

# Behind the Scene

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## Auditioning for Camera: How to Put Your Best Foot Forward *By Paul Awad*

Have you ever wondered why another actor got the part and you didn't? If so, you're not alone. Most actors have tried to figure out why they didn't get a role over another actor, but a few simple steps can help you land the job.

1. **KNOW WHEN THE AUDITION STARTS.** You might think that the audition begins the moment you step in front of the camera, but it actually begins much earlier.

From the moment you step into the room you are playing a role – that of the actor who gets the job. You are not merely auditioning for that part, but for future parts as well. You should act confident, professional, and happy to be there. You may not be right for this part but, if you play your cards right, you will be remembered for future roles.

2. **PAY ATTENTION TO WHO IS AUDITIONING YOU.** Know

the individual who is auditioning you. It may be a casting person or the director. Learn his or her name. Remember it. Nothing leaves a lasting impression in a director's mind like an actor who hasn't taken the time to learn who is who.

3. **ASK QUESTIONS.** Too often, actors are intimidated by the audition process. They are afraid to ask questions for fear they may come across as bossy or difficult. It is in your best interest to learn

## This Year's Cabaret—An Extravagant Success! *By Sandy Oshinsky, Event Chair*

Life is a cabaret, my friends! After all the checks were written and all the auction items happily wrapped and carted away by their new owners, this year's Cabaret Extravaganza—held at the Wyndham Washington Hotel on November 10—became a wonderful memory. It was an overwhelming success that exceeded even our high expectations. If you missed it this year, put it on your calendar *now* for next year, when we will

celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Cabaret benefit for the Theatre Lab. (For now, just save every Monday evening in November 2004. We'll get you the exact date as soon as we have it.)

I am pleased to report that this year's benefit brought in 20 percent more revenue last year's. The event was once again sold out, with many whole tables being purchased in advance. One nice addition this year was the presentation of a short video that beauti-

fully highlighted the activities and achievements of The Theatre Lab, including the benefits of the Life Stories program in the participants' own words and the Directors' recent Linowes award. In addition, teens that participated in the summer program entertained with a song.

Three hundred people stood shoulder-to-shoulder submitting their competing bids on the 150 silent auction items that were donated. These

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everything you can about the role you are auditioning for and what the director or casting person is looking for. You may discover a key piece of information about the part

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included dinners, vacations, theatre tickets, arts and crafts items, trips, exercise classes and equipment, and even a walk-on part in a movie. The live auction featured a professional auctioneer who kept the bidding lively and amusing. Bidding went so quickly that if you scratched your head, it was likely to be taken as a bid! The live auction items included attending a taping of a

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## Auditioning for Camera

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that will help you land the job. Remember, nothing ventured, nothing gained.

4. **REHEARSE.** Often, you will do a cold reading audition. You will be given the script and told to work with it until you are called to appear before the camera. If you are allowed, take the script into the hall and read it to yourself quietly. If you are unable to leave the room, mouth it to yourself. You want to hear how it sounds. Make notes. Try to find a beginning, middle, and

end. Try to show your range, even with the simplest of scripts. Remember, the first time you hear it should not be when you're standing up auditioning for the casting people. Just because it's a cold reading, doesn't mean you should be doing it cold.

5. **FACE TIME.** From the moment they start recording your audition to the moment they stop, you are performing. Don't make the mistake of thinking that the only thing that is important is your performance of the script. Even when you are saying your name and representation,



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you are acting. You should appear relaxed and happy to be on camera. Why would anyone want to cast you if you look like you hate being there? Ask whoever is auditioning you where you should look. Some

## This Year's Cabaret

(Continued from page 1)

future Meet the Press show and then brunch with NBC's Tom Sherwood, a week in a Rehoboth beach home for 10, and a trip to New York via Amtrak, with hotel, dinner and theatre tickets. The auction was topped off by a week's stay in a Santa Barbara, California home, including

You won't want to miss our  
10th Anniversary  
Extravaganza in 2004!

airfare, brunch and dinner at two favorite Santa Barbara restaurants.

