

EXTRACT FROM THREE SISTERS - Chekhov

The extract chosen - from Act One.  EXTRACT CHOSEN

Incorporating the style of Berkoff  PRACTITIONER CHOSEN

Theme: Dreams, Hopes and Isolation

The scene opens with an ensemble on stage including the 3 sisters:

The ensemble will make the sound of a ticking clock- Tick Tock etc.

The 3 Sisters will each be inside a jungle frame structure. One will be right front hand of stge. One in centre back stage and one on left front stage.

Witihn these structures the sisters will do the following

Irina is sitting at a table playing patience

Masha sits reading a book

Olga paces back and forth grading papers.

The three sisters exaggerate their actions in what they are doing.

They repeat these actions time and time again.

This idea of doing things on their own and being inside the steel frames reflects the isolation of the three sisters from the beginning

The sisters will speak the following lines from within the steel frames.

PRACTITIONER
Ensemble playing.
Exaggerated and stylised
mime
Repetition

OLGA

It's exactly a year since father died. A year ago today- May the fifth – it was on your name-day, Irina. It was very cold, we had snow. I thought I should never survive it, and there you were lying in a dead faint. But now here's a year gone by, and we can think about it again quite calmly. You're back in white, your face is shining.....

ORIGINAL TEXT

The ensemble voice the clock striking twelve

PRACTITIONER
Ensemble playing

The clock kept striking then too.

ORIGINAL TEXT

.....  EDIT TEXT

IRINA

Why keep harking back?

OLGA

It's warm today. We can have the windows wide. The birch trees aren't out yet, though. Father got his brigade and left Moscow with us eleven years ago, and I well remember what Moscow was like at this time of year, at the beginning of May. Everything would be in blossom already, everything would be warm, everything would be awash with sunshine.

.....

Pause

I'm at school each day, then I give lessons for the rest of the afternoon, and I end up with a perpetual headache, I end up thinking the kind of thoughts I'd have if I were an old woman already. And in fact these last four years since I've been teaching I have felt as if day by day, drop by drop, my youth and strength were going out of me. And the only thing that grows, the only thing that gets stronger, is one single dream....

IRINA

To go to Moscow. To sell up the house, to finish with everything here and off to Moscow....

ORIGINAL TEXT

OLGA

IRINA

MASHA

YES! To Moscow, as soon as ever we can!

They exaggerate the words

Yes! To Moscow, as soon as ever we can!

PRACTITIONER
Repetition using
words from original
text

OLGA

I dream!

IRINA

I dream!

MASHA

I dream!

ADDITIONAL
TEXT

OLGA/MASHA/IRINA

Moscow!

They will show their desire to leave their confined space with their body movements and will eventually climb out of the steel frames to centre stage.

With the 3 sisters the ensemble will now mime a train journey to Moscow.

PRACTITIONER
Ensemble playing
Exaggerated and
stylised mime

VOICE

The train now arriving on platform 2 is..... (fade)

Members of the ensemble will act as seats in a train. The sisters will sit on these seats and then there will be movements and sound effects to depict the train journey to Moscow.

On arriving in Moscow the ensemble will move around the stage as if moving around the city of Moscow. The 3 sisters will be welcomed to Moscow.. This will be shown in exaggerated movements and loud voices.

They will arrive in Moscow.

Cacophany of city life.

A number of the chorus will welcome the sisters time and time again-

Welcome to Moscow- repeated several times.

The ensemble will dance a Russian folk dance- they will mime the instruments (violins) and they will also use their voices to convey the music.

[This is to convey the happiness that the sisters attach to Moscow]

Suddenly all this will change and some of the ensemble will put on grotesque masks and will threaten the three sisters.

The characters wearing masks will make very threatening sounds with their voices and use their whole bodies to frighten the sisters.

The sisters will use their bodies to respond to the threats.

[This is to convey that the dream they had of a happy Moscow as it used to be is no longer true]

The ensemble disappears and the sisters return to their separate steel frames as they were before at the beginning of the scene.

Irina is sitting at a table playing patience

Masha sits reading a book

Olga paces back and forth grading papers.

The three sisters exaggerate their actions in what they are doing. They repeat these actions time and time again.

VERSHININ and TUSENBACH enter their space

The sisters will respond from within their steel frames.

PRACTITIONER
Ensemble playing
Mime

PRACTITIONER
Ensemble playing
Exaggerated and stylized movement
Exaggerated vocal work

PRACTITIONER
Use of masks.
Exaggerated facial expressions and vocal work.
Repetition of actions

VERSHININ

Allow me to introduce myself- Vershinin. So very glad to be with you at last. But how you've changed! Dear me!

TUSENBACH

The colnel is from Moscow.

IRINA

From Moscow? You're from Moscow?

VERSHININ

I am indeed, Your late father was a battery commander there, I was a battery commander there; I was in the same brigade

ORIGINAL TEXT

IRINA

From Moscow? You're from Moscow?

EDIT TEXT

MASHA

From Moscow? You're from Moscow?

OLGA

From Moscow? You're from Mosacow?

PRACTITIONER
Repetition using
words from the
original text

IRINA/MASHA/OLGA

From Moscow? You're from Moscow?

VERSHININ

I am. I was at university in Moscow and I began my service career in Moscow....

IRINA

You're from Moscow...It's like a bolt from the blue!

OLGA

We're moving there, you see.

ORIGINAL TEXT

IRINA

We think we shall actually be there by the autumn.

It's our home town - we were born there....

EDIT TEXT

And the only thing that has grown, the only thing that gets stronger, is one single dream....

PRACTITIONER
Repetition of words

IRINA

To go to Moscow. To sell up the house, to finish with everything here and off to Moscow....

PRACTITIONER
Stylised movement-
robotic

OLGA

IRINA

MASHA

They move together to front of stage- in robotic manner and utter these words together direct to the audience

YES! To Moscow, as soon as ever we can!
They exaggerate the words
YES! TO MOSCOW, AS SOON AS EVER WE CAN!

Their body movements convey their desire to move back to Moscow.

OLGA
I dream!
IRINA
I dream!
MASHA
I dream!

REPETITION
OF PREVIOUS
MOVEMENTS

OLGA/MASHA/IRINA
Moscow!

They climb out of their stele frames as at the beginning of the scene.

The previous actions of moving to Moscow- the train journey- the arrival- the welcome- the folk dance- the grotesque creatures- are again repeated- but this time at a quicker pace.

PRACTITIONER
Repetition of previous
use of exaggerated
vocal work and
movements.
Use of masks
Ensemble work

Then everything stops suddenly and we go back to the beginning.

Once again inside their seperate steel frames.

Irina is sitting at a table playing patience
Masha sits reading a book
Olga paces back and forth grading papers.

The three sisters exaggerate their actions in what they are doing. They repeat these actions time and time again

PRACTITIONER
Repetition of previous
stylised movements as
at the beginning of the
extract