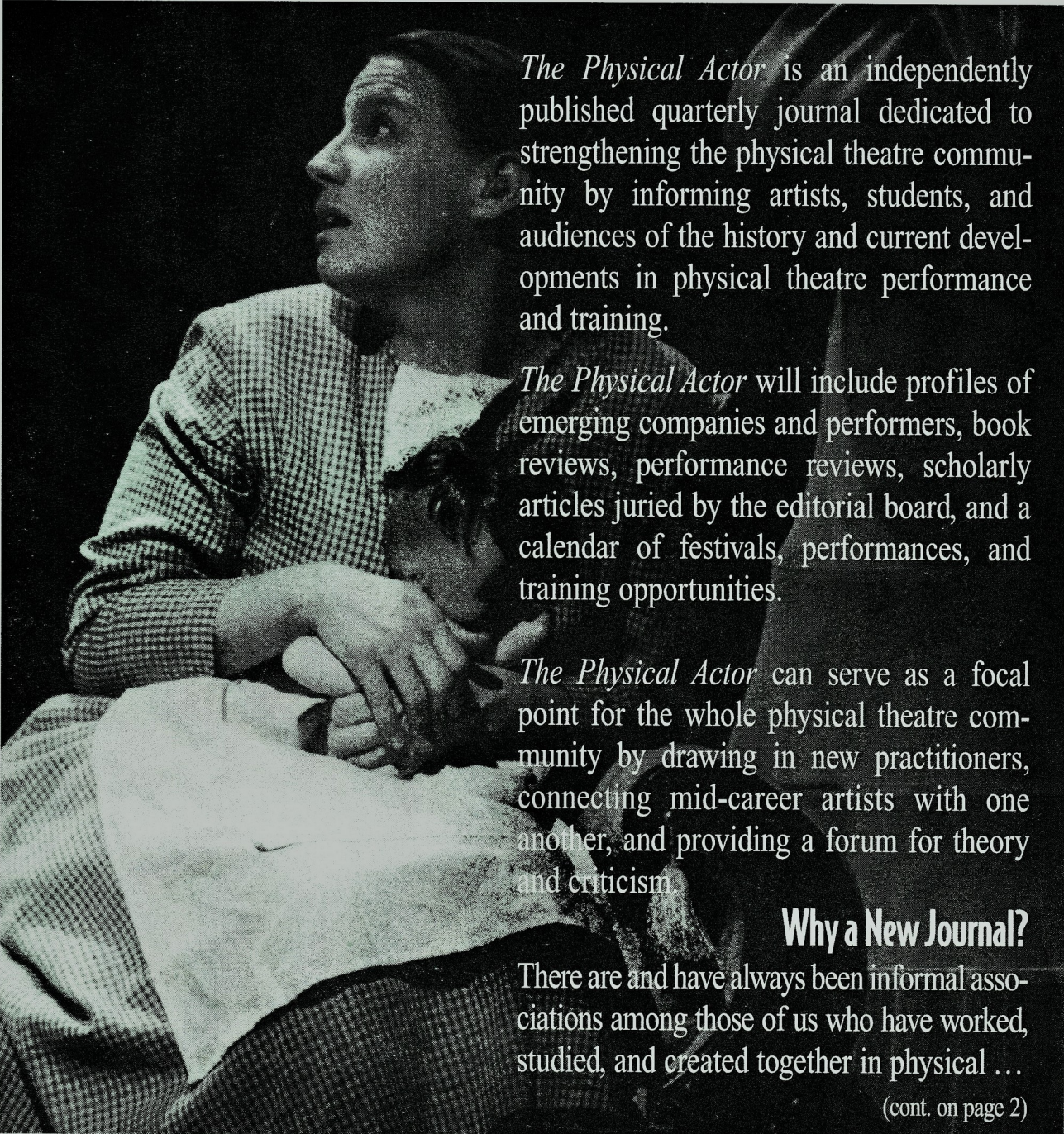


The *Physical* ACTOR

A journal inspired by the Poetry of the Body



The Physical Actor is an independently published quarterly journal dedicated to strengthening the physical theatre community by informing artists, students, and audiences of the history and current developments in physical theatre performance and training.

