

Myths into
performance;
difference between
showing and doing
essay sample



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Introduction:

Singers, actors, dancers, musicians, and comedians performing for live (or televised) audiences watching the show for the first time rehearsed acts repetitively until boredom. After repeating the dance, song, or act hundreds of times, performers easily acquire the habit of showing they are reading the lines, instead of acting the part, showing choreography instead of dancing, or showing they are playing musical notes, instead of playing an instrument. The main purpose of classroom technique, vocal training for speaking or singing performers, or physical training for dancers or stunt people, is to expand durations of their working careers without bodily or vocal injuries.

Performing and Technical Skills are Not Always Equaled:

Almost all artists will deny any formal training. Many long lasting artists, in any discipline received formal training. General audiences usually know nothing about technique, nor do they care about technique. Casting directors and producers usually do not know or care about singing or dance technical training. Producers asking about actors formal training are actually testing performing skills.

Shows are so expensive to produce, they do not have time, money or patience to be concerned about training. At auditions, producers are only interested if the performer can entertain and hold audiences, and ability to work while fatigued without displaying discomfort to the audience. Is this performer going to make the show work? Performers who captures and keeps audiences attention is hired faster than the Mozart or Baryshnikov student.

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Performers technical skills do not automatically mean their performing skills are equivalent. Showing technical skills and doing or performing skills are two totally different abilities. A musical entertainer hitting all the notes correctly or an actor memorizing lines in their sleep, does not necessarily mean their performances are connecting to the audience. Audiences quickly lose story line of shows if the performers cannot connect with them.

Performers concentrating on technique perform into themselves. Audiences are unmoved by the performance if the entertainers are only showing the rehearsed acts. Some directors make actors improvise which encourages performers to perform instead of show rehearsed behavior.

Richard Schechner :

Schechner started producing in the early 70's, whom impacted African American Rights Movement and political and social changes. " Schechner is one of the few people working in western theater who has the experience and knowledge of theater in cultures and can make connections between cultures all over the world" (Richard Schechner '56 Promotes a New World of Performance Studies, 2002). He studied many different cultures, combining different acting and directing styles.

His interests and specialty lied in political or true to life theatre. People studying human behavior can learn extensively through Richard Schechner's works. Schechner's developments most likely influenced what we know today as reality television shows. The only written text serves as a guideline for actors to remember to emphasize certain points. For the most part, the actors are presenting their true emotions, feelings, and what they really

believe in. According to Schechner, “ On stage, as in life, there is no right way or wrong way, only what works and what doesn’t” (Richard Schechner, 2002).

Richard Schechner influenced actor and writer, Spalding Gray. Gray apparently lived an unusual, hard life. He wished not to hide or sugarcoat his experiences as an actor. “ One of his major achievements was the reworking of his own life as a tragic-comic road movie in which he stars as a perpetual innocent abroad, revealing elemental truths in spite of himself and evoking situations in which almost anyone can imagine finding themselves” (Spalding Gray, 2004). By the time Gray had enough of being forced to re-enact fake emotions, instead of his true emotions, he met Schechner. Gray was impressed with Schechner’s acting and directing style.

Playing characters demands fictitious emotions from the actors coming across onstage. Of course, everyone realizes, or they should realize, an actress playing a role on television is not his or her true behavior. Actors have a choice of which roles they will audition for, but have no choice of text or scripts written into the character. To some extent, almost all plays or movies are changed from the original version. The emotions and message coming across stays the same through reproductions of plays or shows. Schechner wanted to leave the emotions or images left up to the performer. Gray was impressed with Schechner because he encouraged Gray to “ be myself first,” before acting a role or taking a character.

Improvisation:

Richard Schechner's acting directions most definitely involves improvisation. Improvisation means performers makes content up as they perform it onstage. Group or duo performances obviously requires different techniques than improvising soloists. Any performer or directors knows any thing can go wrong on stage during a live performance. Most common mistakes are predicted, and back up emergency plans are available. Part of performers training involves thinking on the spot, or covering up mistakes. During performances, is when the performers true abilities are displayed.

Performers style, abilities, emotions and their subconscious beliefs are revealed and on public display during performances in front of live audiences. Unless a performer is born into the entertainment industry, they find this out the first time they ever go on stage. Their face may freeze or lock into a fake smile they are not aware of, forget to smile, eyes or breathing can portray fear, act separate from the character or dance separate from the music. The fear, the emotions, worrying the actor portrays while performing always feelings they are not even consciously aware of, but a display of their true beliefs.

Before a performer goes onstage, they may not even consciously know they are nervous. Once they start performing, it comes out. Richard Schechner taught his actors facial expressions, muscle movements, voice projections should be natural, not an automatic forgotten gesture, while concentrating on technique. If an actor pretends his or her nervousness is written into the act, the audience will assume that is a great actor. This theory may work just as well on the positive side. More often than not, when put under pressure, it is the emotions the person wants to hide that comes through.

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Political Influences Restrict Performing Abilities:

The production's direction is going to go the way the people paying for the show, or its sponsors want it to go. The production is made to advertise and sell what the sponsors want. That is understandable. One mishap can throw the entire performance off. It is the same theory as lying. Actors forgetting their lines can throw off the entire message of the show. The more pressure put on directors and stage show managers, the greater the risk for emergencies or mishaps to occur.

Performers' main job is to entertain audiences. Entertaining audiences attracts repeated crowds more than showing a perfectly rehearsed act. Entertaining means put on a great show throughout the length of the performance the audience paid to see, regardless of any unexpected occurrences, within reason. The show must go on, no matter what. A great show moves the emotions of audiences. Schechner's instructions to his cast was clear; Go out there and put on an entertaining show, the details are up to the performers' discretion. His directions may not be directly like that, but along the same lines.

Improvisations allow expressionism. Entertainer's whose facial expressions freeze up onstage is not being expressive. Acting skills allows singers, dancers and comedians to make writers' scripts, music and dance steps come alive. " There has been an increasing trend in opera generally to prevent singers acting. Great expressionistic acting of opera was demanded 15 years ago.

Now designers are getting stronger and singers are up against more physical restrictions. One director said, "I don't ever want to see any expressionistic acting ever again" (How I would Direct Wagner's Ring, 2007). A director's motive for such rigid instructions is more likely than not influenced by the organization paying the bills. The product, the costumes, songs, or anything else that may be advertised is emphasized, not the performers' talents. Very little financing of the shows comes from ticket sales.

Conclusion:

Onstage performers who are expressive and entertaining can make the scripts, music, or choreography come alive and jump out at the audience. Performers who go through moves without expressions accomplish the same thing as a performing robot. By the time any performer brings the acts onstage in front of live audiences, the routine has become very monotonous to that person. Expressions, emotions, and connecting with the audience makes the difference between boring the audience and entertaining the audience. Mechanical machines can perform or show rehearsed acts. Putting on a great performance demands actors who can do, or sing, or dance or act the scripts.

Notes;

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