Among the evening's highlights, Neil Sturomski was honored for his many years of dedication and service to the Theatre Lab. He was the prior Chair of the event and is responsible for much of the growth and success that the event enjoys today.

After a delicious buffet dinner (definitely better than typical benefit fare!), guests were treated to the Cabaret show featuring Deb Gottesman, Buzz Mauro and Michael Rodgers—the Directors of The Theatre Lab, collectively

known as "The Mood Swings." Their musical numbers were funny, sensitive and timely, and their delivery was flawless. The cabaret was the highlight of an incredibly enjoyable and successful evening.

Many people were responsible for making this year's benefit so special, but Amy Austin deserves special thanks. When Amy asked me to chair the event, she promised her support, and she was there every step of the way. I could not have undertaken this job without her continuous help. Thanks also to the marvelous host committee who worked so hard right up to the evening of the event to make it so successful. We are already beginning to think about next year, our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, and would encourage anyone who is interested in finding out how they could participate to call the Theatre Lab office. Ω

*"If you spend time looking down at the script, it's less time we see your face. Remember, directors and casting persons want to see your eyes."*

casting is done to camera, some to another person. Once you pick your focal point, stick to it. Unless it's a character choice, having your eyes dart back and forth comes across as inexperienced or untrustworthy, neither of which you want. If you are reading from the script, hold the script up high and to the side. Avoid looking down. If you spend time looking down at the script, it's less time we see your face. Remember, directors and casting persons want to see your eyes.

6. **DON'T APOLOGIZE.** Don't

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## Something New For You...

### JANUARY CLASSES

#### *The Actor's Workout*

Laurence Olivier once wrote, "Never give up on exercise. The actor should be as fit as a boxer, as poised as a matador, as agile as a ballet dancer." Okay, maybe that matador thing is a bit excessive. But, at The Theatre Lab, we agree that you've got to feel your best to perform your best.

So we're introducing The Actor's Workout, a brand new concept in acting training that really does a body good. A six-week class combining training in stage combat, physical comedy, Laban Technique, relaxation strategies, mime, clowning, mask work and more, The Actor's Workout will help you achieve and maintain the physical preparedness you need to act effortlessly. It's a class where technique and physique intersect to produce peak performance both onstage and off. And it's way more fun than going to the gym!

Theatre Lab instructor Karen Abromaitis, who is also an accomplished actor, mime, and fight choreographer, has designed a high-energy acting/movement class for students

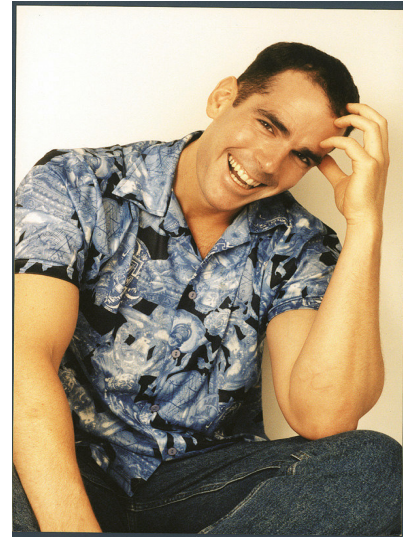
at all levels of acting experience and all levels of fitness.

In each class you'll learn techniques you can use throughout the week to hone your acting skills while you get in shape. And it's such a good time, you won't even notice you're exercising. The cost of the course is \$135 for Theatre Lab Members and \$150 for Non-Members. **Take it in conjunction with any other class we offer, and it will cost just \$100!**

You can enroll in the course for one six-week session or make it a part of your regular exercise routine by taking it every time it's offered—Karen will be teaching it in three back-to-back sessions from January through May.

