher Bubus*
 Erdman, N, *The Warrant*

1926

Gogol, N, *The Inspector General*

1928

Crommelynck, F, *The Magnificent Cuckold*
 Griboyedov, A, *Woe to Wit*

1929

Mayakovsky, V, *The Bedbug*
 Selvinsky, I, *Commander of the Second Army*

1930

Mayakovsky, V, *The Bathhouse*
 Ehrenburg, I and Kellerman, B, *D S E*

1931

Vishnevsky, Vs, *Final and Decisive*
 Olesha, Y, *List of Good Deeds*

1932

Molière, J, *Don Juan*

1933

German, Y, *Prelude*
 Sukhovo-Kobylin, A, *Krechinsky's Wedding*
 Lermontov, M, *Masquerade*

1934

Dumas-fils, A, *Lady of the Camellias*

1935

Tchaikovsky, P, *Queen of Spades*

Chekov, A, *Thirty-Three Fainting Spells*

Pushkin, A, *The Stone Guest*

Griboyedov, A, *Woe to Wit*

1937

Pushkin, A, *The Stone Guest*

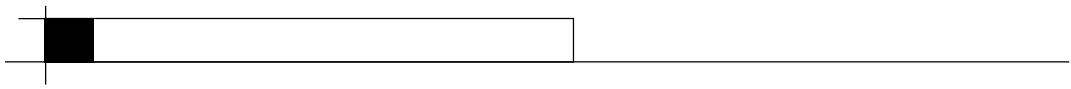
Pushkin, A, *Rusalka*

Seyfullina, L, *Natasha*

Ostrovsky, N, *One Life*

1938

Lermontov, M, *Masquerade*



SECTION 4

One of the dangers of the World Wide Web is that anyone can say whatever they please about anything at all. It is an unregulated mass of opinion, some wonderfully academic and scholarly, some woefully shoddy and infantile.

Websites have a habit of changing addresses, changing names, changing content, or disappearing completely. This is the nature of the Internet; this bibliography offers some sites as examples of what existed at the time of going to print, with as brief a commentary as possible. Some sites may be unavailable for purely temporary technical reasons. Many sites have a better visual content, rather than textual. Dive in, and take a 'surf' around. There is a lot of waste product, but there is also a great deal to admire and enjoy.

www.netcolony.com/members/ant/direct/meyer/html

A basic information site with good links to other sites that are brief in content but of some use in initial research for the student.

www.af rond.tripod.com/biomx/intro.html

A good site that offers a summary of Biomechanics.

www.unet.com.mk/mian/english.htm

An excellent site giving a detailed definition of Biomechanics.

www.muse.jhu.edu/demo/tt/6.1muza.html

A site offering Anna Muza's work on developing Biomechanics with modern-day actors in 1996. Excellent.

www.meyerhold.org

An outstanding site to view. This is the official site of the Meyerhold Memorial Museum. It contains a brief biography, a tour of Meyerhold's last home in Moscow, a download on Biomechanics, showing it in practice, and a timeline of his life, listing key moments and offering visual materials to demonstrate it. It is possible to visit his house, and contact the staff. The final link allows you to search for documents used by Meyerhold depending on the designer, play, theatre, etc. An invaluable resource and one that justifies the World Wide Web.

www.theatrebayarea.org/july01meyerhold.html

Web page that describes the workshops that this San Francisco theatre has held in conjunction with Gennadi Bogdanov, a leading practitioner of Meyerhold's Biomechanics. Interesting and informative, but of limited use.

www.lchc.ucsd.edu/MCA/Mail/xmcamail.2001_01.dir/0027.html

A message posting site for academic research on Meyerhold.

www.theatrelinks.com/genres_styles_practitioners/meyerhold_biomechanics.htm

An unusual site that links you to other sites on Biomechanics. Many images are offered, and these link to further sites. A site to explore, but give yourself some time to search through it. Like many websites, they lead to others and it is easy to lose focus on what you were seeking in the first place.

www.faculty-web.at.northwestern.edu/slavic/theatre/index10.htm

Photographs from the 1925 production of *The Warrant*.

www.gertstein.org/details/par-att.htm

A diary of the Yale School of Drama's reconstruction of Meyerhold's 1926 production of *The Inspector General*. Of limited interest, but it does try to explain his techniques.

www.slavweb.com/eng/Russia/theatre-e0.html

A site offering a database on Russian Performance Theatre. Worth exploring, with the usual warnings about becoming lost in links.

www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/IMRC/russianart/theatre.HTM

A site offering a database on Russian theatre. It is divided into clearly defined sections. Very useful and worth exploring, with the usual warnings about becoming lost in links.

The majority of other sites come under the following headings: excerpts from texts already mentioned in Sections 1 and 2 of this bibliography; adverts offering; the texts mentioned in Sections 1 and 2 of this bibliography; repetitions of websites already mentioned here, or websites in other languages.