

<b>Institution: Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: UOA 35</b>
<b>Title of case study: The Stanislavski Centre</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b>  <b>The Stanislavski Centre</b>, (Patron, Prof. Anatoly Smeliansky), founded 2007, responds to the Stanislavski legacy and post-Stanislavski approaches to acting and provides a research-driven facility promoting and developing a new field of ‘Stanislavski Studies’ within an international context. The Centre acts as a conduit enabling professional practice and scholarly research to interact, enrich and inform each other. Based upon the pioneering research, translations and publications of RBC’s former Principal, Professor Jean Benedetti, the Centre, guided by a distinguished advisory board, includes an archive of photographic, printed and AV materials and hosts an annual programme of events open to the public. In 2012, the centre launched an ejournal, <i>Stanislavski Studies</i>. (<a href="http://bit.ly/lu8VVo">bit.ly/lu8VVo</a>)</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b>  The research that underpins the work of the Centre originates in the series of publications written, edited and translated by Prof. Benedetti; his research into Stanislavski’s life and theories was decades long and continued until his death in 2012. Benedetti’s <i>Stanislavski and the Actor</i> (1998) introduced for the first time to English-language readers, Benedetti’s findings from research conducted in Russia about Stanislavski’s later methods. (<a href="http://amzn.to/1b2i2Hd">amzn.to/1b2i2Hd</a>). He contributed to numerous international symposia and conferences, including a conference on Acting held at the College in 1999, for which he delivered the keynote address (a recording of which is available in the College Archives). Benedetti’s extensive research into Stanislavski’s original manuscripts and the archives of the Moscow Art Theatre culminated in the new versions of <i>My Life in Art</i> (<a href="http://amzn.to/lv6npT">amzn.to/lv6npT</a>) and <i>An Actor’s Work</i> (<a href="http://amzn.to/ljJeay">amzn.to/ljJeay</a>) (both Routledge, 2008),  The Stanislavski Centre was conceived by Benedetti to facilitate the reconsideration of the work of the seminal theorist of modern acting, demanded by the discoveries contained in the new translations. Accordingly, the Centre’s research locates and explores the link between Stanislavski’s approach to acting and theatre-making and contemporary practices in training, professional practice and public awareness. The Centre houses the Stanislavski and Benedetti Collections, key primary research resources that include rare material unavailable outside Russia. The Jean Benedetti Senior Research Fellowship is held by Prof. Bella Merlin a practitioner/academic whose extensive work includes <i>The Complete Stanislavski Toolkit</i> (Nick Hern Books 2007 <a href="http://amzn.to/1fNkohv">amzn.to/1fNkohv</a>) and <i>Konstantin Stanislavsky</i> (Routledge 2003 <a href="http://amzn.to/louKWH">amzn.to/louKWH</a>). Examples illustrating outreach include:  <b>(1) Stanislavski on Stage:</b> exhibitions at The National Theatre (2008) and Pushkin House (2013) sponsored by a private donation from publisher Evgeny Lebedev. Eighty rare photographs from the Archive, illustrating seven productions staged at the Moscow Art Theatre, 1899 - 1921, representing Stanislavski as actor, director and producer. An accompanying book (co-editors Prof. Kathy Dacre and Dr Paul Fryer [PF]) including essays by Anatoly Smeliansky, Laurence Senelick, Katie Mitchell and Declan Donnellan, was also published. A revised exhibition was re-staged at Pushkin House, (<a href="http://www.pushkinhouse.org/home">http://www.pushkinhouse.org/home</a>) including supporting lectures: “The work of Jean Benedetti” (chair, Prof. Michael Earley), “Stanislavski and Contemporary Russian Acting” (Prof. Sergei Tcherkasski, St Petersburg Academy),” The Russians in Britain” (Prof. Jonathan Pitches, University of Leeds), “Photographing Performance” (Prof. David Bate, University of Westminster).  <b>(2) Contemporary Directions:</b> a research project initiated September 2012, exploring the role of the director in 21<sup>st</sup>-century theatre, in partnership with Shakespeare’s Globe Education; launched with a key-note by Sir Richard Eyre, President of RBC, and a panel debate involving Ian Rickson, Kristine Landon Smith and Stephen Unwin. The research project comprises lectures, interviews, workshops, and directing forums (curated by Colin Ellwood, RBC lecturer, and theatre director Simon Usher). These public forums are recorded and made available as an online resource for practitioners and researchers. (<a href="http://bit.ly/1eCyvmW">bit.ly/1eCyvmW</a>): participants include Sean Holmes, Adrian Jackson, James Dacre and Ramin Gray. This project will continue throughout 2013/14 encompassing a collaboration with the Arcola Theatre, inaugurated by a pre-performance presentation by Fryer and developing contextual events supporting a season of Spanish Golden Age plays (Spring, 2014).  <b>(3) Teaching Stanislavski:</b> a research project which explores how Stanislavski’s work and</p>

teaching features in 16 + education in the UK. Undertaken by a research team of nine with input from a further 22 professional practitioners/academics.

