

70-71

BENNINGTON DRAMA DIVISION

Presents

EVERYMAN

Dedicated to Will and Chuck

We are striving to penetrate behind the mask, beyond the action into the character as perceived by the mind; we want to penetrate to the inner mask...If the theatre is finally to rediscover its dynamic essence, it must cease to be 'theatre' in the sense of mere 'spectacle'. We intend the audience not merely to observe, but to participate in a corporate creative act.

Meyerhold

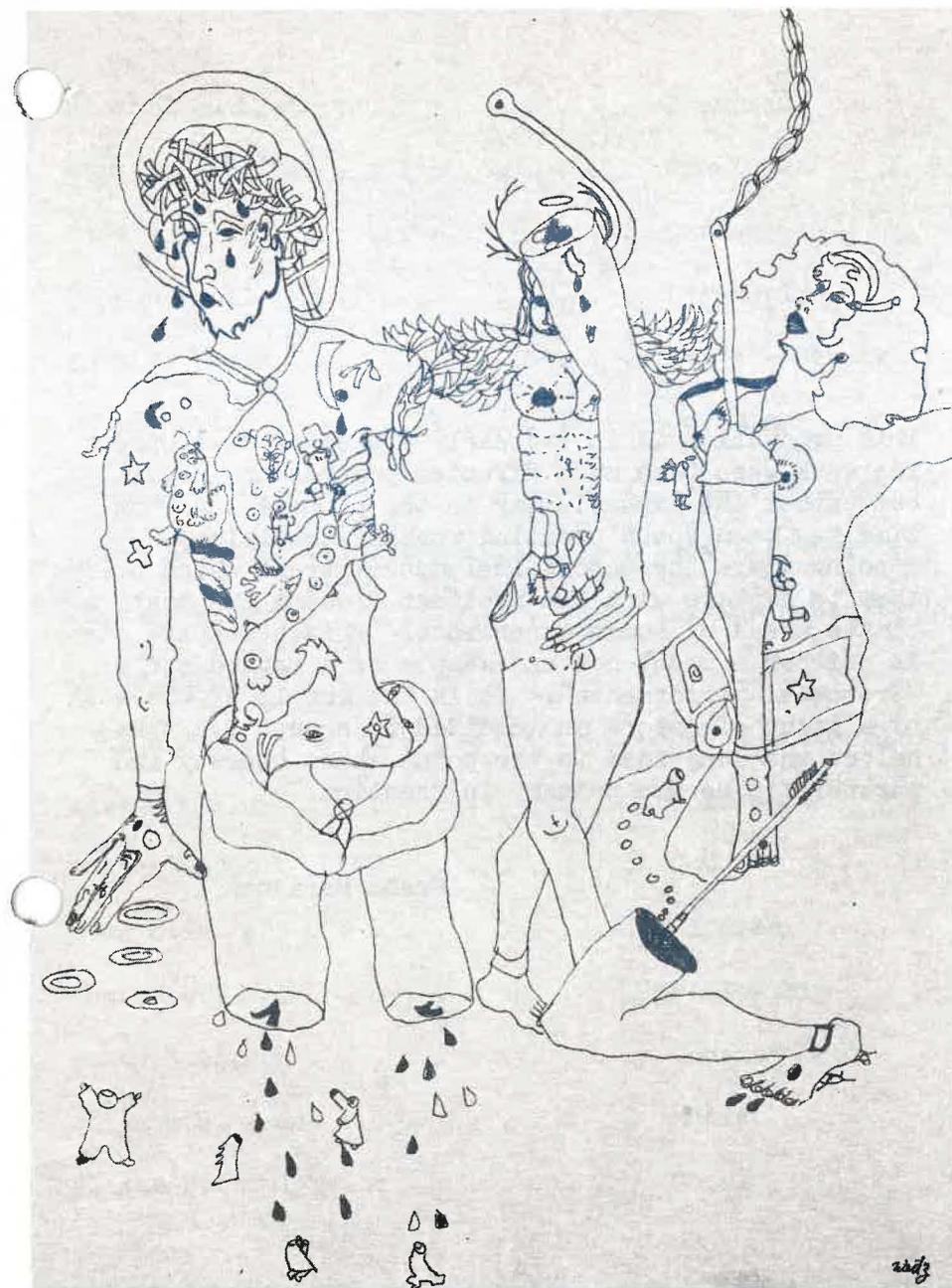
The shock which rips off the mask, enabling us to give ourselves nakedly to something which is impossible to define but which contains Eros and Caritas.

