

SPRING 2020 CLASSES

METHOD ACTING

At the core of the Strasberg curriculum are the Method Acting classes. Students are required to take two Method Acting classes per semester, each with a different teacher. These classes are designed to train the actor in Lee Strasberg's systematic approach to acting known throughout the world as The Method. The technique develops the actor's ability to respond with real behavior to imaginary stimuli and trains the actor to use their personal experience to fire their imagination.

These four-hour classes are divided into two parts: work on one's self and work on the character.

The work one's self employs Lee Strasberg's relaxation and sensory exercises to train the actor's concentration, and eliminate the actor's individual habits of mental and physical tension, which limit their ability to express.

The relaxation is repeated in every class, building over the course of study a keen awareness of one's body and the ability to relax at will. Sensory exercises are also done each class, but become more complicated throughout the course of study. Sensory work begins with recreating ordinary objects and sensations using the five senses and moves towards more emotional stimuli. This part of class focuses on training an actor's talent.

The second part of class focuses on applying the exercises to scenework and learning how the sensory can help fulfill the demands placed upon the actor by a particular script. Students use the exercises to create organic behavior, make truthful choices, and also learn the way in which improvisation can be used to explore a character's motivation and deepen one's understand of the character and scene.

WRITING IN THE TIME OF CORONA WITH LINDSEY FERRENTINO

Spend two hours a week focused on yourself, distracting your brain, and focusing on your writing. Weekly in-class writing prompts will get your creative juices flowing. The class will ultimately culminate in coming up with an idea for a play and beginning that play, but we will spend a large portion of the class preparing to write that. Bring your laptops and get ready to explore your writing voice.

WORKING WITH THE DIRECTOR WITH VINCENT D'ONOFRIO

A select group of students - chosen by lottery - will have the opportunity to study with acclaimed Method Actor, Vincent D'Onofrio. In addition to sharing personal anecdotes, stories from his career, and details of his own acting process, Vincent takes each participant through sensory and monologue work at an individual level.

SINGING FOR THE ACTOR WITH LAINIE KAZAN

Students will start the class with Vocalese (singing exercises) and then Relaxation. Lastly, students work on Sensory Work. Students will accomplish the following in this class:

- How to choose material. What to look for to find the proper material for the individual student.
- Mic technique.
- How to put song arrangements together.
- Telling a personal story through song.
- Composers of music and lyrics.
- The Business of Show Business. How to deal with contracts, lawyers, publicists, agents, managers, etc.
- Putting a show together.
- Writing dialogue for your show.
- Putting a band together (Trio, Quartet or Big Band).
- Sound System/Monitors. How to use and operate them.
- Staging.
- Choosing wardrobe.

These are techniques are what Lainie has used her entire career.

The students' FINAL will consist of applying these techniques to 3 or 4 songs that they have worked on in class with dialogue, etc.

THEATRE DANCE

This class is a Musical Theater Dance class. Each class begins with a set warm up from the Musical Theatre tradition, pulled from American Dance Machine and Luigi techniques, and will include alignment, balance, gentle stretches, isolations and turn technique. We will then learn original choreography from two or more Broadway shows whose combinations require Very Little physical space in which to learn. Join Madline in her small space while you accomplish big things! (Once free from quarantine you would be able to perform these in a large group with everyone already knowing exactly what to do!!)

CREATING YOUR OWN MATERIAL

Actors need to take charge of their careers, which means they need to find and create material for themselves. We will work with each student to develop their own material. It could be a monologue, scene, play or film script. The course will start with identifying an idea. It will progress through character, theme and point of view. Each class will have written assignments to teach the development process. The students will mold and refine their idea into a finished product by the end of the semester. The course is designed to take the student's inspiration and bring it to fruition. This class will help you develop and create works using your own voice.

SINGING

Lee Strasberg placed Singing in the curriculum for the enhanced development of the actor's voice. The purpose of this course is: to introduce voice technique and establish good vocal habit through relaxation, alignment, respiration, phonation, support, registration, resonance, and articulation. Additionally, a daily warm-up routine will be developed suitable for auditions both spoken or sung. It should be noted that even for acting auditions actors are often asked to sing something. For those who already have a singing practice the course is structured to build on the individual's current repertoire. The songbook, developed by the students in conjunction with the teacher, will continue to grow and augment over subsequent semesters so that it covers a vast range of audition needs. The aim is to create a body of work that will prepare the singing student for the demands of the musical theatre industry and the actor for the extreme dramatic demands of voice on stage.