### 3. References to the research

- (1) **Stanislavski on Stage** photographic exhibition at the Olivier Theatre, National Theatre, April/May 2008: Private donation of £20,000, to underwrite the costs. The official opening was conducted by Prof. Anatoly Smeliansky, Dean of The Moscow Art Theatre School. The exhibition book contains essays by each of the Centre's advisory board including Jean Benedetti, Marie-Christine Autant-Mathieu, Kathy Dacre, and Richard Hornby.
- (2) In 2012, the Centre launched an electronic journal: **Stanislavski Studies**. [bit.ly/1cPa5EC](http://bit.ly/1cPa5EC) (The journal has a separate editorial advisory board: Professors Christopher Baugh, Alexander Chepurov, Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei, Kelly Handerek, Julie Holledge, Jan Hyvnar, Nesta Jones, Bella Merlin, Nikolai Pesochinsky, Maria Shevtsova, Brian Singleton, Sergei Tcherkasski, Simon Trussler, Ian Watson and Rose Whyman. Published in partnership with the St Petersburg State Academy of Theatre Arts each edition is available bi-lingually (English/ Russian), and has an international readership/authorship.
- (3) Marking the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Stanislavski's birth, a fully revised version of the **Stanislavski on Stage** photographic exhibition was staged at Pushkin House in January 2013; accompanied by a series of public lectures featuring speakers from the UK, Russia and the US; designed to complement the extensive celebrations, *Stanislavski and the World Theatre*, staged in Moscow earlier that month, curated by Prof. Smeliansky, and at which the Centre was represented by Prof. Michael Earley and Prof. Bella Merlin. Earley and Merlin both interviewed on *Nightwaves* (BBC R3) and in Russia, ME interviewed by TV Kultura ([bit.ly/17YP1xK](http://bit.ly/17YP1xK)) and Russian Today [bit.ly/1etjiDX](http://bit.ly/1etjiDX)). RBC was the only UK HEI invited to take part in the anniversary celebrations in Moscow in October 2012 and January 2013.
- (4) SCUDD/PALATINE Development award, £10,000, in 2008 for the **Teaching Stanislavski** project, investigating how Stanislavski is taught to UK students, in schools, FE and HE institutions.
- (5) In 2008, the College created **The Stanislavski Research Fellowship**, held for the first year by Prof. Kathy Dacre. Her work included the inception of a new project, Chekhov's Theatres, with Prof. Christopher Baugh, which included a research visit to Yalta, and publication of an essay by Prof. Baugh, "Anton Chekhov in Yalta" (<http://bit.ly/18JOj68>). From 2008 to 2010, the Fellowship was held by Dr John Matthews. Two publications resulted from work supported by his Fellowship (*A Life in Ethics and Performance*, Cambridge Scholars 2011 and *Training for Performance*, Methuen 2011). **The Jean Benedetti Senior Research Fellowship** was established in 2013, the current post-holder, Prof. Bella Merlin is a practitioner/academic who is a researcher on acting and has published widely on Stanislavski. Associated with the Centre's work since 2012 she joined the editorial advisory board of *Stanislavski Studies* and contributed a major article, "Where's the spirit gone? The complexities of translation and the nuances of terminology in *An Actor's Work* and an actor's work", for the inaugural edition of the journal, and delivered the Stanislavski Centre/Routledge annual lecture in April 2012, *Here, Today, Now: Stanislavski for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century actor*, available on the Routledge Performance Archive site, which formed part of the research for her chapter of the same title which will be included in *The Routledge Companion to Stanislavski* (2013). Prof. Merlin was part of the discussion panel on the work of Jean Benedetti, which opened the *Stanislavski on Stage* exhibition in January 2013 and the *Nightwaves* (R3) programme about Stanislavski in January 2013.
- (6) Commercial dissemination: In 2012, the Centre was invited to make its photographic collection (over 300 items) available for commercial dissemination by the leading photographic agency, **ArenaPal**. The collection is now available online in high quality digital copies. ([bit.ly/1cPZ4CW](http://bit.ly/1cPZ4CW))