Grotowski

A working condition occurs when the actors trust one another to the extent that allows the individual to create. Any group can be creative in a worthwhile way if it achieves a working condition. No individual can be creative without the alertness and sensitivity of a working condition. If we were to work only to arrive at a mutual trust, we have a show.

In my own role of Death I have thrown away a number of character and movement ideas to arrive at the simple and obvious minimal characterization. What remains is dramatic and original because I believe it, and I am convinced that when an actor believes something, the audience will believe it as well.

John McNulty

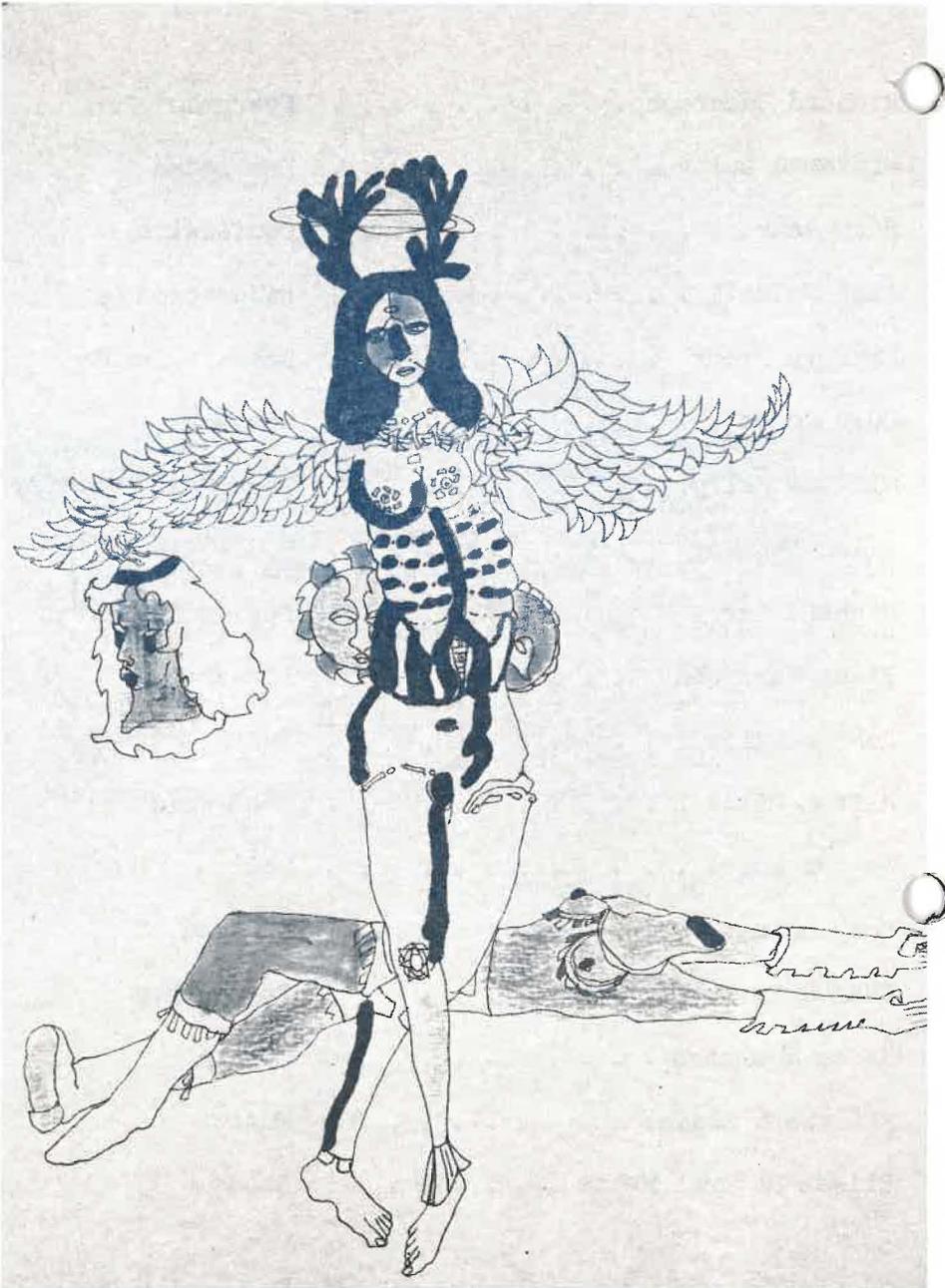


This production is in its early stages of development. The work wasn't so much directed towards the result, but rather the emphasis lay on the process. A long time has been spent creating working conditions-- a point where the actors feel mutual trust which allows them to explore with the greatest freedom the most intimate areas of human experience. This tentative step is neither a model nor an example of a method nor a "Grotowski performance". It is the result of the work of a group of actors who decided to accept for themselves the long road to the point where honesty and partnership become primary in creation.

Franz Marijnen

Richard Bachrach	Everyman
Marianne Balin	Knowledge
Eddy Behr	Confession
Jane Dalzell	Discretion
Marilyn Frank	Death - Beauty
Suzy Jones	Costumes
William Kelly	Technical Director
Allen Kennedy	God - Five-wits
Richard Kerry	Design Consultant
Franz Marijnen	Director
John McNulty	Death - Strength
Alison Mills	Good-deeds
Esther Moses	God
Roma Olin	Kindred
Sharon Ott	Fellowship
Betsy Robinson	Cousin
Elizabeth Swados	Music
Elissa-Racquel Weitz	Goods

Images of a Work in Process



Often, one of the acting (working) conditions of the theatre is that the set mental images of the playwright, with some interpretation by the director, control the actor's mental images, and his mind controls the voice and body he presents; this is almost a hierarchy: acting by subjugation. An ultimate working condition of EVERYMAN, rather, would have the physical, vocal, intellectual images created by research and experiment working as one.

Where do the images begin? The decision in creation must be to think not only on the minimum of the idea, the first flashes of the physical and thematic, but to try to bring it to an extreme. I.E.: What is this image now; where can it finally try to go? As in the physical training, the acting experiments must reach for an extreme. The EVERYMAN, by its ambiguity of nature, allows every one of a universe of liberties.

