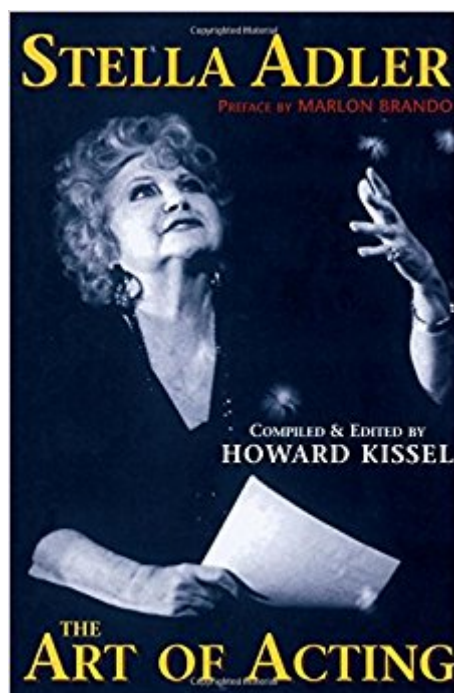


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The Art Of Acting



Synopsis

Stella Adler was one of the 20th Century's greatest figures. She is arguably the most important teacher of acting in American history. Over her long career, both in New York and Hollywood, she offered her vast acting knowledge to generations of actors, including Marlon Brando, Warren Beatty, and Robert De Niro. The great voice finally ended in the early Nineties, but her decades of experience and teaching have been brilliantly caught and encapsulated by Howard Kissel in the twenty-two lessons in this book. Hardcover.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This second collection of Adler's papers precedes the material found in the previous collection (Stella Adler on Ibsen, Strindberg and Chekov, LJ 4/15/99), ending as she begins text analysis. Here Kissel (David Merrick) has taken tapes, transcriptions, notebooks, and other sources to reconstruct an acting course in 22 lessons. What results is Adler at her strongest. Coming from a theatrical family and having studied with Stanislavsky, she became an old-fashioned autocratic teacher determined to pass on the best that she knows. She was certainly the best of her generation. The lessons are graduated from very basic matters to quite complex issues of textual analysis and decorum. Though mostly monologs, they include enough exercises and student responses to get the flavor of Adler's work. Some themes run through these classes: American culture is bankrupt, Lee Strasberg got Stanislavsky wrong, and class and its formality must be learned in order to do major plays through the realist period. This is required reading for anyone interested in theater practice.

DT
Thomas E. Luddy, Salem State Coll., MA
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When Adler died in 1992, the theater lost a great teacher, whose depth of experience alone made her invaluable. Daughter of one of the greats of Yiddish theater, Jacob Adler, she studied with Stanislavski, was a founder of the Group Theater and appeared in many of its seminal productions, married the brilliant critic Harold Clurman (they later divorced), and after the Group Theater folded, founded an acting school that rivaled Lee Strasberg's. But she never wrote a book about her theories and techniques. This collection, culled from sound recordings of her at work, at least re-creates the feel of her classes. Editor Kissel deserves great credit for shaping what could have been a chaotic collage of pronouncements into a coherent whole. The book's 22 lively chapters detail Adler's techniques for preparing her students for a life on the stage. Theater aficionados will appreciate Adler's discussion of modern plays and her belief that acting is a rare, privileged profession, and young actors will benefit from the many acting exercises sprinkled throughout the text. Jack Helbig

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This book changed my life! I never write reviews but felt inspired to write one for this book. It was recommended to me by Bob Proctor and another one of his coaches. I kept asking for a way to change my self-image so that I could lose the extra 10 pounds I wanted to get rid of and they highly recommended this book. After reading the first 5 chapters I was so amazed. The most important thing I learned was that I could use my imagination to act as my ideal self and therefore create it. I imagine all the time being a fabulous, stylish, slender Queen as well as everything around me. I imagine wearing the stylish clothes, eating slowly and with delicate, fancy silverware on gold lined royal plates with high-quality, artfully designed foods. I sit like a Queen, I walk like a Queen, I even drive my car like a Queen. Just totally elegant, confident, beautiful and like I am so important and lucky. And it's so fun! As silly as it sounds it totally works! I barely have food cravings or overeat. I feel so much more confident in myself. I feel like I honor and respect myself more. And definitely a whole lot happier :) Highly recommend this book not just for acting but if you want to change the way you think about yourself. And to change negative habits, thoughts, and self-sabotaging behavior.