The Physical Actor will include profiles of emerging companies and performers, book reviews, performance reviews, scholarly articles juried by the editorial board, and a calendar of festivals, performances, and training opportunities.

The Physical Actor can serve as a focal point for the whole physical theatre community by drawing in new practitioners, connecting mid-career artists with one another, and providing a forum for theory and criticism.

Why a New Journal?

There are and have always been informal associations among those of us who have worked, studied, and created together in physical ...

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SLAVA POLUNIN

phone interview and silent recollection

by Edward Rozinsky

I would like to introduce you to a first rate clown, a mime, an actor, and my one time student Viacheslav Polunin. (Viacheslav is his full first name but to his friends and fans he is known as Slava).

It is accustomed for the disciples to honor their teachers even though throughout history of mankind ever since the creation there have been more than enough examples of neglect of this tradition. It is uncommon, however, for the mentor to praise his student even when a student is very successful. There is more than one reason for this. One of them being that a teacher has many students and a student has but a few true teachers. The other reason is the reluctance to acknowledge the student's accomplishment. I am not one of these teachers and hence I am pleased to write about one of my prosperous pupils. And here are my reasons: first and foremost — I am very proud of him; second — in our trade those who are on stage are much more visible than those who are backstage; third — I am a humble person in general; fourth — it takes several generations of successful students for a teacher to become known. And then there is this beloved perception, "Those who can — do, those who can't — teach". Well, what would "those who do" do without those who teach? A young person acquires first steps, absorbs several good ideas, acclaims some sense of style, and pretty soon all this becomes a part of the artist's self; and from that point on, it feels like all this is inherent. I know this from my own experience. Having been teaching theatre arts for the past 35 years, my learned knowledge and my personal experience have blended so much that it is sometimes difficult to separate them. Certain concepts that I learned years ago seem now like my own discovery and a number of my own inventions sound currently like somebody's textbook proclamations.

With this in mind and on behalf of *The Physical Actor* journal, on Wednesday, January 19, I found Slava in Moscow, in a hotel, and interviewed him over the phone. Naturally, our conversation was in Russian.

"Slava, *privet!* (hello! In Russian). How are you? How is the family?"

"Everything is fine."

"I was commissioned to write an article about you for a new magazine, *The Physical Actor* and I would like to ask you several questions. Can we do it now?"

"I have only an hour because we are invited to a gathering in VTO (National Theatre Society, a prestigious artists' club in Moscow).

The interview was rather short, but I had so many conversations with Slava in the past, that I decided to fill up the gaps with some of my memories and some facts. First, how it all started.

I met Slava in Leningrad (St. Petersburg) in 1971, the year I took over the artistic directorship of the Mime Studio at the Lensovet Palace of Culture (one of the centers of communal arts and culture cultivation in the former Soviet Union). There was a small group of mime enthusiasts that survived after the previous leader, R. Slavsky, left the studio. Slava Polunin was one of them. At that time I was a stage directing student at the Leningrad Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinematography and everything I acquired in school I was anxious to bring to my pupils in Studio. For me the mime studio became a laboratory where I could combine together the learned knowledge of Stanislavky's Method and my own experience in acrobatics, dance, mime, and music. The results of our work were more important for

the administration of the Palace of Culture than the learning process, so I had an advantage of experimenting without being closely censored. Besides, nobody knew much about mime at that time anyway. The style we practiced back then was influenced by omnipresent Marcel Marceau during his tours to Russia. It is later that we began to search for our own roots and found plenty of them in the Russian theatre and Russian cultural traditions.

“Okay, let’s start. What school of acting do you attribute yourself?”

“It is very difficult to say. Most likely it is a combination of different schools. The foundation, of course is the Russian physiological school with a strong influence of Grotowvski and Artaud with their extreme gradation of feelings and complete submersion. They often ask me, ‘Did you take anything from Stanislavski?’ I think Stanislavski’s school influenced me latently, almost against my will, by sheer fact that I lived in Russia and breathe its air. But Bertolt Brecht, with his alienation, is more appealing for me than Stanislavski. Nevertheless, Michael Chekov is still very close to me by soul with his poetic associations of life.

