



The effect sometimes precedes the cause, explains Norin. "There is no doubt that Slava refers back to the ideas of Grotowski" he says. "But I have never seen a rehearsal of Theatre Laboratorium. Slava's famous flickering candles, for example, originate from an educational experiment in Nibble School in the seventies. We cut off the electricity because we wanted the children to experience the school day in terms of the diurnal rhythms."

"We threw out the desks and chairs, and danced and sang instead", says Norin talking about the group's emphasis on open space. Slava's performances dispense with sets in the strict sense of the word. Only what is used is there. A few props, some instruments--the rest is an empty performance area which the actor masters with his skills. "I developed the idea of this empty space so that children and young people could have room to

live and work, long before I read Peter Brook's *The Empty Space*. At that point it was easy to agree with him. Grotowski, Artaud and Brook taught me to formulate what I had already done. Their practical experience and theoretical conclusions have taught me a lot."

There is a network for the kind of dramatic art which Slava represents. But with a few exceptions the network does not exist in our country--it is international. Says Norin "We all have to seek out our 'business partners' abroad, hold workshops, confer and exchange ideas. Without an interactive flow of ideas and artistic experience the search stagnates."

Norin adds that he is searching for a dramatic art beyond the one-sided text-dependency which has been, and still is, dominant in Western theatre. "I want speech, song, music and acrobatics to carry equal weight and to converse with each other during a performance. This kind of fusion of dramatic expression is neither old nor new, nor it is something forgotten that must be reawakened. What I am looking for is total theatre made manifest--something that does not yet exist, but is beginning to make itself felt."

There are two important guiding principles in Slava's training--developing skills and removing limitations. And there is an important connection between the two explains the group's remarkable director. In this particular dialogue between the removing process and the development, Slava he says has created a method, which has proved successful in the development of both voice and body. "The training is a path, a journey of discovery into ourselves. I set out a journey where the lines between art and life had been erased. I am still on that journey."

Erik Norlin and Slava refuse to be categorised. Perhaps it is unnecessary. Slava exists and continues, indefatigably, through its work. ■

