

## ASSIGNMENT: READING ON ACTING

### Instructions

As you continue to work in the theatre you have come to realize that you not only “learn by doing,” although this is certainly the primary method, but you also learn from observation, and reading and traditional study techniques. Therefore, when assigned each student-actor will read, write about, discuss, and be tested on the following theatrical writings. Neatness, completeness, and clarity are a must and will be graded.

WRITING INSTRUCTIONS. Write a paper in which you do the following:

FIRST, write a brief summary of the book in 2 to 4 paragraphs.

SECOND, detail the most unique or interesting comments/statements/elements on acting by the author.

THIRD, comment on elements of acting discussed by the author of which you are already aware, but are reinforced by the author (reinforcing what you already know). Write 3 paragraphs covering 3 areas of acting technique which you have already studied, but the book reinforces by dealing with in detail.

FOURTH, what new information about acting does the author detail that you “wish” to put into practice in your own acting (learned anew or discuss contradictory techniques or philosophies to those you have already learned). Write 3 paragraphs covering 3 areas of acting technique which you have NOT already studied, but the book deals with in detail.

PAPER STYLE REQUIREMENTS: Title Page: including book title, book author, your name. Body: 2 to 3 pages typed, double spaced, font size: 12 point, margins: 1” all sides, or 5 pages handwritten, double spaced, printed clearly not script. Staple. You will receive extra credit if you three-hole punch the paper for placement in your portfolio.

Please remember you will be charged for lost books!

SOTA Students: Before you leave for WINTER & SPRING RECESS you must pick up your reading assignment book from your teacher.

A sample of a four year drama/theatre class reading assignment follows next. This is the actual reading assignments used at SOTA.

## YEAR ONE

ASSIGNMENT: WINTER RECESS READING

DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_

Richard Boleslavsky. *Acting: The First Six Lessons*. Theatre Arts Books, 1963. (122 pgs. The first text on the Stanislavsky system published in America in 1933. Originally published in 1923 as a series of articles in *Theatre Arts Magazine*.)

### Sources for further study

A short biography on Boleslavsky and an extended article by Boleslavsky (drawn from unpublished notes of 1923) appears in *Actors on Acting, The Theories, Techniques, and Practices of the World's Great Actors, Told in Their Own Words*, edited by Toby Cole, Helen Krich Chinoy, and Patrick Sheehan. Three Rivers Press. (Various editions published since 1949. Currently in 4th edition, 1995).

ASSIGNMENT: SPRING RECESS READING

DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_

Melissa Bruder, Lee Michael Cohn, Madeleine Olnek, Nathaniel Pollack, Robert Previto, and Scott Zigler. *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*. Vintage Books, 1986. (94 pgs.)

*Practical acting techniques developed and taught by David Mamet and the Atlantic Theatre Company*

### Sources for further study

To read more about David Mamet’s approach to acting and his principle of Practical Aesthetics see his book, *True and False: Heresy and Common Sense for the Actor*. Pantheon Books, 1997. hdbk. & pbk.

## YEAR TWO

ASSIGNMENT: WINTER RECESS READING DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Uta Hagen and Haskel Frankel. *Respect for Acting*. Macmillan, 1973.

ASSIGNMENT: SPRING RECESS READING DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Chekhov. Mel Gordon, ed. *On the Technique of Acting*. Harper Perennial, 1993. First complete edition of Chekhov's *To the Actor*.

### Sources for further study

Uta Hagen's second book was *A Challenge for the Actor*. Macmillan, 1991.

Michael Chekhov. *To the Actor* (Paperback 288 pgs). Routledge; Revised edition (June 1, 2002)

*This handbook for actors (and directors) has been revised and expanded by Mala Powers. It includes: a previously unpublished chapter on 'Psychological Gesture', translated into English by the celebrated director Andrei Malaev-Babel.*

Michael Chekhov: On Theatre and the Art of Acting: The Five-Hour Master Class 4 CDs and Booklet (Paperback) 2004

Michael Chekhov USA West Studio web site: [http://www.chekhov.net/mic\\_main.html](http://www.chekhov.net/mic_main.html). It includes pages on the Michael Chekhov approach, a biography, and many other areas.

## YEAR THREE

ASSIGNMENT: WINTER RECESS READING DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_  
David Ball. *Backwards and Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays*. Southern Ill. Univ. Press, 1983.

ASSIGNMENT: SPRING RECESS READING DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Shurtleff. *Audition*. Bantam Books, 1980. (and video)  
"His 'twelve guideposts' have stood the test of time and should be read again and again." Jane Armitage, Oberlin College

## YEAR FOUR


ASSIGNMENT: WINTER RECESS READING DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Cohen. *Acting Professionally : Raw Facts About Careers in Acting*. (5th edition) Mayfield Publishing Company, 1997. (Paperback - 192 pgs)

ASSIGNMENT: SPRING RECESS READING DATE DUE: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mel Shapiro. *The Director's Companion*. Harcourt Brace College Publishers. 1998. (Paperback - 235 pgs)

### FOR YOUR WORKSHEET ASSIGNMENT GO TO

<http://sfsotatheatre.org/>

click on:

**ACTING IS ACTION – Web Pages** 

and click on:



**WORKSHEET: READING ASSIGNMENT NOTES**

and



**READING ON ACTING RUBRIC**

*Duplicate as needed for your use.*