Slava Polunin was a leading actor in my studio and an inspiration for many other kids. There were a couple of routines that Slava was already performing solo and with a partner that needed to be finished and polished. Among those was a mime duet, *In the Art Museum*, and two solo pieces, *A Stubborn Donkey* and *Tango*. We added soon new plays *Corrida*, *Public Telephone*, *Piano Concerto for Two*, *In the Subway*, *Gossipers*, *New Pygmalion* — and a whole new production began shaping up. The enthusiasm of the group was outstanding. The reaction of the audiences had galvanized future exploration of the genre as the technical capacity grew rapidly from one class to another. The new members of the group looked up to Slava, whose advanced skill inspired them to work hard to achieve the same results and, in some cases, to copy his every movement and his every facial expression. There were other gifted students like Sasha Skvortzov, Nikolai Terentiev, and Sasha Makeev. It was very rewarding for me to work with a group of dedicated and talented young people. I ended up learning a lot from such students. Interesting enough, many of my pupils from mime studio became professional actors and some internationally recognized.

“Slava, how does your personal clown style relate to Russian Clown, to Jacque Lecoq, to Commedia dell’Arte?”

“The ideas of a satire on social injustice I got from the Russian traditions of circus clowning. Remember Durov with his Green Pig? (Slava refers here to the great Russian clown of the end of 19th century, Anatoli Durov. Once in Odessa, during his tour, he had an encounter with a governor of the town whose name was Mr. Green, a rude and arrogant man. That same evening the clown brought a pig painted green in the circus arena. The circus manager asked Durov, ‘What kind of animal is this?’ The clown answered, ‘It’s a pig!’ The manager said, ‘Never saw a green pig before,’ then the clown replied, ‘In this town there are some!’). The idea of opposition to the establishment, as you know, goes back to Skomorokhi and Litzedei (traveling performers in Ancient Russia). These traditions as you know, I reflected in my routine *Nelzia!* (In English *Can’t!* — a satirical play where one clown is stopped by the authority of another clown every time he tries to touch something.) The expressiveness I possessed from commedia dell’arte.

“Why commedia? Did you have a chance to see anything

in this style while you were young?"

"No, but I learned it first from the books, and later, when I was already an established artist, I had an opportunity to see three different productions of Goldoni's *The Servant of Two Masters*". One of them was by Teatro Piccolo and that is when I've got a better idea of the Commedia. Also, I've got an idea from Jean-Louis Barrault's Pierrot in *Children of Paradise*. Much later I met Jacques Lecoq in Paris. We did not know each other and I wasn't aware of what he was doing. But after spending some time together, we perfectly understood each other. We both agreed that what we were doing was very similar even though we were working in different countries.

I would like to add to this that back in Russia we were securely divided by the Iron Curtain. But we did our best to move forward with our beloved silent art, many a time deprived of basic information on western experiments and achievements. After we finished putting together a production *21 novels about Comical and Serious* the popularity of the Mime Studio became enormous. The show consisted of twenty one short mimodramas connected to one another by brief "links", with a prologue and epilogue. Slava played in many of the novellas, but there were numbers played by other actors so as to give him some rest. The show had some kind of completeness that was acknowledged by Slava Polunin recently as his lucky chance to play in a whole production as opposed to small mime plays in a variety show. It was very gratifying for all of us at the Mime Studio, as at the same time elsewhere in the country there emerged semiprofessional and amateur physical theatres with their own productions incorporating mime and silent acting. One of them was Lithuanian Mime Theatre with their show *Esse Homo*.

"You mentioned in different interviews that you consider Charlie Chaplin to be your teacher. What did you learn from him?"

