

What the heck is he talking about?

Terms, definitions, jokes and other miscellany from the world of live performance

Theatre-in-the-round: Any theatre where the audience is seated all around the playing area. Settings usually have to be fairly minimal, and actors must remember more than ever to use their entire bodies, as at any given time they will have their back turned to half of the audience.

The Limelight: Before the days of electricity early lighting designers used a mirror placed behind a burning piece of lime to create a crude light source that was softer and more flattering on skin tones than the gas lights in use at the time. This light was often mounted on a pivot so it could follow the leading actor or actress around the stage, so if the light was on you, you had become a star, you were living in the limelight.

Motivation: The idea that an actor needs a reason to do or say something onstage sprung from the Moscow Art Theatre of Konstantin Stanislavsky, arguably the grandfather of naturalist acting. In Stanislavsky's theatre the ensemble would spend up to two years rehearsing a production and the actors would be expected to have a very intimate knowledge of the characters they were playing, hence they would know exactly why every line was spoken and every movement was made.

Actor to Alfred Hitchcock:

What's my motivation?

Hitchcock: *Because you're an actor and I told you to.*

Notes from the Director's Chair

Whew! What a crazy summer!

I'm happy to report that we have almost completed our summer season and the first show of our winter season is almost ready to be moved into the theatre. Our season marketing campaign continues, with orders still being taken up to the end of Wuthering Heights, the second show of our season.

Things have been very busy at the Fergus Grand Theatre the last little while, with some badly-needed clean-up and renovations getting done. Far less visible but no less important, the technical upgrades that are being made by the fundraising efforts of the Fergus Grand Theatre Volunteers are going to have a direct benefit on our productions this season, with increased lighting, sound and staging possibilities.

The theatre community in Centre Wellington as a whole seems quite healthy as well. Our friends at the Elora Community Theatre have quite a season planned, and On the Spot Productions will be returning to the theatre the week before Wuthering Heights with the hilarious musical comedy Way Out West in a Dress (featuring, incidentally, Grinder member Jessica Buchanan – Pippa, from Spider's Web). Wellington-Waterloo Playhouse is also currently auditioning acts for their fifth "Toast of the Towns" variety show in November, and you can bet we'll try and get some Grinder Productions involvement in that.

Workshops, workshops, workshops. We have lots of workshops coming up this year. Acting, Stage Managing, all areas of design, directing, technical production, promotion and playwrighting are all on offer this year, all at very reasonable prices, open to members and non-members alike. Please see below for articles on our first and second workshops of the year.

Grinder Productions has a new website! Please check out our new and improved online look! And best of all, updating it is easier than ever, so if you find any mistakes just let me know and I can fix them without the equivalent preparation of state visit.

As you can see there's a lot of great stuff happening. We're at the start of what promises to be a very active year. I think that we have a great season planned, and we have some wonderful people on board already. Nothing would make me happier than a string of audience-pleasing hits, and there's no reason we can't make that happen this year. There's plenty of opportunity to get involved this year, so come on out and be a part of action!

Eric

Acting 101

Baffled by blocking?
Can't tell your stage left from your
other stage left?
And how do you "find" a light?

The answers to these and other questions can be found in *Acting 101*, a quick, concise overview of what it takes to be an actor in a play, designed for those with little or no experience onstage, or those that have done a few plays, but find themselves lost at times, unsure of what they should be doing. We'll go over everything from handling auditions to what to do in rehearsals to how to memorize lines. We'll talk about the many ways to "act" and how to find out which method is right for you.

The course is broken down into three sessions, one for kids aged 8 - 12, one for teens and one for adults so each session can be tailored to the specific needs and strengths of each age group.

Children: Saturday, September 23rd,
10am - 12pm

Teens: Saturday, September 23rd,
2pm - 5pm

Adults: Sunday, September 24th,
2pm - 5pm

The cost for any one of these sessions is just \$20, and class sizes will be limited, so book early to avoid disappointment. You can register by e-mailing grinder@grinderproductions.org or leaving me a message at 519-843-5999 or 519-787-1981.

Progress Report: Bordertown Café

We're still running! This show hasn't closed yet, so the full report will have to wait until the October newsletter, but for now I can say that we have been playing to enthusiastic audiences throughout the run, the show has been a great way to promote our season at the Grand, including the first show...

Progress Report: Absurd Person Singular

Rehearsals have just finished up at the rehearsal hall and things are set for our load-in this Sunday, September 3rd at the Grand. We'll be starting around 1pm and any extra hands would be greatly appreciated! While ticket sales are quite brisk there are still seats available, so please tell everyone you know to come on out and see this hilarious piece of theatre.

