

Philip Burton
Review and Recap notes for STANJ master class
October 18, 2011
Montclair State University

	Exercises	Lesson connection
<i>Young At Heart</i>	16 Steps intro	Ar, Er, Eu-rhythm Introduction of 16-step sequence to be used for the final exercise at end of class. Important that you lead participants from mistakes to accuracy (Errhythm), but you gradually introduce them to the larger world of Eurhythm through the different ways of doing the same step to many styles and tempi. Text = the steps; Life = the rhythms employed to bring the steps to dramatic life. The music defines this.
Disordination	Nose / Ear How many letters? Stop for green light.	Ar, Er, Eu-rhythm AR: Mistakes (a human condition necessary for learning and struggle – not a horrible place) ER: arithmetic accuracy EU: beauty, humanity, tonicity
<i>Button Off My Shirt</i> Ronnie Milsap	AR ER EU	Ar: mistakes, inaccuracy. Important to note that this is a natural, normal state when learning anything new. Note how hard the high-fives are and how much excess muscle tension is used when learning this sequence. Encourage students to find TONICITY defined as “just enough” muscle tension to enact the sequence. In fact, more life, ease and interpretation of the music will be enabled from relaxing into the exercise. Easy, cool, confident, not uptight, stiff and self-conscious. (It’s always okay to make mistakes, and your worst all-thumbs-and-left-feet student will still be successful provided the life and rhythm are there. Ultimately, the steps don’t matter, the life does.
Pattern vs. Rhythm	How Many Letters? Stop at a GREEN light?	The pitfall of familiar lines comes through the challenge of creating first time listening. This is done by using repetition to lull the student into listening with less attention so that you set them up to make mistakes. The white of an egg is the white not the yoke. You Go at a Green light, etc. What is the smallest unit of dramatic increment? A Beat, a Bit, a moment? These small increments can be further dissected. Thinking of them as molecules, they can be broken down into their atoms: Anacrusis, crusic and metacrusic. Crusic: The Strike – It, or what we think is It. In fact, it cannot happen without the pre-It or the AnaCrusic: the preparation, the run before the vault, the breath before the first note, the wind-up before the pitch, the breath before the line, and so on. Watch the platform diver. Watch the gymnasts vaulting. MetaCrusic is the aftershock, the resonance following the strike, the bounce after the strike, etc. The three parts can define certain character keys when compared to others; e.g., the heavy weights are Crusic (Wicket Witch of the West); the light characters are Anacrusic (Good Witch of the North), the Metacrusic weighted characters are less defined according to their weight (Dorothy from Kansas). All characters have assertive, crusic moments and lighter anacrusic moments with a full range of rhythmic assertion, so it is helpful to ask each character, “Where in this play do you have you strongest moment? Where is your lightest moment? When this is known, tabs have

		<p>been set marginally within which the character rhythms ebb and flow. AnaCrusic moments can be hidden or covert (Slap Hands game), but they always need to be there. Acting should not look like Family Guy where you will find little reaction in characters but consistent pick up of cue in the dialogue. Notice how unresponsive (unanimated) the animated characters are when listening.</p>
Tempo / Rhythm	Clapping accelerando	<p>Slow tempo = more life Fast tempo = lighter life</p> <p>Saying “pick it up” or “slow down: you’re running away with this scene” are both unskilled, usually unhelpful, notes for the young actor. The key to tempo adjustments is found in the rhythms, and adjusting the rhythms is a matter of either living more fully and indulgently (thus achieving a slower tempo) or living more lightly (thus allowing for a quicker pace). Choices are not challenged, only the speeds at which the choices are lived out. The mature actors should understand the tempo notes given by the director so that confusion does not happen.</p>
Voice/Speech Tempo	<p>What a To Do to die today At a minute or two to 2:00 A thing distinctly hard to say but harder still to do. The beat, etc.</p> <p>Good Blood, Bad Blood, Red Leather, Yellow Leather</p> <p>(Tongue twisters can be managed by lighter rhythm)</p>	<p>Illustrates how speeds need not betray truthful behavior and can enhance the variety and freedom of the rhythm in a scene. This is a basic demonstration of Agogic Law; e.g., (1) the faster you go, the lighter you must get; (2) the slower you go, the heavier (more indulgent, more full behavior, moments lived out more fully) you can get; (3) Tempo suggests not only speed but a way of living. If the scene needs to go faster, I’ll need to lighten generally to allow the faster rhythm. Fast Food vs. a real dining experience at a 4-star restaurant; (4) Eurhythmia means tonicity – just enough effort. “She makes it look effortless.” The stressful performance kills life and spontaneity. However, neurosis over pedestrian tension as an evil to performance is waste of time. Rehearsal cures most tension in the balanced performance.</p> <p>Our finest British actors today demonstrate a balanced knowledge of interior and exterior work brought together with a remarkable understanding of how to approach text according to tempo. American actors tend to pace Shakespeare almost with a metronome; whereas, the Brits orchestrate tempi: light and quick here; elongated and heavy there. Watch the film “Much Ado about Nothing” (Kenneth Branagh) so juxtapose American and British English speakers – an excellent comparison study in rhythm and text.</p>
Wink & Smile	16 Steps review	By this time, the sequence should be sinking in, and you will see some students really getting into the jazzy style of this music. This is what we want. Continue to encourage those who are not yet getting it.
Circle of Concentration	Not Q, X or Y	Superb exercise, but we did not have time to do it. Another time, I hope.
Andreas Vollenweider	Crusis / Ana / Meta	<p>Circle of Rhythm - Use music that is slightly slower than that of normal walking in order to force the students to surrender to the given beat. Some may not be able to do this – some have no sense of beat. This can be learned however, so even take the straggler by the arm and walk him around the circle. Put the group into couples arm-in-arm to force adherence to the beat. Stay with this part of the exercise long enough to being most along.</p> <p>Find the One (because it “feels” that way) and then find the 4, the anacrusis to the downbeat. Find the logical place to change direction – it is in the light anacrusis, so change directions on the 4 and step down in the new direction on the 1. This is the beginning of understanding basic rhythm,</p>

