



Stanislavsky: A Life in Letters

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Konstantin Stanislavsky transformed theatre in the West and was indisputably one of the twentieth century's greatest innovators. His life and work mark some of the most significant artistic and political milestones of that tumultuous century, from the emancipation of the serfs to the Russian Revolution. Little wonder, then, that his correspondence contains gripping exchanges with the famous and infamous of his day: men such as Tolstoy, Chekhov, Trotsky and Stalin, among others.

Laurence Senelick, one of the world's foremost scholars of Russian literature, mines the Moscow archives and the definitive Russian edition of Stanislavsky's letters, to produce the fullest collection of the letters in any language other than Russian. He sheds new light on this fascinating field. Senelick takes us from the earliest extant letter of an eleven-year-old Konstantin in 1874, through his work as actor, director and actor trainer with the Moscow Art Theatre, to messages written just before his death in 1938 at the age of seventy-five.

We discover Stanislavsky as son, brother and father, as lover and husband, as businessman and "internal emigre." He is seen as a wealthy tourist and an impoverished touring actor, a privileged subject of the Tsar and a harried victim of the Bolsheviks.

Senelick shares key insights into Stanislavsky's work on such important productions as *The Seagull*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*. The letters also reveal the steps that led up to the publication of his writings *My Life in Art* and *An Actor's Work on Himself*. This handsome edition is also comprehensively annotated and fully illustrated.

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