



An Acrobat of the Heart: A Physical Approach to Acting Inspired by the Work of Jerzy Grotowski

Stephen Wangh

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A Vintage Original

"The actor will do, in public, what is considered impossible." When the renowned Polish director Jerzy Grotowski began his 1967 American workshop with these words, his students were stunned. But within four weeks they themselves had experienced the "impossible."

In **An Acrobat of the Heart**, teacher-director-playwright Stephen Wangh reveals how Jerzy Grotowski's physical exercises can open a pathway to the actor's inner creativity. Drawing on Grotowski's insights and on the work of Stanislavski, Uta Hagen, and others, Wangh bridges the gap between rigorous physical training and practical scene and character technique. Wangh's students give candid descriptions of their struggles and breakthroughs, demonstrating how to transform these remarkable lessons into a personal journey of artistic growth. Courageous and compelling, **An Acrobat of the Heart** is an invaluable resource for actors, directors, and teachers alike.

An Acrobat of the Heart: A Physical Approach to Acting Inspired by the Work of Jerzy Grotowski Details

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From Reader Review An Acrobat of the Heart: A Physical Approach to Acting Inspired by the Work of Jerzy Grotowski for online ebook

Malvolio says

There's really not a more accessible book on the training methods of Grotowski. I highly recommend it for any dance, movement, theater teacher, as well as any performer.

Frank Hartley says

One of the best and thought provoking acting books I've read out there. Challenges and incorporates all of the major styles and builds on your current technique.

Christine Bissonnette says

One of my favourite books on acting. This book was on the recommended reading list from the National Voice Intensive with David Smukler (<http://www.voiceintensive.org>), and it reminded me of a lot of the work we did during those 4 weeks. Here's a quote from the beginning of the book: "His lessons, he insisted, were never meant to be a universal map for all travelers to follow, but simply a starting point from which an actor might begin to explore his or her personal unknown territory."

One of my favourite chapters in the book was the one on character. In learning how we transform ourselves into different characters in our work, the book also supplied a somewhat hidden perspective on how we make decisions about our identities in our lives. A truly fantastic read for actors, artists, and people in general.

Huling says

This is one of the best acting books I have ever read. Steven Wangh shows actors how to approach practical material in a most impractical way. He uses the non-traditional physical work of Jerzy Grotowski as a way to enliven and awaken the actor's instrument in approaching contemporary works. Some of the exercises were familiar to me and some were totally new and very different than what I have been exposed to in my training. I found Wangh's book very insightful as it offered such a fresh and exciting way to work. He uses a lot of the principles expounded upon by not just Grotowski but such theater luminaires as Anne Bogart, Kristin Linklater, Yoshi Oida, as well as other pioneers in new millennium training techniques. This book is for actors ready to awaken their bodies, minds, and souls in order to free themselves and achieve their ultimate creative potential.

Ari says

Wangh balances pedagogy, practical exercises, and interesting stories from his own experience as an acting instructor. One cannot simply teach themselves this kind of work through a book alone. However, it would serve as a fantastic guide for someone entrenched in this or another type of acting training as supplemental material or another way of approaching actor training. Also the book can be employed a useful resource for those actor instructors and/or directors looking to expand their understanding of physical approaches to acting and character building.

Brian Astbury says

This is, in my opinion, the best practical introduction to the work of Jerzy Grotowski. Written fluently and with love, it sets out the basic exercises in a way that demystifies this major figure in theatre and actor training. For young actors setting out on the road, those already practising, those who might have started losing faith - this is essential reading. These techniques should be at the heart of all actor training. Sadly they aren't.

Liz says

This was another book I ended up reading for a class this semester. I read it for what was probably my favorite class of the semester, Movement for the Stage. I loved learning about the exercises inspired by Grotowski's work with the Polish Laboratory Theatre. It really helped in my acting journey to finally find a way to connect my body to my mind and voice when I act.

I just wish I had found this book a couple years earlier before I lost some of my joy for acting and decided to follow a different career path. If I'd read this book two years ago I probably would even now be planning on being an actress. The plastiques were a great way for me to find a really strong acting presence and I'm sad that I won't get to explore it much moving forward with my life.

Emily says

Like a lot of physical acting books, it's really hard to just read the thing. It's like a class that you can only audit from a distance. But it's a really cool class. And Wangh sets this book up prettily cleverly in actually recounting this work as if it were a class, thereby addressing a lot of the back and forth that arises in response to the work as well as the work itself. I'm going to steal like a bandit from this one!
