

THE INTEGRATED ACTOR

“When he gets onstage, the actor faces a great many levels of awareness. He must interact and he must perform. He must relate in some way to a text, a theatre, an audience, scenery pieces, costumes, props, the demands of his director, the behavior of his fellow actors, the actions of the stage crew. He must also deal with potential distractions: the inevitable awareness of the potential presence of critics, of the state of his own career, of the offstage relationships he maintains--or wishes to maintain--with his fellow performers. The actor must deal with the anxieties of stage fright, vocal tension, physical clumsiness, the terror of forgetting his lines, of drying up emotionally, and--worst of all--of letting his confidence sag. He must be spontaneous without thinking about being spontaneous, and without appearing to try to be spontaneous. He must work within a fixed text, and yet make the words emanate from himself. He must create the play’s character, and yet be personal and idiosyncratic enough to be humanly alive. He must fit into the play’s style without losing a sense of humanity. He must be credible and he must be, in the best sense of the word, theatrical. These are, quite obviously, hard tasks.”

--from ACTING POWER, by Robert Cohen

“When all else fails, breathe.”

--Clyde Vinson, Clyde Vinson Studio, NYC

Texts:

- ACTING POWER, THE 21st CENTURY EDITION, by Robert Cohen
- IMPRO, by Keith Johnstone

Scripts/Scenes:

- *TBA*

In this class, participants will:

- Develop practical skills to minimize anxiety on stage.
- Expand awareness to include body, voice, and environment.
- Free the imagination to make bold choices; to trust the first impulse.
- Maintain a high performance level through the thick and thin, the ebb and flow, the ups and downs of daily life.

Key Exercises:

- Mirror
- Place/Environment
- Status
- Observing & Wondering

- Internal Obstacles
- Text Obstacles
- Playing Opposites

Course Outline:

Class #1

- Introduction, discuss goals, expectations, and desired outcomes
- warm-up, theatre games/exercises
- focus work: Mirror, Environment, Place
- working alone: Place
- working with a partner: Activities In Twos
- assignment: observe application of exercises in everyday life, or in performances. ie TV, film, plays.

Class #2

- review previous week's work. share weekly observations.
- warm-up, theatre games/exercises
- focus work: Observing & Wondering
- working alone: Environment
- working with partner: Sharing Observations In Twos
- assignment: make notes of times when Observing & Wondering; practice exercise when stuck in traffic, in line at grocery store, waiting at Doctor's office, etc.

Class #3

- review previous week's work. share weekly observations.
- warm-up, theatre games/exercises
- focus work: Status
- working alone: apply Status to simple story, or text
- working with a partner: Contentless Scene
- assignment: observe how status plays out in daily life. prepare a monologue, or a story for presentation.

Class #4

- review previous week's work. share weekly observations.
- warm-up, theatre games/exercises
- focus work: Status & Adjusting

- working alone: present monologue, focusing on Status
- working with a partner: assign scenes. explore status options within scenes.
- assignment: rehearse scenes. continue observations.

Class #5

- review previous week's work. share weekly observations.
- warm-up, theatre games/exercises
- focus work: review Mirror, Observing & Wondering, Environment/Place, Status
- working alone: monologue and story work
- working with a partner: present scenes. layer focus work into scene work.
- assignment: rehearse scenes. continue observations.

Class #6

- review previous week's work. share weekly observations.
- warm-up, theatre games/exercises
- focus work: Obstacles- Internal & External
- working alone: apply Obstacles to monologue
- working with a partner: apply Obstacles to text
- assignment: see a play. note observations about anything we've been studying.

Class #7

- review previous week's work. share weekly observations.
- warm-up, theatre games/exercises
- focus work: Opposites
- working alone: apply Opposites to monologues
- working with a partner: apply Opposites to scenes
- assignment: rehearse scenes and monologues for Final Week.

Class #8

- review previous week's work. share weekly observations.
- warm-up, theatre games/exercises
- focus work: putting it all together - Presentation
- working alone: present monologues, stories, or poems
- working with a partner: present scenes
- assignment: sign up for more classes