"I regard Charlie Chaplin as my teacher because since I was a young boy my fascination with little Charlie was founded on his comedy being very human and warm, which was very responsive with my nature. Along with Chaplin I absorbed the traditions of English Music Hall and turned it into tragicomic effect. Then after Charlie Chaplin I was enchanted by Leonid Engibarov, who showed me how one can be poetic and lyrical even in the circus, where the tradition of buffoonery and exaggeration was strong.

"My second important influence and inspiration was Marcel Marceau. His quivering attitude towards pantomime, his precision and his uncommon ability to express life in gesture, a pose found a lot of response in my heart. Then around the beginning of the 80's, I turned sharply towards *avant-garde*."

All this enthusiasm of young Polunin passed in front of my eyes. He became very interested in finding philosophical foundation for his art. He got engulfed in all sorts of reading, from Seneca to ancient Eastern philosophers. Like all of us, he was eager to see the productions of other physical theatre groups in the Soviet Union and to discuss the differences between our attempts and theirs. It is due to our open (seldom very private) discussions that we had a chance to develop our styles and methods in both teachings and performances. In music we were all fascinated with the Beatles and Pink Floyd, and we could only dream about one day visiting "other civilizations" (beyond the Iron Curtain) in order to see with our own eyes how they



do what we are trying to do. And such a day had miraculously come to our Mime Studio. It happened during one of the numerous visits that the administration of the Palace of Culture cultivated to show off to foreign visitors the talent and enthusiasm of young Soviets. This time it was a delegation of a political theatre group from Le Havre, France. They came to my studio led by the Chief Administrator himself, who was trying to show French guests in one evening all the performing groups working under the same roof. We demonstrated to our guests a part of the class and several mime plays. After that they refused to go anywhere else. They spent about an hour with us, demanding to show more and more of our program.

We became friends with our French visitors and invited them to meet with us outside the official place, something strictly prohibited by the authorities and vigorously enforced by the KGB. Some of us spoke a bit of English, but Slava Polunin was ahead of us all: he spoke... a bit of French! We talked about arts, about politics, about life in general. Our guests were members of some kind of socialist party, and one of them said that after they toured Soviet Union they understood that if they are to build communism in France it has to be a different kind of communism, not the same as in Russia. Anyway, soon after they left for home we received an official invitation to come and perform in Le Havre, France. Mind you, to France? The land of Marcel Marceau!

I had to modify our show *21 Novels...* for the tour and had to include in it some propaganda pieces. One of them was a specially created play, *The Last Barricade*, depicting an episode from the French Revolution. The entire ensemble was involved in this pantomime. The invitation to visit was for a group of twenty. Both the administrative director and the artistic director of the Palace of Culture were planning to travel so that left eighteen places for my group. We began a vigorous preparation for the tour under the watchful eye of a now very concerned administration. Our work was made even more complicated because the

omnipresent KGB began sifting through our ranks. First one of my girls was rejected the exit visa because they found out that her father used to work for an airplane producing plant, then a boy was declined because he was raised by his aunt and was an orphan. So every time they cut on my ensemble, I had to redesign the entire show for a smaller group of actors. The rejections continued until only eight actors were left including myself. I did not originally plan to be in a show because I had other duties such as operate the lights and sound effects, but I learned to do all of it.

Now I know that the whole thing was carefully orchestrated by the KGB, with cooperation from the administration of the Palace of Culture, in attempt to save face and to serve “security measures.” But back then I did not believe my ears when two weeks before the tour they announced that “unfortunately” Mr. Rozinsky (that’s me, the artistic director of the group!) will not be able to travel with the ensemble. Of course, they were afraid that I’ll defect in France (Barishnikov and others made them paranoid). But the official version was that there is a law of the state (they made it up!) that prohibits a person who is only married one year to go to a capitalist country. So I did not go to France that time. I went there much later, as a citizen of the USA.

Two things this event had brought to life that I will never forget. One was about myself. Even though this rejection critically insulted me, I agreed to stay with the group in order to, yet another time, redo the show so they can play it in France. I did this because the art was more important for me than my personal feelings. The other was about my pupils: at the meeting where my rejection was announced the administrator asked the kids whether they would be able to perform the show without me, their teacher and their director. All of those 17 to 19-year-old boys and girls, the product of communist ideology, said “yes”, so much, was the desire to travel abroad and so little was the respect for someone who taught them everything even to be considered for a tour like this.

