

THE CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI METHOD

By David J. LeMaster

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CHARACTERS

DRUSILLA:	Female, head disciplinarian, abrupt and tough
CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVMEYERHOLDSKI:	Either gender, The great acting teacher
JOHN:	Male, young acting student
JOANN:	Female, young acting student
ACTING CLASS:	Male and females, as many acting students as the company has available

PRODUCTION NOTES

This play may be performed on a bare stage. You may use as many extra actors as required to be a part of the acting class. When Drusilla talks to the “auditors,” she speaks directly to the audience. The person she chases from the audience may be a plant. All costumes should be either street clothes or “acting class attire.” Chekonstinestanislavmeyerholdski should wear a suit.

The Chekonstinestanislavmeyerholdski Method was originally produced as *The Acting Class* at Kingwood College under the direction of Kat Adams, in April 2005.

Drusilla	Mercedes de Jesus
Chekonstinestanislavmeyerholdski	Sam Martinez
Joann	Lauren Shoefstall
John	John Hanna
Actors	Ty David Lerman, Olin Meadows, Lindsay Luker, Alicia Rompage, Kyle Mahler
Producer	Eric C. Skiles, Artistic Director
Technical Director	Darin P. Garrett
Stage Manager	Annette McLinn

For Heather and our experiences in acting class

**THE CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI
METHOD**

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AT RISE: Lights up on an acting class. The actors form a circle and are doing warm-ups. The instructor is either male or female. There is no limit on the number of actors involved. The lines may be divided among many different characters.

DRUSILLA: Good afternoon, everyone, my name is Drusilla, and I'm the docent in charge of keeping order. Welcome to the advanced audit class for the great acting teacher, Anton Chekonstinestanislavemeyerholdski. The second. Have you all paid your auditing fee at the door? ***(interaction with audience--SHE asks for money from at least one)*** All right, then, his (her) excellence will be here in a few moments, but first let's go over a few rules for the class. First, there will be absolutely no talking allowed, and I-- ***(changes personality into rage; singles out someone in audience)*** I know that isn't gum you're chewing! ***(goes to the audience member)*** Did you see the sign outside that said no gum? Huh? Can you read? Swallow it. Come on. Swallow. Swallow. ***(satisfied)*** Anybody else got gum? And if anyone in here was stupid enough to bring in a drink... Is that a cell phone? I know you didn't bring in a cell phone! ***(takes cell phone)*** An additional fifteen dollar fee for rule breaking. Any other rule breakers in here? ***(glares at audience)*** All right then. Here's the rules. You talk, you're out. Your phone goes off, you're out. You disagree with the Maestro, you're out. You get the picture? ***(changes back to gracious, friendly attitude)*** Okay, then. We'd like to welcome you to this afternoon's advanced acting class in the Chekonstinestanislavemeyerholdski technique, better known to laypeople as "Manner Acting." Oh! And here comes the class. Now remember what I told you.

(Enter the class. It is a group of young actors and actresses. They get into a circle and warm-up. Enter CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI, arrogant, asinine, and flamboyant.)

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: There must be complete silence for my actors to work. Silence everyone. Silence. Silence. Good. Now. I want you to concentrate. Everyone? Concentrate. Repeat after me. ***(a meditation)*** Aaaaaaahhhhhhhh.

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ALL: Aaaaaaaaahhhhhhhh.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: Aaaaaaahhhhhhhhhh.

ALL: Aaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhh.

DRUSILLA: **(interrupting)** I know I don't see a camera phone over there. I know that's not what that is!

(SHE attacks. Someone in the audience who holds a camera phone gets up and runs. DRUSILLA chases her out of the theatre. They're both gone. Pause.)

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: **(unphased)** Mmmm
mmmmmmmmmm.

ALL: Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee.

ALL: Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: Oooooooooooooooooo.

ALL: Oooooooooooooooooo.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: Very good. Now concentrate, everyone. Breathe. Breathe. Breathe through your eyeballs. That's it. Breathe. Breathe.

(JOHN, a young man in the audience, raises his hand. The teacher does not notice, HE goes on with the breathing technique.)

JOHN: Excuse me.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: Keep breathing!

JOHN: Excuse me? I have a question.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: Drusilla, who let that mongrel in this room? ***(turns to find DRUSILLA, but SHE's gone)***

Oh, confound it, must I deal with the vermin myself?

JOHN: I've just got a quick question—

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: There is no time for a quick question, you inquisitive poltroon. We're trying to concentrate here. Are you concentrating?

JOHN: Well, I—

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: No, you're talking. You can't concentrate and talk at the same time. ***(to an actress)*** Joann. Stand up.

JOANN: Yes, Ms. (Mr.) Chekonstinestanislavemeyerholdski.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: ***(pronounces it slightly different)*** That's Chekonstinestanislavemeyerholdski, you abysmal girl. For heaven's sake, get my name right.

JOANN: Yes, Chekonstinestanislavemeyerholdski. I mean Chekonstinestanislavemeyerholdski. I mean—

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CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: Forget it. Would you be so kind as to demonstrate "The Manner" for this arrogant young—

JOHN: My name's John. I just want to know—

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: JoAnn. Demonstrate for Mr. John how to concentrate. **(JOANN concentrates)** Good. Breathe. Breathe. Breathe through your eyeballs!

JOHN: That!

(JOANN jumps.)

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: **(to JOHN)** Would you be quiet?

JOHN: But how do you do *that*?

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: Do what?

JOHN: Breathe through your eyebrows.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: Eyeballs.

JOHN: Eyeballs.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: First you have to find the correct portion of your anatomy.

JOHN: Yeah, but—

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: You don't think about it, you pitiful child. You just do it.

JOHN: You're insane. You can't breathe through your eyeballs.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: **(to JOANN)** Show him. **(JOANN concentrates hard)** That's it! That's it, my little dove!

JOHN: What? She's just taking deep breaths through her nose, that's all.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: Be quiet.

JOHN: You show me how that's breathing through her eyeballs.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: Be quiet.

JOHN: Do her eyeballs open and close? No. Do they inhale? No. Do they exhale? No.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: Be quiet, be quiet, be quiet!

JOANN: I don't think I can concentrate anymore.

CHEKONSTINESTANISLAVEMEYERHOLDSKI: Rest, my darling. Rest. **(to JOHN)** You have disrupted my class.

JOHN: All I want to know—

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