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THE MICHAEL CHEKHOV TECHNIQUE:
IN THE CLASSROOM AND ON STAGE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of MFA Theatre Pedagogy at
Virginia Commonwealth University

by

JOSH CHENARD

BA Theatre Performance, University of Southern Maine, 2003

MFA Theatre Pedagogy, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2010

Director: Barry Bell
Assistant Professor of Theatre,
Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
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Abstract

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Commonwealth University

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Major Director: Barry Bell
Assistant Professor, Theatre

Referred to by Constantin Stanislavski as "My most brilliant pupil," Michael Chekhov's approach to acting is founded in an understanding of the artist as a whole being whose thoughts, feelings, desires, voice, and physical body are intimately interwoven. The Michael Chekhov technique trains these aspects jointly while encouraging the actor to fully explore and utilize his or her unlimited, rich, and fertile imagination. I have seen the powerful benefits of this technique as an actor (which I have been utilizing for 13 years) and as a teacher and director (for almost 10

years). In my thesis, I will firstly describe the technique, its principles, tools, and philosophies. I will then delve into the application of the technique in the classroom (utilizing information gathered during my *Introduction to the Techniques of Michael Chekhov* course taught at Virginia Commonwealth University, Spring 2009, Fall 2009, and Spring 2010), and on the stage (utilizing information gathered during the two VCU Shafer Alliance Laboratory Theatre productions I directed of *And Sometimes We Just Listen to Each Other Breathe* in Spring 2009, and *La Bête* in Fall of 2009).