



Questionnaire for theatre expert

Name	Konstantin Valentinov Kuchev
Occupation	Composer of theatre music, professor in music in the center for classical suggestopaedia "Vihrovenia"
Country of residence	Bulgaria Tel. 00359 885 60 6628 konstantin.kuchev@gmail.com

Please answer the following questions giving specific examples where possible:

Experience and Expertise

Outline your experience and expertise in the area of theatre

I have been composing music for theatre performance. I have participated as an author of original music to theatre performances in international theatre festivals in the Czech Republic, Poland, Sarajevo, Greece and Egypt – with the performances "Orpheus" and "Session" of the university theatre Alma Alter. I have worked with an organization for contemporary arts and culture "36 monkeys" on the performances "After tomorrow before yesterday" (2009) and "On time" (2012) as musician and actor. I am the author of the music to the performance "Le petit Prince" (2009) of association "Help for children in risk" and the kids' actor school "Peter's day", played in Sofia, Varna, Plovdiv and Pazardjik.

I am founder and anchorman of the impro-performance "Moon walk", presented in the clubs Studio 5, Yalta Art Room, Antract, during the festivals Beglika, Uzana field and Golden sparks –



Project number: 2014-1-BG01-KA201-001555





Varna and since the beginning of 2015 also as a part of the French language school “Alphonse de Lamartine”. Since 2014 I have been participating as a musician in the performances of the Playback theatre “Here and now”. Together with the actor Martin Petrushev I am leading the improvisation theatre project “SutvoRiMi” (Creative rhymes). Since mid 2015 I have been leading music lessons for the children in the Center for classical suggestopaedia “Vihrovenia. I have worked for homes for parentless children, as well as in protected homes for children with special needs.

What has been the impact of theatre on your own life?

For me theatre is a free, shared space, where you can express your inner world in the most thorough manner. I am a musician, but I have studied the most important essence of music – dynamics, rhythm, harmony and polyphony – from my theatre activities. The stage is a place for honesty and for a meeting of the inner I with the collective WE.

What impact do you think theatre can have on our lives and what you consider to be its instrumental value (i.e. the way theatre can be used in particular settings rather than theatre as art or entertainment)?

From my involvement in improvisation and applied theatre, I can state that it has a positive influence on every person who managed to overcome his/her personal barrier and became a participant in the collective game. The new theatre forms remove the barrier between actor and spectator, in order to allow them to reach a more aware level of global comprehension and expression of the self. When I say a “more aware” I mean inner liberation from the deeply set fears and unlocking of unsuspected skills. Theatre plays a central role in the suggestopaedic education system, which in its sense is learning by playing, by experiencing. The game methods give exceptional results with children and adults from all social groups. One of the most widely used concepts for music-dance education and upbringing in the whole world is “Schulwerk”. The key words characteristic for Schulwerk are rhythm, speech, music, movement, combined with imagination motivating games. The system relies on methods, the objective of which is to unlock and develop the musical and creative potential of young children, through theatrical activities and games.

Theatre /and arts in general of course/, combined with playing, presupposes a neutral meeting territory. It is inherent for men to need to and to be able to play. We play all the time, we enter and exit roles /parent, mentor, child, boss, failure, authority, someone in love/, we create plans and scenarios, consciously or subconsciously model our behavior.

Theatre however takes away the “have to” characteristics of the game and liberates us from the clutches of necessity. The man is empowered according to his/her desire and choice and without any life necessity to create and remove roles and to enter and to come out of them.



Theatre presents the opportunity to do something for someone and through something, with which you surprise yourself and for that you get an evaluation and applause. You gain the confidence that you can be different according to your own choice, you can make people laugh, you can be funny, scary, unpredictable, good, bad, smart or stupid. The stage gives us power to say things we would not say in everyday life and to find means for expressing yourself. It increases your own self-evaluation.

What strategies do you use and how do you work with hard to reach groups or people who are not usually engaged with theatre or who might be reluctant to take part?

My practice shows that game improvisation unlocks the creative potential in every child, even in those who are initially shy to participate in the common activities. Quite often it is these shy children who get really enthusiastic by the possibilities of this instantaneous creative work. Now they have the chance to create the text and the melody of the song, to imagine and then try in practice their stage idea or movement in space, to express their inner world. The richness and variedness of this inner world provokes other children from the group to become a part of the process, to enrich it and to add their own ideas. This collective process removes the differences between the participants and the group is unified. Embarrassment and fear disappear. The children feel free to express themselves. The basis of my method is the feeling for a working process: there are no wrong attempts. Everything is born instantaneously. We express what is inside of us. We discover unknown lands.

In the first place, my approach to the hard to reach groups is as with any other group – we discover together what the group needs and then we create/implement it.

Theatre and Working with visually impaired people

Describe any experience you have had of working with visually impaired people either with theatre or in some other capacity.

I have worked with v.i. children and with children with other disabilities within a project of foundation Seeder in protected homes in Kazanlak. I involved them in music and improvisation activities. During the next months I will work with another group in Kyustendil. During my 5 year old education in the national music academy "Pancho Vladigerov" I had worked on a daily basis with my visually impaired colleagues during their music education.

How was working with visually impaired people (if there was such work) different to the way you would normally work?



My practice has taught me that the main thing when working with v.i. youths is the individual approach towards each and every one of them. After they have been specially instructed how to perform a certain song or text, they memorize it very quickly and precisely. Many of them are really sensitive towards sound, because it is their main orientation tool in space. This makes them quite musical. The level of sensitiveness to the sound environment with every one of them, as with the visually unimpaired, creates an individual musical language. They see by hearing.

What impact has working with visually impaired young people (if there was such work) had on your own practice?

For me the work with v.i. youths is an extremely precious communication. They notice things, which we, the sighted people, do not see. In this sense, the work with music and theatre with v.i. people enriches my own perspective about the direction and purpose of these arts. I can say that communication with the visually impaired has made me more attentive and careful with details. We, as sighted, should be responsible for the purity of our interaction with them. They are extremely trusty and honest with us. We are their connection with the visible world.

What do you think is the value for visually impaired young people of working through theatre?

According to me, theatre work with people with v.i. has the potential to liberate them on many levels, make them feel more confident in their bodies and in space, as well as in their communication with the others.

VISION

What do you think we should consider regarding the use of theatre in the VISION project?

Theatre and game practices are an inseparable part of the personal development of each human being and are the most natural and quick way for learning new skills for socialization with the surrounding environment. In this sense they are extremely useful and effective for projects, which involve people with visual impairment.

What do you think could be the impact of this work?

It would be quite positive in all possible directions, but mostly at social level. One of the main issues in contemporary society is acceptance. To accept the other, who is different from you. Theatre is a free zone for meetings of human beings, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, physical state and looks. This acceptance and the awareness of the free human spirit have the potential to heal society.



Please attach a current CV with this questionnaire!

Thanking you for your time and consideration:

The V.I.S.I.ON team

“This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.”



Project number: 2014-1-BG01-KA201-001555



Erasmus+