Viola Spolin

THEATER GAMES FOR REHEARSAL

A Director's Handbook

UPDATED EDITION

Foreword by Rob Reiner



CONTENTS

Preface to the Updated Edition	xii
Foreword by Rob Reiner	xiii
Preface	xv
Acknowledgments	xvii
Chapter 1: PREPARATION/PRESENCE	1
The Director	2
Theater Techniques	3
Choosing the Play	4
The Director's Objective	4
Focus	5
Casting	6
Evaluation	7
The Director as Sidecoach	7
Sidecoaching	8
Spontaneity — The Off-Balance Moment	9
The Director's Ability to Inspire	9
Rehearsals	10
Theme	11
The Acting "Side"	12
Chapter 2: WORKSHOPS	14
Seeing and Not Staring	14
Exposure	15
Tug of War	16
Three Changes	16
Play Ball	17
Mirror	18
Who Is the Mirror?	18
Follow the Follower	19
Chapter 3: THE FIRST REHEARSAL PERIOD	20
The First Readings	20
Suggestions for First Rehearsal Period	21
Building a Story	21
Feeling Self with Self	22
Vowels and Consonants	23
Spelling	24
SLOW MOTION FOR READING	24
SINGING DIALOGUE	24

Warm-ups	25
Explosion Tag	25
Pussy Wants a Corner	26
Who Started the Motion?	26
Walk-Through Rehearsal	27
Where (The Set)	28
Where Game #1 with Floor Plan	29
Where Game #2 Without Floor Plan	30
Where Game #3 with Floor Plan	31
Give and Take	32
Take and Give	32
Give and Take Warm-Up	32
Give and Take	33
Converge and Redivide	34
Stage Movement (Blocking)	35
Sight Lines for an End Stage	37
Stage Picture	37
Stage Picture	38
Stage Business	38
Keep That!	39
Chapter 4: THE SECOND REHEARSAL PERIOD	40
The Relaxed Rehearsal	42
General Improvisations Around the Play	43
Begin and End with Objects	44
Seeing the Word	45
Explore and Heighten	45
Laughter in Rehearsal	46
Seasoning the Players	47
The Nonstop Run-Through	48
Biographies	48
Chapter 5: TUNE-UPS	50
Reading Lines Naturally	50
Gibberish: Selling	51
Gibberish/English	51
Memorization	52
Timing	53
Three-Way Conversation	53
Contact	54
EYE CONTACT #1	54
Contact	55
Contact with the Audience	56
Eye Contact #2	56

.

Listening to the Players	57
Picking Up Cues	57
Physicalization	58
Showing Emotion (Inner Action)	
THROUGH OBJECTS	59
Changing Emotion	60
Emotion	61
Changing Intensity of Emotion	61
Camera	62
Silence Before Scenes — Silence as the Pause	62
Silence on Stage	62
SILENT SCREAM	63
Silent Tension #1	63
Silent Tension #2	64
Theatricality	64
Extended Sound	65
Out of the Head! Into the Space!	65
Space Substance	66
Chapter 6: THE THIRD REHEARSAL PERIOD	67
Growing Stale	67
Dubbing	69
Part of a Whole, Object	70
Slow/Fast/Normal	70
Verbalizing the Where, Part 1	71
Verbalizing the Where, Part 2	72
Spot Rehearsals	73
Shadowing	73
Shadowing	74
Exits and Entrances	75
Exits and Entrances	75
Seeing the Show	76
Stage Fright in the Director	76
The Special Run-Through	
(Cutting the Umbilical Cord)	77
Makeup and the Actor	78
The Costume Parade	78
The First Dress Rehearsal	79
The Performance	79
Random Pointers	80
Chapter 7: GAMES FOR CONTINUING REHEARSALS	82
Character Games	82
Physical Visualization	83

Box Full of Hats	84
How Old Am I?	85
What Do I Do for a Living?	85
Who Am I?	86
Who Game #1	86
Who Game #2, Facial Emotions	87
HOW OLD AM I? REPEAT	88
Exercise for the Back #1	88
Exercise for the Back #2	89
HOLD IT! #1	89
Hold It! #2	90
Mirror Penetration	90
Transformation of Relation	91
Listening/Hearing Games	92
Mirror Sound	92
Mirror Speech	93
Stage Whisper	94
Unrelated Conversations	94
Vocal Sound Effects	95
Who's Knocking?	95
No Motion Expands the Moment	96
No Motion Warm-Up	96
No Motion: Walking	97
Space Objects Versus Mime	98
FINDING OBJECTS	
in the Immediate Environment	98
Space Walks	98
SPACE WALK #1	99
SPACE WALK #2	100
SPACE WALK #3: SKELETON	101
Space Walk #4: Attitude of Another	101
Space Walk #5: Touch and Be Touched/	
See and Be Seen	102
Traditional Games	103
Object Relay	103
When I Go to California	104
SINGING SYLLABLES	105
More Where Games	105
The Specialized Where	105
What Time Is It?	106
What's Beyond: Activity	106
What's Beyond?	107
Miscellaneous Games	108
Add a Part	108

•

•

Deaf Audience	,108	
Blind	109	
Pitchman	109	
Occluding	110	
Animal Images	110	
GLOSSARY OF SIDECOACHING PHRASES	111	
		6
ALPHABETICAL INDEX TO GAMES	114	
		•