

## The TEAM

*TEAM for Actors* synthesizes three elements in human behavior: thought, emotion, and action. This holistic technique helps actors see how these three inter-related parts are present in the actor's life, in the character's life, and in basic human behavior. This union of the first three parts combined with the actor's Personal Connection to these elements manifests a fully realized, passionate, embodied performance.

**TEAM is an acronym: Thought + Emotion + Action = Manifestation**

The book provides a chapter for each aspect of the approach, presenting theories and tangible methods for exploring the areas of Thought, Emotion, and Action. The Manifestation chapter guides the actor through the process of unifying with the character's experience and moving from theory into embodiment.

*TEAM for Actors* unites: traditional actor training approaches, basic human behavior theory, and the somatic approach of Alba Emoting™. This unification assists the actor in moving from the theoretical, to the practical, and into the tangible. The root of the word *somatic* is *soma* meaning, "living body as experienced within," a term meant to resolve the gap between the mind and body, representing a holistic perspective of the person. This book often refers to the Alba Emoting™ technique<sup>6</sup>, developed by neuroscientist Dr. Susana Bloch. Alba Emoting is a reliable, safe, and measurable method for embodying emotions and actions of expression. Alba Emoting theory is threaded throughout *TEAM for Actors* and provides a scientifically proven method for understanding and embodying expressive behavior. Alba Emoting offers a means for examining physiological activities, modes of expression, and the inner thoughtful experience of expressive behavior and how these elements then meld into a fully embodied performance.

The book includes many of my own original exercises created through years of experimenting with this approach. I also share stories of acting and directing experiences using *TEAM for Actors* in my classes and rehearsals. In order to connect these acting theories with basic human behavior, I include Maslow's basic psychological theory of a human hierarchy of needs and connect each term and method used in the TEAM to examples from daily life. Finally, since past acting teachers will always influence and inform the present, the book also refers to revered acting techniques, relevant terms, and traditional theories and exercises developed by notable acting teachers.

## **The TEAM as a Holistic Approach to Acting**

Thoughts are intrinsically tied to emotions and actions, and these ultimately lead to manifested visible results. Some may call this result a performance, an act, living the part, living in one's words, or embodiment. Whatever name one assigns the result, *TEAM for Actors* makes it clear that all of these simultaneously cooperative elements create that result. These inter-related aspects are present in your life, in the character's life, and in all human behavior. When you feel an emotion, you simultaneously have thoughts about this emotion, or had thoughts that influenced that emotion. At the same time you engage behaviors and physical reactions to these thoughts and feelings. A multi-layered interactive communication process continues to build as you take actions that express additional emotions, develop reactive thoughts, and evoke these multiple layers in the behaviors of others.

**[Example]** A simple example of this from everyday life might be, when you express a hearty hello to someone, but they don't respond with a congenial hello back to you. You quickly develop your own thoughts about this exchange. Your thoughts then influence how you behave and then engage in further interactions with that person.

Since all these equally influential aspects are present in human behavior, *TEAM for Actors* addresses them as equal and reciprocal building blocks for creating quality acting. *TEAM for Actors* also recognizes that the resulting performance is the merging of actor and text. The actor analyzes and interprets text as a means of building a character that is supportive of the story. The Manifestation chapter includes methods for the actor to connect personally with the role, bringing the actor closer to believing in, and then embodying the character's situations.

## **Personal Use of the TEAM**

The actor's personality, life history, and feelings about the character or the text all influence how she interprets the character. Likewise, the actor's style of learning, mode of receiving information, and personal preferences for physical, emotional, and intellectual engagement in the craft of acting will also influence her approach. Individual preferences for learning and developing a craft are important for an actor to recognize and respect. Additionally, an actor must acknowledge that the character she plays will also have these individual preferences for personal expression. So, the actor may play a character in one script that she feels is best to approach first from a physical angle and then fill in the other aspects of emotion and action. Yet, that same actor may play a role from another script where the character is highly intellectual and so requires a thought process first. Essentially the actor is recognizing her MVP (Most Valuable Player) of the TEAM. In

sports terms, the MVP could be different for each game, and there may be a string of games where the same MVP was recognized as the most influential team member for each game. However, all team members contributed to the game, and all members were necessary. The same holds true for the TEAM in *TEAM for Actors*.

You may already know the MVP as your own acting style, your personal rehearsal process, or how you prefer to approach a role. One element of the TEAM can be used as a primary method of preparation for a specific type of role or style of play. It is vital for your growth as an actor to recognize your preferred use of individual parts of the TEAM, and how this preference may change from situation to situation. A versatile actor accepts that different approaches may be needed for varying styles of scripts and their characters. These are all examples of how you can use a part of the TEAM as an approach, or gateway into the acting work. However, eventually all elements of the TEAM need to be incorporated in order to provide a holistic product.

## **TEAM for Actors as a Companion Text**

*TEAM for Actors* can also be used as a companion text with other acting techniques or embodiment methods. Although this text provides the groundwork for you to study the Alba Emoting technique as an embodiment method, other somatic approaches and many of the regarded acting techniques referred to in this text, would work well with the TEAM as an additional source for embodiment. You may also already have a favored method for embodiment, or may find that embodying comes easily by simply imagining the given circumstances. With this in mind, you may not need further study of other embodiment methods and may be able to employ the TEAM by using this text alone.

## **TEAM for Actors...and Directors**

Whether you are an actor or director, once you understand how to apply this holistic approach to acting, you can easily recognize when acting is lacking the layers and dimensions necessary to present fully embodied, truthful behavior. *TEAM for Actors* offers building blocks for preparing any acting role, testing approaches to scene work, addressing the delivery of a song or dance, and preparing monologues. *TEAM for Actors* can also be used to deconstruct a performance. When a director observes a moment in rehearsal that is not coming across believably, the director can use a review of the TEAM to find the missing link. The side coaching techniques in this book also provide the director with rehearsal methods for coaching actors on elements of the TEAM and helping actors embody their choices in the moment. When acting, you can use the approach as a reflection method after receiving notes for changes from a director. Also, when you

recognize that something is not working right in a scene or performance, you can use the TEAM as a review process before the next performance. Both actor and director can utilize the TEAM as an active tool for initially creating dynamic acting roles, and then as a retrospective analysis of performances in process.