And every acting possibility must be, therefore, sorted out; sometimes images are discarded, others become transformed: with Goods, original concepts included Goods as a great filthy Harpy; driving Everyman from his life and possessions. There was no immediate physical image, however; and more basic explorations were made before a voice and manner that evolved into a great, menacing tumor of a woman (like a Harpy) were suggested.

Indeed, the EVERYMAN is the identity crises embodied. For "Everyman" and the actor the first questions are probably: Who Am I? What am I doing?; for all one has is a list of events involving God, Death, Everyman, Gooddeeds, and various "hypocritical" acquaintances. Here, one can become engrossed in the extreme double-images possible to the re-interpretation:

1. All actors trained to play EVERYMAN (a first over-all possibility for the play was several Everymen); all actors might be trained to all roles, and no role set.
2. EVERYMAN as a one man show: the same actor playing God, becoming Death, becoming Everyman. This would be an extreme of the Genesis experimentation that has occurred.

3. A present question: If there is one Everyman, what part of me is him; what part of him is in me? Where do I play Everyman?

The above might be called an impulse for the group work necessary for this EVERYMAN. Here again, are amazing dualities, or hypocrisies. The actors crouched outside and inside the immediate world of the Everyman must respond to him: whether they mock or sympathize; they need to give a constant attention to the activity on stage, and add to it when needed.

And, Everyman, too is part of the dual world; from in and out of outer circle come his tormentors and lovers, the nightmare gods and mad crying spirits that awake him to die. Like the dog packs of the Argentinian tyrants, which played with children by day, all set out by their personal nighttimes to lap up the blood in the courtyards, reminder of the slaughtered and tortured; they sing an Indian lullaby as Everyman does physical penance. Who are these creatures to him, this Everyman who is not the Bunyanian Christian nor quite the "Kilroy" of a Camino Real? Is God man or woman, and the same of Death; or are the two reflections of what is the masculine and feminine forms of the other? There is a terrible violence even in the images, and should that be expressed physically or subliminally or with just the voice? In the end, the image of EVERYMAN and the acting problem are images of endless streams of questions whose answers only lead to more probing.

Elissa-Raquel Weitz