It was a great experience nevertheless for the group to perform abroad and to see that their art is equally understood and appreciated by people of another country. Slava Polunin was praised by the audiences and the press in Le Havre, and his international career began from there. Along with his partner, Sasha Skvortzov, he was later invited to perform in Finland and several East European countries as a part of different variety shows. In 1979, Slava and Sasha became winners of the National Competition of Variety Show Actors. At that same year I applied to immigrate to the United States, leaving my job in the Leningrad Institute of Music and Cinematography and at the Palace of Culture long beforehand so as not to harm any people associated with me, because I became a “traitor” in the eyes of authorities. Not knowing about my decision, Slava Polunin and some other pupils of mine came to me asking to become the Artistic Director of a new state Mime Theatre, the permission of which was granted to Slava as a laureate of the competition. It was nice of them all but a bit too late. Too late for apology, and too late for me to change my mind to leave that country for good.

“Slava, you have your own style, appreciated by many in the industry. You have a lot to share. Why don’t you have a school to teach young people physical theatre and clowning?”

“I do not have a stationary school, it’s true. But I always taught students even when I had a theatre in Leningrad, “Litzedei.” My actors around me were learning from me, I always was interested to take young apprentices and teach them while coaching for the show. Then I began traveling a lot and for a

while there was no time for anything. But later when my traveling became more or less organized I always liked to have 3-5 young apprentices around me. I have them learn the roles and give them opportunity to participate in smaller parts in my shows. I teach them and instruct them constantly. For instance in Moscow recently I auditioned about 700 people and took three apprentices in my theatre. They will be learning the craft and the roles so that I can try them in my other plays, in the US and other parts of the world. So my school exists but it is a different kind of school, a mobile school.”

“Any plans regarding a school in the future?”

“Yes, I dream about a stationary school where I can teach methodically for a period of time. I am thinking of such a school in Russia. That school would have to incorporate ancient traditions of Russian street performers like Skomorokhi and Litzedei and will be guided by my idea of a physical theatre and clowning. I even have an idea of a reality TV production about a group of students that are admitted to the School of Physical Actor. They will be led through all the stages of art comprehension, with all its ups and downs. And this show will be not just about talent and the great moments and incredible commercial achievements (as the American Idol for instance), but more about the downfalls and sufferings of those who chose art as a profession.”

“Where do you plan to open your school?”

“So far Russia is not ready for such a school, but I continue pushing for it.”

“Would you teach such school alone?”

“Of course not. I’d need a lot of teachers who would bring their knowledge and vision into the teaching process.”

When I left Russia in 1979, Slava Polunin gathered the best of my former Mime Studio and began his own theatre that soon became known as *LITZEDEI (The Jesters)*. The group had its portion of success with Russian audiences but the true recognition and fame (incidentally, the name Slava in Russian also means fame) came to Slava Polunin overnight. Literally overnight! There was (and I believe still is) a very popular night TV show in Russia called *Sky-Blue Kindle*. There is an old Russian saying, “just come to a kindle” meaning, “if you see a kindle from the outside, come”. The *Sky-Blue Kindle* was a television set. This variety show, shown only on special occasions, glued the entire nation to their TV screens. The best actors, celebrities and most unusual people were invited as guests to a friendly atmosphere of people who sat around small tables and drunk (no, not vodka) tea and coffee. It was carefully created by the producers. Slava was invited to perform his routine *Asisyai* in one of these shows. In this number Slava is playing two characters: a man whose name is *Asisyai* and his girlfriend, who are speaking on the phone. There are two huge inflated telephones on each side of the stage and Slava walks from one to the other, transforming into another character on the way. Both characters speak gibberish with only several words identifiable, one of them *Asisyai*. Next day the young and the old in the entire country greet one another with a memorable *Asisyai*. The artist became a celebrity. Slava still has this routine in his *Snow Show*.

