



Sanford Meisner on Acting

By Sanford Meisner, Dennis Longwell

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Sanford Meisner was one of the best known and beloved teachers of acting in the country. This book follows one of his acting classes for fifteen months, beginning with the most rudimentary exercises and ending with affecting and polished scenes from contemporary American plays. Written in collaboration with Dennis Longwell, it is essential reading for beginning and professional actors alike. Throughout these pages Meisner is a delight—always empathizing with his students and urging them onward, provoking emotion, laughter, and growing technical mastery from his charges.

With an introduction by Sydney Pollack, director of *Out of Africa* and *Tootsie*, who worked with Meisner for five years.

"This book should be read by anyone who wants to act or even appreciate what acting involves. Like Meisner's way of teaching, it is the straight goods."—Arthur Miller

"If there is a key to good acting, this one is it, above all others. Actors, young and not so young, will find inspiration and excitement in this book."—Gregory Peck

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Sanford Meisner has been called "the theater's best-kept secret," and *Sanford Meisner on Acting* by Dennis Longwell gives some insight into what techniques the hugely influential drama teacher used in his 50-plus years of work. One of the founding members of the Actors Studio (with Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler, and Harold Clurman), Meisner developed his own special lessons based upon his understandings of the great Russian teacher Stanislavsky. Turning away from the sense-memory exercises common among his colleagues, his training focused instead on a realistic approach to imagination and creativity. Unlike many other educators associated with "the Method," Meisner had little tolerance for self-absorption or striving after strong emotional effect, instead preaching that clarity of purpose and efficient use of the psyche are the actor's greatest tools. Longwell's book follows a class of eight men and eight women through one of Meisner's 15-month courses at New York's Neighborhood Playhouse, with extensive transcripts taken directly from Meisner's notes to the students on the basis of their exercises. With an introduction by director Sydney Pollack, one of the many influential artists who studied with Meisner (the book includes accolades from Maureen Stapleton, Arthur Miller, Gregory Peck, and Eli Wallach), this is an excellent introduction that helps to demystify the work of a great theatrical teacher. --*John Longenbaugh*

From Library Journal

Meisner, a member of the Theater Guild and the Group Theater, has devoted most of 50 years to teaching acting and is one of the great unsung resources in American theater. This book is not an acting text, but a journal of a 15-month course taken by 16 adult actors. We follow them as they progress from early exercises through preparation to detailed scene work. Meisner emphasizes emotional truth and acting as the reality of doing. His students find the course difficult, but most improve markedly. Not all survive. Though Meisner is not well, he is a superb teacher and his enthusiasm is undiminished. This is required reading for all actors and those interested in acting. Thomas E. Luddy, English Dept., Salem State Coll., Mass.
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From the Inside Flap

This book, written in collaboration with Dennis Longwell, follows an acting class of eight men and eight women for fifteen months, beginning with the most rudimentary exercises and ending with affecting and polished scenes from contemporary American plays. Throughout these pages Meisner is delight--always empathizing with his students and urging them onward, provoking emotion, laughter, and growing technical mastery from his charges. With an introduction by Sydney Pollack, director of "Out of Africa" and "Tootsie," who worked with Meisner for five years.

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