The Art of Acting is a great book on the subject of acting written by one of the premier acting teachers of the 20th century. Adler's book is inspirational, powerful, and profound. She explains, in great detail, various actions the actor may be called upon to perform on stage and leads her

students through various exercises meant to connect the actor with the imagination and train themselves to realistically behave within the context of their character's background, costume, environment, social status, and culture. The only reason I gave this book four stars instead of five is that I feel it is not as use-able as some other acting books. Adler sometimes goes on (and on and on) describing the nature of some kind of action ("to reminiscence") or something and...what am I supposed to DO with that? It feels a lot like her interpretation (read opinion) of the nature of those things and how they should be played. Again, it just seemed to wax philosophical more than useful from time to time. There was also the advice "the actress does not sneeze on stage" to which I wanted to shout "COME ON Stella!"...my point is, again, if you want something really practical you should take a class while reading the book so it's easier to see how to use this information, and/or pick a different book. With all that said, she makes a lot of good points and is very powerful. The dignity she brings to acting is extraordinary and her emphasis on imagination is fascinating. I recommend this book to actors, directors, and anyone interested in theatre and acting. It's a beautiful book, and I intend to re-read it eventually. Hopefully I'll find more utility in a second reading.

The classic. If you want to act, get this book, read it, do the exercises, practice them and just go for it. Even if you do not wish to act on stage or screen, and you simply want to make of your life a better experience -- more valuable and enriching for yourself and others -- then read this book and do the exercises. If you want a different story for yourself, a richer life, a more profound journey on this planet, read this book and do the exercises. This book is about life. Acting is her way of talking about a cool excellent approach to living.

Stella Adler puts forth the idea that an actor must have SIZE. That is, to stand in front of the world and speak great words and perform great actions, one must have a mind and presence poised to take on the universal problems presented by great playwrights. An actor must develop a mind worthy of great ideas. And that's just where the fun begins. From there, an actor must learn to dissect text and create circumstances. An actor must learn to visualize and experience those circumstances in vivid detail. An actor must learn to identify action and disassemble it until every bit of that action is seen and performed by every bit of the actor. I enjoyed Æ Sanford Meisner on Acting. It presented a series of exercises and examples of students failing at those exercises. At the end of the book, one appreciated Meisner's system and how the practises may help develop strong impulses. Stella's book has exercises too, and it also has short examples of students attempting

them. But this is not where the heart of the book is. The heart is in its passionate declaration of what an actor's responsibility is, and how an actor - an artist - perceives the work and seeks to be worthy of it.

I'm not an actor but I bought it to understand method acting and Marlon Brando (her most famous disciple) lot of good tips in life actor or not, but one thing I can't understand maybe a schooled actor can help. She says something like: "If you bring your life experiences to Julius Caesar how do you think your rejection at the high school dance even measures up to Marc Antony's dilemma?" yet Brando says in interview after interview: "If I need to be mad, I think of how my father treated me." so where's the connection? I don't understand that, wouldn't she have taught him: "Your anger at your father cannot measure to Marc Antony." or something like that. Thanks.

Perhaps the most important work ever written for an actor. It is also essential reading for anyone who peruses a life in the arts. Stella Adler had a first-rate mind and her insight into the creative process is a remarkable journey into the world of the imagination and sets standards and guidelines that are the gold standard not just for actors but for all artists.

Great book! I'm currently taking a class in her technique and even though I don't agree with everything Stella says, she is a great teacher and this book gives an accurate account of her life and technique.

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