“Your son Ivan is in your *SnowShow*. Do you see him as your disciple and do you want him to continue your dynasty?”

“The *SnowShow* that is played now in New York is very successful. My son Ivan is in it. He began as an extra and is now already playing the Green Clown. I am the Yellow Clown, and we now play as partners. Many critics notice a distinctive style in Ivan’s acting. I am glad, because I taught him everything, as you can imagine, and I see him growing literally before my eyes. I want this *SnowShow* to last as long as possible and I am thinking of passing it to my son as a baton.”

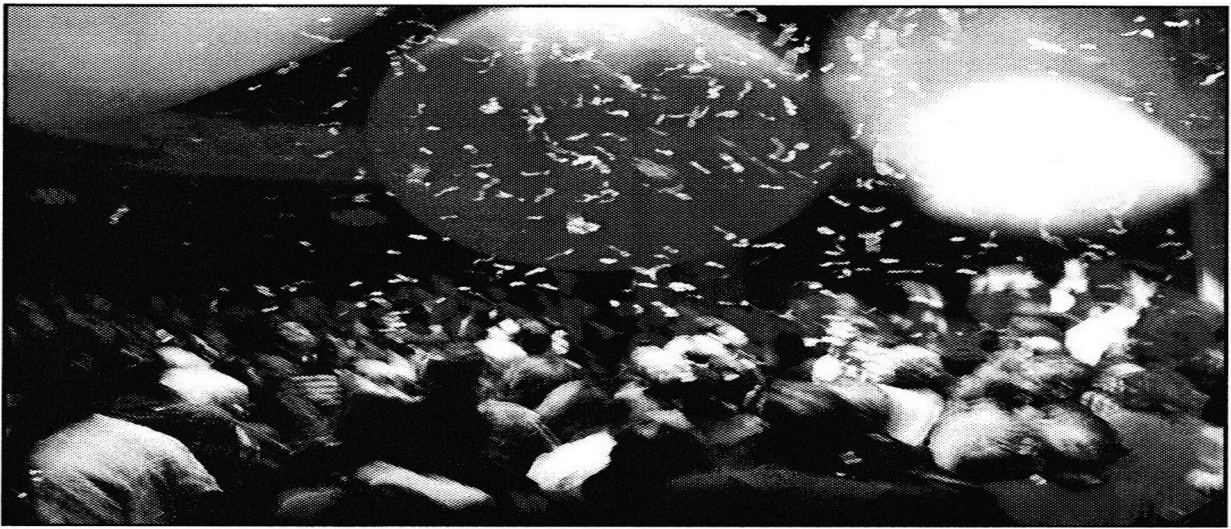
The reason I asked Slava this question is because it used to be a tradition in Russian and European circus to pass a routine or a character from father to son. Even in the Soviet era there was a famous family of magicians, “KIO”, and other traditional acts. It was true especially when a new, innovative style came to existence. Slava found this in his *Assisyai*. In connection with this routine I recall how much we at Mime Studio at the beginning used to be very particular about the purity of the genre of pantomime and didn’t even allow a thought of using words in our plays. It proved to be a valuable constraint for the first stage of mastering physical actor, but most of us later instinctively broke these boundaries and started to use a word, a song, and sound imitation to enrich the movement. Slava’s *Asisyai* was also a beginning of the real clown. The clown tradition in Russia dates back to jesters and vagrant comediennes who entertained the public in marketplaces and villages in the Middle Ages. This art then moved on to the circuses and finally became a trend that produced great clowns such as Anatoli and Vladimir Durov, Oleg Popov, Yuri Nikulin, Leonid Engibarov, and many others. There is a special bond in Russian sentiment with a circus clown. Russian people know their clowns just like they know their poets. I remember when I was a child I told my parents that when I grow up I’ll be a clown. They laughed, but little did they know that I would accomplish my childhood dream, well in some variable way.

“Slava, you travel a lot with your shows all around the world. What countries do you prefer touring?”