#### *Advanced Scene Study*

Acclaimed director Jose Carrasquillo (former Artistic Director of the Group Theatre in Seattle) returns for one session only to help students take it to the next level. A fast-paced course incorporating both classical and contemporary works, Advanced Scene Study focuses on improving text interpretation, clarifying moment-to-moment decision making, developing confi-



*Eddie Sarfaty will be coming down from NYC to teach "Stand Up Comedy Workshop" this Spring. Eddie has performed across the country and can be seen this season on Comedy Central's Friday night show, **Premium Blend** and is currently working on a half hour special for that network.*

dent movement choices, deepening connection with the material, and more. A must for those serious about working in the Washington area. **Prerequisite:** Beginning Scene Study or permission of the instructor.

#### *Comedy Sketch Writing*

If you watch *Saturday Night Live* and say to yourself, I could do *that!*, this could be your big break. David Toney, former comedy writer for Fox's "In Living Color," teaches you to pitch ideas, develop compact comic premises, write amusing dialogue, and create "franchise characters" (like Molly Shannon's Mary Catherine Gallagher and the Cone-

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Where Are They Now?

**Jill Barry** will be appearing in *Wit* at Silver Spring Stage in January along with **Trish Kerle**, who recently starred in the Cedar Lane production of *A View from the Bridge*; **Rusty Clauss** played the plum role of Grandma in Ford's Theatre's production of *The Grapes of Wrath*; **Colleen Estep** is performing in the one-act play *Perfectly Good Airplanes* at Grosvenor Park; **John Feist** understudied roles in Round House Theatre's production of *Heartbreak House*; **Joe Fiorillo** is Uncle Tony in *Tony and Tina's Wedding* at Dave and

Buster's; **Jeremy Frankel** appeared in *Lost in Yonkers* with Silver Spring Stage; **Joe Lewis** played Prospero in the Chevy Chase Players' production of *The Tempest*; **Bill Hensel**, **Debbie Kieffer**, **Paul MacWhorter**, **JoAnn Mangione**, **Paul McLane**, **Jerry Oshinsky**, and **Richard Wilt** appeared in a series of staged readings of plays by Tom Stoppard and Noel Coward at MetroStage, starring Theatre Lab faculty members Deb Gottesman, Michael Kramer, and Buzz Mauro, among others. **Ω**



## Something New For You...

(Continued from page 3)

heads). No prior writing experience required.

### *Great Ideas in Acting*

Don't know your Hagen from your Haagen Daz? Think Stanislavsky played Bobby Fisher for the World

**Don't miss *Creating a Musical Role!***

Chess Title? Then this class is for you. Your theatre education won't be complete until you understand the teachings of the great masters of acting. Helen Hayes Award winner Rick Foucheux (*Twelfth Night, Oleanna, Edmond*) leads you on a whirlwind journey through the acting theories of Michael Chekhov, David Mamet, Uta Hagen and, of course, the "father of modern acting," Constantin Stanislavsky. This is a discussion-based course for actors and non-actors, with a demonstration component (where theories are put into practice) for those students who wish to apply what they're learning to their own acting process. Anyone who knows Rick knows the discussion will be lively, the stories will provide an incomparable insider's view of the craft, and the take-away value will be priceless. Strongly recommended for students who have taken scene study courses but who have no formal exposure to acting theory.

### *Group Singing*

If you like to sing, but restrict yourself to the shower or your car, maybe it's time to think about branching out. The Theatre Lab's Group Singing class is a low-stress way to develop your skills as a singer and take that all-important first step toward singing in public. No solos here—just a group of people learning together about vocal production, rhythm, harmony, and even a little bit about how to read music. The class proceeds step by step and culminates in the singing of fully harmonized choral pieces. And you may be surprised at what beautiful music it's possible to make together. Instructor and Theatre Lab Director Buzz Mauro has tons of experience in both musical theatre and choral singing, and can bring out the best in anyone's voice.

Group Singing would be a terrific starter course to help you build confidence in your singing voice. And you'll have a lot of fun while you're at it!

