

The Joy of Rehearsal: Reflections on Interpretation and Practice- Translated by James Thomas

By James Thomas

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Anatoly Efros (1925-1987), one of the most admired and original directors of post-war Russia, directed at the Central Children's Theatre, Malaya Bronnaya Theatre, Lenkom Theatre, Moscow Art Theatre, and Taganka Theatre, and elsewhere including the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis and the Toen Theatre in Tokyo. He taught directing at the State Institute for Theatre Training and wrote several influential books. His productions received numerous awards for creative excellence.
In *The Joy of Rehearsal*, his best-known work, Efros illuminates the dynamics of the director's creative work. He discusses the process of considering future plays, rehearsing them, and evaluating the results. Devoted to the principles of Konstantin Stanislavsky and Michael Chekhov, and inspired by the ideas of Bertolt Brecht, Efros also considers the practice of rehearsals and other features central to professional creative work. His productions of Shakespeare, Moliere, Chekhov and other classics were major events for those who looked to the theatre for social significance as well as aesthetic experience. Theatre students and professionals will benefit from the insights gained as Efros writes about his unique vision for the modern theatre.

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Editorial Review

Review
«Russian theatre in the twentieth century was progressive and innovatory. We know a good deal about Stanislavsky and his contemporaries, but not much about their heirs. At last we are able to meet a Russian colossus of the second half of the century, Anatoly Efros, whose work and ideas challenge, infuriate, and excite in about equal measure. Efros's 'The Joy of Rehearsal' is a work of outstanding significance. It is quirky and personal, and also profound, and its influence will undoubtedly reverberate for a long time to come. We owe a considerable debt of gratitude to James Thomas for making this work accessible in the west.» (Robert Leach, Theatre Director and Professor of Drama, University of Edinburgh; Author of 'Revolutionary Theatre, A History of Russian Theatre', and 'Makers of Modern Theatre')
«Theatre director Anatoly Efros spoke to a generation of Soviet Russians who remembered Stalin's oppressive regime, enjoyed the relative artistic freedom of the Thaw, and then suffered the artistic stagnation caused by the hardening of political control in the 1970s. Efros expressed the complex reactions of his era in kinetic, starkly modernist productions of classics. His art challenged complacent and conventional readings of the familiar dramas of Shakespeare, Chekhov, and others. In 'The Joy of Rehearsal', Efros sets forth his radical readings and discusses the practice of directing. Additionally, he reshapes the autobiographical form as radically as he reshaped the classics he staged, turning the chronological memoir into a verbal collage of musings.
James Thomas introduces Efros to the English speaking world for the first time. Thomas's smooth translation allows the reader to see into the mind of Efros and to draw theatrical insight from his innovative thinking. The invaluable introduction and historical notes help the reader enter into Efros's political and artistic world. Thomas is guided in his work by admiration for this remarkable theatre artist and experience as a scholar. Given Efros's bold creativity and importance to the development of theatrical art, everyone interested in Russian theatre after Stanislavsky should read Thomas's translation of 'The Joy of Rehearsal'.» (Sharon Carnicke, Theatre Director, Professor, and Associate Dean at the University of Southern California; Author of 'Stanislavsky in Focus' and 'The Theatrical Instinct: Nikolai Evreinov and the Russian Theatre of the Early Twentieth Century')

About the Author
James Thomas is Professor and Director of the PhD Program in Theatre at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, and Director of the Study Abroad Program with the Moscow Art Theatre School. He received his PhD in theatre history and criticism from the University of Texas. He is the author of *The Art of the Actor-Manager: Wilson Barrett and the Victorian Theatre* and *Script Analysis for Actors, Directors, and Designers.*

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