“I like to perform in countries and among people where the traditions of physical theatre are strong, where people like and value a clown. England is one of these countries. I adore England because it has strong traditions in clowning. The public is well prepared for what I have to show. They are connoisseurs of physical comedy. Another such country is Czechoslovakia. There are five to seven such places in the world. I also like to meet with professionals everywhere I go, to talk, to discuss our problems and future.”

“You mentioned once to me that you like to go to some Asian countries. What are these countries?”

“That is true, but for a different reason. Thailand and India are where I go to play and to stay with pleasure. The people there tend to remove themselves from the turmoil of everyday life and to submerge into contemplation, meditation. I like to be among these people even though (or maybe because) my life rhythm is completely different. I am always on the move, I am always on the road. So there I learn to relax, to slow down. More so,



since I am getting older these tempos are not achievable for me and I must slow down a bit.”

Before Slava’s Off-Broadway engagement he was in the US several times and we talked a lot about perception of a clown in America. The clown in the US is not a respectable figure. Everyone who fixes a red nose and puts on a funny clothes is a clown. Americans see clowns as characters who pass out leaflets in front of the stores, who make balloon animals in the shopping centers, and clowns are indispensable at kids birthday parties. Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus has a small army of clowns, but none of them sticks in one’s mind. Even *Cirque du Soleil* with its great theatricality, did not bring a clown to the level of a “star” of the show.

“Slava, you know personally many clowns all over the world. Who, in your opinion are the best clowns in our days?”

“I am a red clown. You know there are traditionally two characters: red clown and white clown. So being myself a red clown I am interested more in my fellow reds. I like Bill Irvin, I adore Jerome Deschamps that has his theatre in Paris, I also love Boleslav Polivka.”

Once Slava also mentioned Avner Eisenberg as one of his favorite clowns. To meet all these people, he had to come to America. But before Slava Polunin came to the US for the first time, the same circumstances that permitted him and his theatre to travel to the United States affected his life in his native Russia. Just when Slava acquired his “wings,” his popularity, and his fame, there came the “perestroika.” The economy in the country was rapidly changing and many artists found themselves “out of business.” People were simply trying to pull through, and the “clowns” became bothersome. Slava recollects these hard times when he and his friends had to leave together as a commune in order to survive, with sad humor. One summer they all moved to a small village in the south just to find enough food to get by. But “perestroika” ushered in something else, something that Russian actors embraced with joy. It was the opportunity to travel abroad, to finally see what other people were doing, and, yes, to finally show openly, without being forced to promote the Communist regime, other people what they can do.

About that time, in the Spring of 1988, I had a call from Mike Pedretti, who was the Director of Movement Theatre International in Pennsylvania. I had been teaching in the University of Miami back then and met Mike on one of the conventions of the American Theatre Association. Mr. Pedretti asked me if I knew a company called *Litzedei* from Leningrad

and said that he saw them performing in a festival in Bulgaria. I said that I not only just knew them, but that most of the group were my former students. He was contemplating to invite the group to participate in his festival, and of course I strongly recommended that he ask them to come. I even offered my help in telephone communications and in negotiating the engagement. Our reunion was very exciting. We had not seen each other for almost ten years. I was very pleased with the show in general and with Slava's performance in particular, admitting how much he grew artistically. We talked a lot about our art and about our different portions. There I encountered the conditions that Slava and my former pupils have been living the past years. I saw them bringing to their first tour to America smoked sausage, nuts, honey, and other nonperishable food in order to save the little money that they've been given to buy clothes for themselves and souvenirs for their loved ones. I remember, after the performance I went to a supermarket and bought all kind of foods and drinks to treat them to a feast of "Americana."

Several years later Slava brought his group to the US for the second time. This time it was a commercial tour. Trying to help Slava with publicity, I called my friend Oscar Dekhtiar who was a director on George Schlatter NBC's *Funny People*. Oscar was able to convince Mr. Schlatter to do an episode on Russian clowns and we all met in Lexington, Virginia. The episode was aired on NBC in June 1989 and America had a chance to see Slava Polunin for the first time. His appearances in different European countries and Montreal, Canada soon attracted attention of the producers and Slava was invited to perform with the *Cirque du Soleil*. He travel with the company for several years and finally left to continue working on his individual projects. But he did not leave completely: his routines and short plays are still performed by other clowns (mostly former actors of "Litzedei") in various shows of the *Cirque*. Besides, Slava remains a consultant for the company when it comes to hiring a new clown or introducing a new clown routine into the program.