### 4. Details of the impact

Prior to the paradigm-shifting publications that were the result of Benedetti's scholarship, readers and students had to contend with inaccurate, misleading and difficult-to-read English-language versions based on early drafts of Stanislavski's writings, first published in 1938. Some of the mistranslations had resulted in profound distortions in the way his system has been interpreted and taught. Benedetti succeeded in translating Stanislavski's huge manual into a lively, fascinating and accurate text in English. For the first time, the two books previously known as *An Actor Prepares* and *Building A Character* were restored to a single volume, as had been Stanislavski's original intentions. This work has precipitated a major reconsideration of the Stanislavski's theories

## Impact case study (REF3b)

and 'system'. Professor Merlin's work has built on Benedetti's, creating two manuals for actors that distil Stanislavskian precepts into easily accessible instructions and exercises: *The Complete Stanislavski Toolkit* (Nick Hern Books 2007 [amzn.to/1fNkohv](http://amzn.to/1fNkohv)) and *Acting: The Basics* (Routledge 2010 [amzn.to/1gn6LDA](http://amzn.to/1gn6LDA)).

From its inception in 2007, the Centre has worked in the UK and abroad with a range of professional partners, in the performance industries and in Higher Education to develop a portfolio of outreach activities that cater for the needs of a wide international public audience, from school-age students to experienced professional practitioners. It has been the Centre's intention to ensure that access to and knowledge of Stanislavski's work and legacy is as widely disseminated as possible. Every event that the Centre produces or supports is open to a public audience.

Whenever possible the events are offered either free of charge or at a significantly reduced cost, subsidised by the Centre. Details of all events are publicised via the Centre's website, Drama UK, The Society for Theatre Research, and academic networks such as SCUDD. The majority of the events are directly linked with specific research projects, and the Centre offers a platform for the sharing of research from both academic and non-academic sources. Indicatively:

(a) **Professional Development and training events** designed for practitioners, teachers and academics, working with partners including Pushkin House, Globe Education at Shakespeare's Globe, The Arcola Theatre and Kingston University: study days on Sanford Meisner (70 participants) (featuring William Esper, leading Meisner technique teacher, <http://esperstudio.com>) and Viewpoints (60 participants), a series of CPD workshops for educators, public lectures and master-classes and pre-performance talks, hosted at RBC and external venues. The Centre frequently hosts lectures, master-classes and workshops by leading international scholars and practitioners, offering a platform for the wider public dissemination of their research: recently including Prof. Kelly Handerek (University of Regina) on Uta Hagen, Prof. Charles Gilbert (University of The Arts, Philadelphia) on Stanislavski and the singing actor, and award-winning director Ian Rickson, a master-class on Chekhov.

(b) **The Stanislavski On Stage Exhibitions** at The National Theatre (2008) and Pushkin House (2013), all open to the general public and accompanied by a series of contextual lectures which incorporated collaborative and complimentary research strands from academic colleagues from the UK, USA and Russia, and made them available to a public audience. In 2008, the exhibition was funded by a personal donation from Yevgeny Lebedev (publisher of the Evening Standard and the Independent) and was located in the foyer to the Olivier Theatre, exposing it to some [15,000](#) general public audience members. In 2013, the exhibition expanded its reach to a Russian-speaking audience, through its presence at Pushkin House, which provided access to approximately 1440 day-time visitors and 200 evening guests across the four lecture presentations. Since the addition of the images to ArenaPal, they have been exposed to web-traffic amounting to more than 500 visits per month.

(c) The provision of specialist material to publicly available projects (in print and on film). The Centre has supported two documentary film projects produced by Copernicus Films, based in Moscow. As well as providing access to the collections, particularly the photographic archive, the Centre provided consultancy on materials and links to other sources of material (e.g. The Moscow Art Theatre collection), assisted in the final editing of materials, including the compilation of on-screen captions, and hosted the premiere screening of the first film, *Stanislavski and The Russian Theatre* in April 2011. The second film, *Vakhtangov and the Russian Theatre* (November 2013). See [www.copernicusfilms.com](http://www.copernicusfilms.com). In addition to the dvd and online distribution of some 150 copies of the film, excerpted material has received 19,490 views on Youtube.

(d) **Open access research resources**: The research collections which form part of the Centre are available to the broadest range of users. The Centre has advised teachers, GCSE students, provided photographic material for theatre productions and for the illustration of books and journal articles; including *The Independent*, *Pulse UK*, *Black Snow* (Walking Thoughts theatre company). The Centre has hosted researchers (theatre practitioners and academics) from the USA, Belgium, The Czech Republic, Russia and Korea.