MASTERING SELF-TAPE

Self-taping is a different muscle than any other technique. More and more, Casting Directors are expecting higher quality self-tapes. This class will give you a comprehensive guide to setting up, shooting and editing your best self-tapes. In addition to being an audition class, focusing on script analysis, incorporating the method, breaking down characters and techniques you can use to gain confidence in your own choices when taping on your own, this class will go over the important technical side of things. From the right equipment, taking into consideration different budgets, maximizing your lighting, improving your sound, choosing the right camera and angles, setting yourself up on different online platforms, backgrounds, all the way to how to navigate this growing business side of our industry.

IMPROVISATION

Improvisation provides students with a powerful acting tool that helps explore material on a spontaneous and collaborative level. Students delve into a diverse range of unscripted scenes aimed to stimulate the imagination and engage the impulses of discovery.

CREATE YOUR OWN WORK

Creating Your Own Work is for the artist who is interested in developing original ideas into short and full length plays, sketches, short films or other mediums of storytelling through group improvisation work. Both comedy and drama are explored. This is a class intended to cater to the immediate needs of the individual artist and hone the skills necessary for creating original characters, stories and ideas. Students will employ writing, acting and improvisation exercises as a group to build out their original ideas with premise, character development, structure and theme. In addition to creating their own work, there is plenty of room for students to expand their creativity in other fields they'd like to explore including directing, producing, writing, camera work, etc. The main objective of the class is to create a safe and liberating space to create your own work. Though not mandatory, students have the opportunity to walk away from this class with a finished product. This could be a scene from a play they want to write, a short film, a digital sketch, the first episode of a web series, a fleshed out character that is performance ready or whatever work they want to create.

AMERICAN CINEMA

A survey of important American Cinema, filmmakers and actors from the silent era to today, Must be willing to watch great films and discuss them.

STRASBERG AND SCENE ANALYSIS**

Several years before Stanislavsky understood the logical evolution of his discoveries and insights into how an actor and a director needs to analyze a play, what is today called *active analysis*, Lee Strasberg intuited Stanislavsky's ultimate practice from his acting classes with Richard Boleslavsky and Maria Ouspenskaya at the American Laboratory Theatre in the mid-1920's and effectively demonstrated in his legendary productions with the Group Theatre. The organic form of a truly acting and thus theatre-based rehearsal process is built on the use of *rehearsed improvisations*, called *etudes* by Stanislavsky. These etudes "actively" analyze and explore the *dramatic action* of the play – i.e., *the given circumstances, events, facts, objectives, psycho-physiological-action, counteraction and adaptations or adjustments*, the text-based means through which an actor builds a the playwright's character. Before one can "actively analyze" a play one must know how to break its text into the *bits of action* that

make up the actual *play*, which is “hidden” or embedded “sub textually” in the text. This is the architecture of acting and directing and the basic material of theatre. This class teaches the student the process of *action analysis* as the foundation of acting.

AUDITION

This class is designed to prepare the method actor for auditioning in a variety of casting situations. Students will learn to refine their type in addition to learning the basics of marketing through head shots, resumes, and finding an agent. Students will be introduced to a variety of techniques and audition materials suitable for specific types of work such as plays, movies, soap opera, commercials and more. Students will develop a thorough understanding of the casting process from answering a casting call, to taking direction at the audition, through the call back, and ultimately, the offer of a part.

SPEECH

The purpose of this class is to first address the underlying accent issues the student has. In order to do so, the student must be able to speak English understandably with their given accent. Students will learn the basic differences between Theatre Standard American English and General American English in addition to fundamental concepts like voice and unvoiced consonants, vowel and consonant combinations, consonant and consonant combinations, vowel and vowel combinations, American English intonation, general word stress, phrasing, etc. This class is formatted around students reading and performing excerpts, corrections being given, and questions being addressed. Additionally, the students will learn the International Phonetic Alphabet to ensure that the student is speaking with proper intonation. Conversational correction is also utilized as there is an inextricable link between knowledge of grammar and idioms and the student’s ability to concentrate on accent reduction.

