

# Acting

## Chapter 5

- Act well your part, therein the honor lies.

# Two major approaches to acting...

- Emotional/subjective acting – the playing of roles in such a way that actors weep, suffer, or struggle emotionally (become and experience the role)
- Technical/objective acting – use of learned skills of acting, movement, speech, and interpretation to create roles; no emotional response is allowed (actor does not actually live the part)

**\*\*Most actors use a combination of both\*\***

# Method Acting

- Highly subjective method of acting developed by Stanislavski, Russian actor/director

## Most famous method actors...

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| ● Marlon Brando  | ● Paul Newman     |
| ● Robert DeNiro  | ● Jamie Foxx      |
| ● Al Pacino      | ● Joaquin Phoenix |
| ● James Dean     | ● Johnny Depp     |
| ● Marilyn Monroe |                   |

# Types of Roles

- Leading Roles – the main characters in the play
  - Protagonist – the main character in a play
  - Antagonist – the person or force working against the protagonist
  - Juvenile – a young romantic male lead between the ages of 16 and 30.
  - Ingenue – a young romantic female lead between the ages of 16 and 30.
- Supporting Roles – those characters who contrast others (point out characteristics of leading characters)

- Straight Part – roles in which the actor and character are similar.
  - Cast by type – actors are cast in straight parts who really play themselves.
- Character Part – roles in which actors deal with traits that differ from their own to produce a desired character.
  - Typecasting – identifying and casting an actor in the same kind of role over and over.

# Keys to Characterization

- Internalizing – the actor gets within the character and learns what the character is really like down deep inside.
- Externalization – the process by which the true personality of a character is made visible to an audience.
- Concentration – the ability to direct all your thoughts, energies and skills into what you are doing at any single moment.
- Observation – observe people carefully, noting how they communicate fine shades of emotion. Observation is the key to characterization!

- Emotional Memory – the recalling of specific emotions that you have experienced or observed.
- Projection – strong volume, but also “reaching out” to the last person in the last row of a distant balcony.
- Motivation – the “why” of characterization.
- Stretching a character – the process of making a role unique, individual and interesting.
- Inconsistent Consistency – the special personality trait of a character the actor chooses to emphasize.

- Playing the conditions – the conditions are the elements of time, place, weather, objects and the state of the individual. They affect the manner in which characters meet their objectives and deal with the obstacles.
- Playing the Objectives – includes all of the ways and means that a character uses to reach a goal that he or she has established.
- Playing the Obstacles – the ways in which a character faces each crisis or obstacle.
- Energy – the fuel that drives acting, both individual performance and group performance.



- Focus – directs the actor's attention, action, emotion or line delivery to a definite target.
- Uniqueness – every actor who plays a character should be unique in that role, not merely a close copy of someone else.

# Physical Acting

- The Bubble – the amount of space around an actor/character that helps create a character.
- Master Leading Gesture – a distinctive action that is repeated and will serve as a clue to a character's personality.
- Leading Center – a slight or an exaggerated movement, depending upon the character and the style of the play.

- Cross – movement from one stage position to another
  - Cross between lines or to break up the line
  - Never move during important lines or involved in stage business
  - Do not move on a laugh line
  - Always cross below furniture and characters who are standing
  - Cross above characters who are seated
  - Gestures should usually be made with the upstage arm for maximum forcefulness.
  - Turns should be made toward the front.

- Countercross – when one character moves and another moves in an opposite direction
- Actor's Positions – decreasing in emphasis
  - Full front
  - $\frac{3}{4}$  front
  - Profile
  - $\frac{3}{4}$  back
  - Full back

# Four Basic Staging Techniques

- Cheat out – pivot the torso and turn the face toward the audience (share a scene)
- Giving the scene – when the audiences' attention shifts from one actor to another (the one who hlds the dominant stage position)
- Turning the scene in – actors who are not the key characters in a particular scene shift the angle of their bodies more upstage and then look directly at the scenes' key actor.
- Taking yourself out of a scene – the actor turns away from the audience into a  $\frac{3}{4}$  or full back position

# Stage Business

When an actor must make use of hand props, costume props, stage props other actors and even parts of the set, this is stage business

- This takes training and practice!
- Rules of food and drink:
  - Do not eat or drink any more than is necessary.
  - Unless the script calls for it, do not try to deliver lines with food in your mouth.
  - Learn how to dispose of food that is in your mouth. For example, practice disposing of it unnoticeably into a napkin.

# Vocal Acting

## **Pitch and Inflection** **Two types of characters**

- Pitch up – Lack confidence and tend to be fearful, intimidated and confused
- Pitch down – self-assured, dominating authoritative and overbearing.

# Four Inflections

- Rising – indicates questioning, surprise or shock
- Falling – signals the end of a statement. Also used to express depression, finality or firmness
- Sustained – staying on the same note – suggests calmness, decisiveness, or steadiness of purpose.
- Circumflex – the intonation of two or more vowel sounds for what ordinarily is a single vowel sound. Change the meaning of a word or stress a particular meaning.

**DO NOT ALLOW THE FLOW OF EMOTIONS FROM OTHER CHARACTERS TO PULL YOU OUT OF YOUR OWN CHARACTERIZATION.**