(e) The Centre has supported several **performance events** for public audiences including producing a double-bill of one-act pieces (Chekhov's *On the Harmfulness of Tobacco*, and Pushkin's *The Queen of Spades*), performed by Philip Lowrie, and staged at Pushkin House in May 2013. These staged performances reflect the Centre's interest not only in Russian repertoire, but also in different approaches to acting. In this instance, the solo-actor performance.

## Impact case study (REF3b)

(f) Research on the Centre's **photographic collection** has resulted in several lectures and presentations given by PF: these have included illustrated presentations for both public and academic audiences, hosted by The Arcola Theatre, The University of East London, DAMU Theatre Academy in Prague, and The University of Malta. Fryer also wrote an article on the Centre and its collection for the Summer 2013 edition of *Theatre and Performance*, a magazine aimed at the popular, non-specialist market, entitled "Happy Birthday Mr Stanislavski" (g) **Publications:** The *Stanislavski Studies* ejournal, launched in 2012, reaches a wide international audience and has now published three issues (issue #4 will appear in Spring 2014). Since its inception, in addition to sales of the ebook editions the site has received 12,668 page views, during 4808 visits to the website by 3120 unique visitors, of which 78.33% were working in English and 13.52% were working in Russian. 38.56% of visitors were based in the UK, 21.15% were based in the US and 11.29% were based in Russia. The exhibition book, ***Stanislavski on Stage***, published by the Centre in 2008, is still on sale via the Centre, the National Theatre Bookshop and Amazon.com.

##### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

**Publishers: Routledge (Taylor and Francis):** publisher of the new Benedetti edition of Stanislavski's works, ([bit.ly/18JNcn7](http://bit.ly/18JNcn7)) sponsors the annual Stanislavski Centre/Routledge lecture, inaugurated by Prof. Anatoly Smeliansky in 2011. *The Theatre Arts Archive* of materials from the US imprint is on extended loan from Routledge to the Stanislavski Archive. HD video recordings of the Annual Lecture are available via the Routledge Performance Archive online, including the lectures by Professors Smeliansky and Merlin. The 2013 lecture was delivered by Prof. Philip Zarrilli. They have agreed to provide sales figures on the work of Benedetti and Merlin on request. Nick Hern books have confirmed that Merlin's *The Complete Stanislavsky Toolkit* has sold in excess of 10,000 copies in the UK. U.S. publisher Quite Specific confirm the sale of [a similar number of copies](#) of the same work in the U.S.

**National Theatre:** hosted the original *Stanislavski on Stage* exhibition of material from the Stanislavski Archive (April/May, 2008). This inaugural event for the Centre, was opened by Prof. Anatoly Smeliansky (Dean, Moscow Art Theatre School). [bit.ly/1fLtATv](http://bit.ly/1fLtATv) Staff at the National Theatre have provided a statement corroborating information on the exhibition's reach.

**Pushkin House:** hosted the re-staging of the exhibition [bit.ly/1ethwmn](http://bit.ly/1ethwmn) They have provided a statement including data on the exhibition's reach.

**Globe Education at Shakespeare's Globe:** original partners in the *Contemporary Directions* project, offering a link to professional practitioners via workshops and events, held at RBC and at The Globe. [bit.ly/1hkplFz](http://bit.ly/1hkplFz)

**Arcola Theatre:** hosted a pre-show presentation and discussion on the Stanislavski photographic collection and Stanislavski's work, and will collaborate with The Centre in a programme of contextual events accompanying the *Spanish Golden Age* season from January 2014. [bit.ly/1ethKd5](http://bit.ly/1ethKd5)

**Copernicus Films:** Russian-based film production company referenced above have provided sales data and an online presence for the Centre's holdings and scholarship. The Centre will present the premiere screening of the Vakhtangov film in April 2014, in partnership with Pushkin House. [bit.ly/1b0HPPZ](http://bit.ly/1b0HPPZ).

**ArenaPal:** performing arts photographic library handles the commercial dissemination of the Centre's photographic collection. The entire collection has been digitised and made available to view online with captions written by the Head of the Centre. [bit.ly/1sdqRc](http://bit.ly/1sdqRc)

**Kingston University (Department of Drama):** partners the Centre in the presentation of public study day events. These outreach activities are offered to professional practitioners and others. They include *The reality of doing: Sanford Meisner* (2012), and *Moving Texts: Viewpoints, the system and the actor* (2013). <http://bit.ly/17X86ym>

**Bloomsbury Press:** publisher of Benedetti's earlier books has consulted on the expansion and future development of the ejournal, *Stanislavski Studies*. This has included a major expansion of the editorial advisory board. [bit.ly/1jN0652](http://bit.ly/1jN0652)

**The Higher Education Academy:** published the *Teaching Stanislavski* report in 2010. <http://bit.ly/1bYbu9Y>