### *New Play Workshop*

Michael Kramer is back with another New Play Workshop, the course in which students rehearse a play that has never been produced before. Under Michael's expert guidance (he has a long list of professional acting, directing, and stage management credits to his name) students will tackle all the special challenges that come with a brand new script and present the results in a staged reading open to the public

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at the end of the course. The class will be working on a new play by Steve LaRocque, a widely produced playwright who will work closely with the group, offering straight-from-the-horse's-mouth insight into characterization and motivation, and providing continual rewrites, using student input to help shape the final version of the play. Students will receive all the benefits of a traditional scene study class plus training in how to deal with rewrites and incorporate input from the playwright, how to understand a "raw" script without the aid of previous performances to guide you, and how to handle the special performance requirements of a staged reading. The number of students in the class will be limited by the number of roles in the play, so please call early if you think you might be interested.

### *Principles of Comedy II*

The laughs just keep coming—and so does the comedy training! Now offered just once a year, Principles of Comedy II is for those serious about being funny. Through comedy improv exercises and extensive classical and contemporary scene work, Theatre Lab Director and comedienne Deb Gottesman prepares actors for working on a wide range of comedic stage roles. **Prerequisite:** Principles of Comedy I or permission of instructor.

COMING THIS SPRING

### *Creating a Musical Role*

Sing out, Louise! And that goes for the rest of you, too. If you've ever thought it would be great fun to be

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## Something New For You...

(Continued from page 4)

in a musical, you were right. There's no theatrical endeavor more collaborative, more challenging, or more exhilarating than telling a great story through music. And now's your chance to be a part of it. Creating a Musical Role, based on The Theatre Lab's wildly popular "Creating a Role" class, will provide students the opportunity to rehearse and perform *Ragtime*, one of the most celebrated musicals of the modern era. Adapted by Lynn Ahrens, Stephen Flaherty, and Terrence McNally from E.L. Doctorow's prize-winning novel, *Ragtime* offers a sweeping portrait of early 20<sup>th</sup> century America, with fascinating characters, unforgettable songs, and a beautiful book. This ambitious project will take students through a typical professional production experience, from learning the notes, to researching the characters, to incorporating movement, to acting the songs, to finding the arc of the scenes, to taking the final bow. The course culminates in two public performances.

No previous musical experience is required for participation in this production—the class is open to anyone who can carry a tune. Cho-

rus roles (which are both interesting and demanding) will not require auditions and will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Major singing roles will be assigned by audition.

Taught by Theatre Lab Directors Buzz Mauro and Deb Gottesman, Creating a Musical Role is a rare educational opportunity. It will likely fill quickly, so sign up ASAP if you're interested. **Prerequisite:** Beginning Scene Study or a musical theatre course or permission of the instructors. Group Singing (Session I) is highly recommended as a primer for those new to the musical theatre world who wish to take this course.

### Stand Up Comedy Workshop

In this course students will search out the universal in their own relationships, experiences and opinions, incorporating them into the development of a unique stage persona and material appropriate for stand up comedy. There will be a strong emphasis on the craft joke writing and delivery and the course will culminate with students performing their material before an audience.

### Public Speaking the Actor's Way

Want to deliver a dramatic speech that will captivate a crowd? The secrets of applied acting will help you take center stage with confidence. Taught by Theatre Lab Director Deb Gottesman, who is also the co-founder of the applied acting consulting firm Center Stage Communications and co-author (along with Buzz Mauro) of *Taking Center Stage: Masterful Public Speaking Using Acting Skills You Never Knew You Had* (Penguin/Putnam 2001), this course will focus on developing powerful content, creating a reliable rehearsal process, alleviating anxiety, projecting en-



thusiasm, improving physical and vocal control, and much more. A unique lunchtime offering, Public Speaking the Actor's Way offers top quality professional speaking training from one of the nation's foremost experts in the field of applied acting at one-tenth the price you would pay if you took the course outside The Theatre Lab! Ω

## New Grants

The Theatre Lab is pleased to acknowledge the generous support of many new and renewing funders in fall 2003. The organization has just received \$24,000 from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities for general support and arts education projects operating in the DC school system; \$10,000 from the Fannie Mae Foundation Fund of the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region for our Life Stories projects for incarcerated and at-risk youth; \$4,000 from the Anne S. and Henry S. Reich Foundation for our Life Stories project for seniors; and \$2,750 from the Rachel Liba Cardozo Children's Foundation for youth scholarships. Ω