		and this concept graduates into the open rhythms of non-metered phrases in drama. Instruct group to move together (go back; come forward on your commands), but they must figure out that the best place to do this is in unifying the anacrusis. Suddenly, even the earliest command to reverse direction is taken in, understood and then executed together at the next anacrusis.
Scoring the script	Script: Two Actors	Finding the movable anacrusis for every type of character. The actual anacrusis in the actor happens from true listening and response immediately following the stimuli. Remember Alvina Krause (Northwestern University) standing near the actors and hitting them at the moment they should be “getting it.” “Getting it” is key to breathing so that pick up of cue can happen immediately following the last word in the line of the speaking actor. Experiment with the script by moving (and justifying) the flags to new positions within (or even following the line).
Pick Up of Cue	<p>The Law: All Cues Must Be Picked Up except when they’re not.</p> <p>All laws of science are meant to be questioned and evolved. My work is not religion.</p>	<p>There are three technical elements that will artificially establish helpful stage rhythm in cases where the dramatic equilibrium is suffering: Voice/Speech/Diction, Projection, Pick Up of Cue. Uninspired moments usually invite one of two things: Cliché or Technique. The three fixes above will guide a scene back into contact and inspiration.</p> <p>There are those who will disagree with this enthusiastically; however, over 30 years of directing, I’ve never had a scene that was not fixed more quickly and easily than after I have applied the three technical adjustments. They are safe adjustments because they in no way compromise actors’ choices, but they provide immediately-improved flow of action that can lead the actors back into the eurhythmic “inspiration” that Stanislavski wrote about. The interior teachers will tell you you’re bad if you loose contact with your character, but this is inevitable, unavoidable. The external skill teachers will insist on correct physical action to the detriment of emotional contact. The pragmatist will tap both realms to establish dramatic truth and will understand that it is less <i>truthful behavior under imaginary circumstances</i> as it is <i>effective behavior under theatrical circumstances.</i> High School is a great place for the young actor to get his technical instrument perfected (body, voice, diction, stage rhythmic knowledge). Save the emotional mining for the crazy college professors. Of course, be practical, be balanced, and be honest.</p> <p>Cues are addressed in three choices: (1) Pick up: No dead air between the last word of the speaker and the first word of the responder. (2) Drop or Delayed Cue: Air between the two as described above. This device is used for dramatic purposes, but it does not indicate that the action pauses. Silences can be powerful, so in fact, there should really be no such thing as a dropped cue. (3) Imbrication (Telescoping): Speaker forging into their text on top of the other speaker to heighten urgency or believability. (Look at that scene from Sound Of Music where Maria and Cpt. Von Trapp have the fight about play clothes and climbing trees – the scene after the kids fall in the river.</p>
Park Avenue	16 Steps review	
Many Lives		This is the 16 steps done with a variety of tempi and styles: Country Western, Jazz, Symphonic, Classical, etc. The step now becomes less important in the face of responsive expression. Insist that the students demonstrate the first anacrusis before the first step. If not, stop them and make them go back.

		Remember the “shake out” before a monologue? This is a cliché and virtually unhelpful. Instead, have the actor walk the character around, breathing in the rhythm of the first moment, then have the student walk into the scene and deliver the first text or action. The “shake out” puts the actor in a relaxed, unready state. You cannot jump into the air off a straight leg. No. You must first bend the knees to create the anacrusis for the jump, then jump. Do not begin scenes or monologues from a shaken out, relaxed place. Get to the ready (anacrusic) place and discover how much more easily a correctly prepared first moment gives rise to the second, the third and so on. The better the student understands this, the shorter will be the preparation time. Eventually, all the actor will need is a couple of breaths in the correct rhythm, and boom, the first moment appears as if by magic. By the way: the first moment of scene is not necessarily the first word of text . . . but you already knew that . . . I hope.
<i>Gun Show</i>	John Debney	
<i>Billboard</i>	Vern Landdon	
<i>Golden Pond</i>	Dave Grusin	
<i>Blue Grass</i>	?	
<i>Count Basie</i>		
<i>Trouble with Love</i>	Kelly Clarkson	
<i>Fogged In</i>	Marc Shaiman	
<i>Patton March</i>	Jerry Goldsmith	
<i>Pink Cadillac</i>	Natalie Cole	
<i>Orange Blossom</i>	Urban Cowboy band	