



# program in **ACTING**

The acting program is an intensive combination of classroom exploration and practical production experience. Students follow a two-year acting sequence carefully designed to help them incrementally increase their knowledge of and facility with text analysis, character development, spontaneity and impulse, period and aesthetic style, and overall expressiveness. In July of the first year, students study the Stanislavsky System as a foundation for their acting training. This early training with teachers from the Moscow Art Theater School (MXAT) focuses on concentration, imagination, observation, relaxation, and action analysis of a text. Classes combine extensive exercises, structured improvisations (also known as *études*), and textual analysis to help students form a cohesive whole out of their training. The Russian teachers also discuss the artistic and professional ethics of acting, sharing the philosophies of theater that have come to characterize the Russian tradition.

In the fall of the first year, students focus on the work of Sanford Meisner and the acting theory developed by David Mamet and William H. Macy known as Practical Aesthetics. This work is designed to help students replace intellectual ideas with impulsive and spontaneous choices engendered by focus on and responsiveness to the actor's partner within an analytic framework. Classes also explore approaches to freeing the students' creativity and imagination and expanding their range of behavior

in order to create the capability to play a broad range of characters and styles. Fall and winter classes involve extensive scene study, with the primary focus on contemporary work. In the winter, students are introduced to "outside/in" work: generating character through physical and vocal choices first, followed by internal character choices. Also in the first year, students are encouraged to hone their time management skills. By taking on the demanding conservatory schedule of the Institute, students are readied for the scheduling demands of life as a working actor. All acting classes and workshops are closely integrated with training in voice, speech, and movement. These combined skills provide each actor with a number of approaches for conquering the myriad challenges they are likely to encounter as professional actors.

In the spring of the first year, students travel to Moscow for a three-month residency at the Moscow Art Theater School. In Moscow, students continue their training in acting, movement, and voice with Russian master teachers. They also continue studying speech and verse with an American teacher. Students present and perform weekly their first production, an ensemble piece at the American Studio of the Moscow Art Theater School.

In the second year, back in residence at the A.R.T., students focus on applying skills learned in the first year to a wide variety of styles and genres both on stage and in the classroom. Classes

focus on a variety of acting challenges presented by writers such as Tennessee Williams, August Wilson, and Samuel Beckett. Students also focus on contemporary heightened text by playwrights such as Suzan-Lori Parks and Mac Wellman, and spend three weeks on intensive Shakespearean scene study with master teacher David Hammond. Students perform in Institute productions directed by faculty members and internationally acclaimed guest artists. In some instances, students will also have opportunities to perform and understudy in A.R.T.'s professional productions, although the number of these opportunities will vary widely from season to season. Students may also perform in staged readings or workshops of new scripts being developed by the theater.

Because both the A.R.T. and MXAT are major international institutions, Institute students gain a unique perspective on world theater. Students are encouraged to use this perspective to define their own place in the professional community. As part of an ongoing curriculum on the business of acting integrated into their entire two-year program, students are trained in on-camera and voice-over techniques, as well as having meetings with agents, casting directors, and other entertainment professionals. In the spring of the second year, graduating actors give a showcase presentation in Cambridge, New York, and Los Angeles for artistic directors, freelance directors, casting directors, and agents.



## Voice

The goals of the actor's voice training curriculum are to expand the individual's use of his or her instrument and to apply this optimized usage of the voice to acting technique for honest, spontaneous, dynamic, and healthful expression of the inner life in action. The study of body awareness, breath and support, vocal placement and range, speech and dialects, Shakespeare text, and both choral and individual singing will help the student maximize his or her vocal capabilities on the physical, intuitive, and intellectual level. These separate yet intertwined aspects of vocal study will give the student the flexibility to approach texts both inside and outside the realm of colloquial speech, while remaining intimately connected to personal truth. Each student will receive a combination of classes, voice labs, and individual coaching sessions during the five semesters of training.

## Movement

The goal of the movement training sequence is to guide actors toward a spontaneous freedom of impulse, precision, and expressivity of motion. Through this program, the actor learns how to use the physical self and develops a large vocabulary based on an understanding of what is common to all bodies and what is unique to his or her own. Work in specific movement teaching guarantees the student the skills necessary to create roles and work in various styles. Students will create their own movement vocabulary and maintenance program to follow throughout their career. Study includes psychophysical exercises, Meyerhold's biomechanics, Vakhtangov's plasticity training, Grotowski training, individual and partner acrobatics, unarmed stage combat, fencing, modern, classical and historical dance, slow motion, impulse work, Viewpoints, style and genre explorations, and Dalcroze Eurhythmics.