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**Staff:**

Deb Gottesman, Director  
Buzz Mauro, Director  
Michael Rodgers, Managing Director  
Colleen Estep, Program Coordinator

For information on advertising in *Behind the Scene*, please contact our office and ask for Michael Rodgers



## Playwriting Competition a Hit!

The results are in! We asked you to come up with a five-minute comedy that could be featured in our annual Cabaret Extravaganza and we received more than 25 terrific entries. Congratulations to First Prize winner (and first-time playwright) Tim Aldrich for his mini-masterpiece *Lines*, which brought down the house at the Cabaret. Kudos also to Tom Sherwood, author of *America: Closed for Security Reasons*, which took home second prize. Stay tuned for an evening of staged readings of the top submissions coming in early 2004. (And drop us an email if you'd like to act in or direct any of them). Ω

# Record-Breaking Cabaret Extravaganza!

The Theatre Lab's 9<sup>th</sup> annual *Cabaret Extravaganza* lived up to its name—delivering great food and entertainment and **raising over \$90,000** for our education and outreach programs. The event, held November 10 at the elegant Washington Wyndham Hotel, featured our biggest silent auction ever, along with a brand new cabaret act from *The Mood Swings* — comprised of The Theatre Lab's very own Deb Gottesman, Buzz Mauro and Michael Rodgers.

Many thanks to **Event Chair Sandy Oshinsky** and our **event sponsors—Heritage Title, Inc. ♦ Dickstein, Shapiro, Morin and Oshinsky, LLP ♦ Lillian Kamen Fund**. We would also like to thank our Table Hosts: Beech Street Foundation ♦ Sally Brice and Kathleen Shank ♦ DC Smiles ♦ Development Finance International, Inc. ♦ Michael and Roberta Gottesman ♦ Lent Scrivner & Roth, LLP ♦ Jerry and Sandy Oshinsky ♦ Sanford & Doris Slavin Foundation ♦ Neil Sturomski and Derek Wright ♦ Sturomski & Associates.

Thanks also to Barbara Klein our emcee for the evening and our teen performers from the Musical Theatre Institute for Teens 2003. And congratulations to the terrific Host Committee of Theatre Lab friends that made it all possible: Sally Brice & Kathleen Shank, Heather & Richard Cass, George & Phyllis Cohen, Stephen Daigler, Lisa Dickey, Jill Dixon, Pat Douglass, Thalia Doukas, Traci Dunphy, Laura Einstein & Helene Madonick, Colleen & John Estep, John Feist, Jim & Sandy Fitzpatrick, Keri & David Ford, Grayson Fowler, Jeanne Goldberg, Michael Gottesman, Robert & Sarah Haft, Sandra Jerez, Marcia Kuntz, Robert Kapler, Irv Lachow, JoAnn Mangione, Bo & Lois Meyer, Doug Miller and Jeffrey Slavin, Jerry Oshinsky, Bill and Evelyn Perkins, Margaret Poethig, Alan Roth, and Tom Sher-

## Auditioning for Camera

(Continued from page 2)

apologize for making a mistake or for being nervous. Most people will have no idea you are nervous unless you point it out to them. And, if they do notice you're nervous, you certainly don't need to state the obvious.

**THINK POSITIVELY.** Don't focus on the negative. Tell yourself, "I'm going to do a great job with this audition! The casting person/director is going to enjoy my performance!" Visualize your audition going well. Visualization works for athletes. Why not for you? Ω

*Paul Awad is a film and commercial director who teaches a variety of screenacting classes, including Making It in Commercials (Session III), at The Theatre Lab.*

Where are YOU now? Contact us about your theatre exploits and we'll include you in the next *Behind the Scene*.  
Contact@theatrelab.org

**Act  
outside  
the box!**

# Happy New Year!