TAI CHI

Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese martial art, meditation and health practice based on the Taoist principles of balance and harmony of mind-body-spirit. Tai Chi

teaches the student to cultivate awareness and sensitivity of intention, action, and effort through the practice of breathing, posture, alignment and movement. Emphasis is placed on learning how to be “present and responsive” to internal and external stimuli by applying the principles of grounding, centering, focusing and listening.

MONOLOGUE

This course is designed to assist the actor with finding the best individual monologues suited to them. The actors will work on several 1 minute and 2 minute audition monologues (the standard audition time) during the 12-week course. We will explore classical and contemporary monologues, learn how to break the monologues into beats, analyze the text, and block them. In addition, audition outfits and photos and resumes will be covered. The actor will leave the class prepared with audition monologues to get the job.

DIALECTS

Dialects class will provide the actor with the ability to utilize the primary dialects found in musical theatre, as well as to understand the process of researching all dialects and accents first-hand.

VOCAL PRODUCTION

This course endeavors to impart a vocal technique that is open, free, flexible, lively and possessing an extensive and colorful range. Vocal production is a dynamic vocal technique specifically designed to compliment the work of the Method actor. The goal of the course is to develop an open and embodied instrument and provide the artist with an effective “neutral,” allowing for optimal exploration of human emotion and physical expression. This class begins its training process in the recognition and release of constricting, tension-related habits that impede the full, free, flexible, and expressive use of the vocal instrument. This release and recognition is achieved through exploration and exercises in relaxation, alignment, respiration, phonation, support, registration, resonance, and articulation.

SHAKESPEARE AT THE GLOBE

The plays of William Shakespeare are the foundation for the last 400 years of theatrical history and great acting. A working knowledge of Shakespeare is essential for any serious student. In this class we will table-read, analyze and discuss four Shakespeare plays while presenting rehearsed scenes and speeches every week. Al Pacino once said to Lee Strasberg “I could act this stuff if only it weren’t for all these words” and Lee responded, “that’s Shakespeare.” There is no need to fear the language. Beginners are always welcome. This is a two-hour History and Acting Elective.

ACTING ON CAMERA

This is conducted as an immersion course that gives the student practical experience in the best acting techniques required by most narrative Feature Films and Television Series that are shot like Features. These are correctly known as “Single-Camera” productions as distinct from “Multi-Camera” Studio productions.

MOVEMENT

Utilizing various techniques, awareness exercises, physical explorations and improvisations this course gives students the tools to better understand how their bodies work and how to use themselves more efficiently and less habitually. By learning how to use relaxation to gain control over their physical expression, the actor can use themselves more effectively and creatively and thus slip more easily into the skin, the essence, the passions and needs of the character in response to the circumstances of the scene.

BUSINESS OF ACTING

This class is designed to help bridge the gap between studio training and the professional demands of the actor. It will help students develop a strategic plan to get work and will provide students with a better understanding of industry expectations and how to translate their in-class work into a successful career and

become self-sufficient artists after finishing their training. This class encourages students toward specific career goals, creates a framework for their achievement and ensures that they are prepared for what the industry requires of them. Students leave with a greater understanding of themselves within the industry, as well as the tools to tackle auditions in various media and meet with representation.

Topics of discussion include but are not limited to: agents, managers, casting directors, breakdowns, creating a reel, managing your time efficiently, unions, websites, headshots and resumes, and more.

HIP HOP FOR THE ACTOR

The class begins with a well rounded warm up, beginning with grooves related to the foundation you will be learning. This serves as a way to warm the body and dive right into the material, allowing your body to follow before thinking too much about the movement. Then we concentrate on isolation down the chain of the body, including the isolation necessary to produce a wave. After this, we head to the floor to do a footwork drill, also serving to strengthen the body as well as give the student more material to play with. Warmup is concluded with a stretch.

After warm up, time is spent delving further into the material that was encountered in warm up. J9 will either give a short drill at this point or have students go across the floor. The main focus here is to have a discussion (whether physical or verbal) about what the foundation entails and where it is derived from. This all leads into the combination, this will help students put steps into a sequential format and they can enjoy dancing to a routine at the end of class. We add on to the sequence each week, culminating into a large dance sequence by the end of the semester.

Class is usually ended with a Freestyle Circle, combining concepts that the actors are learning in acting class with what they learn in dance. This is usually very joyful, freeing and the best part of class. Students are guided to explore their characters, their feelings, and their movement.