"Slava, I am sure American students and professionals would like you to share your experience with them. Why, I have never seen you teaching a seminar or a workshop in the US?"

"I am constantly invited to teach a seminar or a workshop practically anywhere I go with my show, but unfortunately I do not have time for this. Besides, I prefer to teach workshops or seminars as a part of a big event. Like once in Leningrad when I invited hundreds of enthusiasts of physical theatre from all over the Soviet Union to go with me and my theatre troupe on a riverboat, where we traveled the Northern lakes and little islands while performing for each other, listening to lectures, participating in all kinds of shows and improvised costume parties and events. Those who went with us then will never forget this schooling."

Perhaps because Slava is so fascinated with British audiences, London became his next long stop in his triumphant journey around the world. After several successful years there in 1993, he was awarded a Time Out Award and in 1997 his *SnowShow* had a glorious run in Old Vic Theatre in London that brought him the prestigious Oliver Award for "Best Entertainment". Now Mr. Polunin make his home in the suburbs of Paris where he and his family occupy an 18th century mill converted into residences, a rehearsal studio, hotel for guests and a small theatre.

"Slava, I know it is a stereotyped question, but what are your plans for the future?"

“My nearest plans are to restore one of my old shows *CHURDAKI* that is very dear to me. (*Churdaki* is a whimsical combination of two Russian words: eccentric and garret. In this play several clowns live together in a garret). In fact, I’ll just use the general idea of the play and will produce a very new and different version of it. That is going to happen in April-May of this year, and I’ll do it in Russia.”

“June 1st is the opening of the Chekhov Theatre Festival, which I will be a part of. It is a traditional festival in Moscow with all kinds of theatre being presented. My role is to oversee street performances under the auspices of this festival. Also they asked me to produce the opening night show. So, I am inviting fifty saxophone players from France and another fifty saxophone players from Russia. This musical group will be the central piece of the opening show.”

“Another project I am already working on is the *Day of Russia* at the International EXPO in Japan, June 17, 2005, that I was commissioned to direct.”

“Still another project is *EUROPALIA* Festival in Brussels, October 2005. I am commissioned to organize *Days of New Russian Culture*. I am planning a giant spectacle *Swan Lake* in the open air.”

“My long term plans — to establish a Center of People’s Street Theatre in Moscow. I have a great experience from a festival that I was instrumental to organize in 2001 in Moscow. I did it with the support of the City Government and it was very successful.”

Indeed, with Moscow, Slava Polunin has a special relationship. The theatre where Slava opened his *SnowShow* on January 21 in Moscow is Vakhtangov Theatre named after a famous student of Stanislavski. Eugene Vakhtangov went his own way and among other great productions, he created *Princess Turandot*, a play that stayed in this theater’s repertoire for many, many years. I happened to see this production in 1969. It was one of a kind and amazing due to the fact that a good portion of the show was improvised. The traditions of commedia dell’arte continue with Slava on stage of this enormously famous theatre, sort of Russian “Comedy Francaise”. And the run of the *SnowShow* started with an invention, something that Slava is very good at. On his demand they build several dozen snowmen in front of the theatre. Since the winter this year is snowless in Moscow, Slava arranged for a snow machine to supply the snow. The Muscovites liked this idea so much that people spontaneously began to build more of these snowmen and Slava told me that evening how all the streets around and adjacent to the Vakhtangov Theatre are covered with every sort of snowmen. It’s in the news and as a result the show is sold out for the rest of the run.

Edward Rozinsky is a stage director, choreographer, and playwright. He is an adjunct professor at New World School of the Arts and FIU in Miami, and is currently working on a new book on stage movement.