EVER WONDER WHAT HAPPENS TO ACTORS WHO DON'T LEARN THEIR LINES?



Grinder Productions has a new Website!

Well, I finally got myself into the twenty-first century and got myself a decent laptop, as well as some internet connectivity. What this has done is allow me the time and flexibility to create a more comprehensive online presence for the company. The new site has more information about the upcoming season, workshops, directions to our performance venues and much, much more, including past issues of this newsletter. I'm also working on an archival section, where we'll have photos, posters, programs and other materials from previous productions. I'm also looking for other sites to link to, so if any of you out there have a personal website just send me the address and I'll add you to the list.

Stage Managing, Grinder Style

Stage Managers are the most over-worked, under-appreciated people in theatre. As a former stage manager myself, I know this to be true. I also know that at Grinder Productions Stage Managers will always be asked to take on responsibility and to do a good job, but they will also be rewarded for their efforts. And as we are desperate for stage managers anyone who successfully completes this two-week course will be **guaranteed** an offer of paid stage managing work on a future show, either this season or in 07-08.

Details: October 2nd, 4th and 11th from 7pm - 10pm at the Rehearsal hall. We will cover all aspects of stage management, from preparation to rehearsals to calling a show, in a format that is practical, simple and adaptable to personal style.

Cost: \$50 per participant, which will include some written materials.

E-mail grinder@grinderproductions.org or call 519 843-5999 or 519 787-1981 to register. Book early, as class size will be limited.

Our Contact Info

Telephone (Admin):

(519) 843-5999

Telephone (Box Office):

(519) 787-1981

E-mail:

grinder@grinderproductions.org

Website:

www.grinderproductions.org

Rehearsal Hall

6188 Second Line, West Garafraxa
Directions: Take Belsyde Avenue out of Fergus towards Orangeville. Turn right at the second line, which is the second road out of town. We are the last farm on the right, and we are rehearsing in the renovated portion of the large barn, upstairs.

2006 – 2007 Workshop and Courses

Here is the list of all the courses we'll be offering throughout the year. I'll have more information on each one as it comes up, but you can pre-register for any of these at any time just by letting me know. See the side panel for information on the September workshop in acting and the October workshop in Stage Management.

| Month | Workshop | Notes |
|-----------|----------------------|--|
| September | Acting 101 | The basics of acting |
| October | Stage Management | See side panel |
| November | Set Design | An overview of the creative and practical considerations of set design. |
| December | Costume Design | An overview of the creative and practical considerations of costume design. |
| January | Lighting Design | Taught in conjunction with the tech of All My Sins Remembered, an overview of the creative and practical considerations of lighting design. |
| February | Sound Design | An overview of the creative and practical considerations of Sound Design. |
| March | Directing | A comprehensive study of the creative and practical aspects of directing for the stage. Graduates of the this course will be offered directing work in the 2007-2008 summer and winter seasons. |
| April | Technical Production | Covering everything from set construction to finding props, this course is designed to provide members with a wide range of technical skills, as well as the basis to work as Production Managers on future shows. |
| May | Promotions | A complete look at what is involved in marketing a show. |
| June | Playwrighting | A week-end workshop for developing dramatic material. An original short play or a selection from a longer play is required. |

Bits and Bobs...

Script Pick-up

Just a reminder that you can get your scripts this Saturday, September 2nd, from 10am to 5pm at the rehearsal hall. Scripts will be available for all shows. Drop by and see our rehearsal facility, maybe meet some fellow company members, and pick up information on this season's productions.

Acting Workshop

We still have some spots open for our acting workshop. See the article earlier in this newsletter for further details. Sessions for kids, teens and adults, just \$20 each, and no previous experience is necessary.

The Casting Update

I'm still waiting to hear back from a few people about various and sundry shows, but from here on in I should be able to keep track of the remaining offers, so I won't put out another mass casting offer until we're ready to release the casting offers for the summer 2007 season.

Season's Tickets

You can now purchase season's tickets to all the Grinder Productions shows by visiting the Fergus Grand Theatre box office, or by calling 519-843-5999. Our season ticket package lets you pick any five shows at the regular price (\$12) and get any sixth show free! Just at another \$10 and you can get all seven shows. What better way to enjoy seven evenings out than seeing your friends making magic.

The Back Page

Next time someone complains about the cost of theatre tickets...

It was a beautiful spring day that an elegant, stylish, well-to-do lady was on her way to tea. Upon her head she wore a breath-taking hat. As she walked across a street a garbage truck missed the light and whizzed by her, just inches from her face. The woman jumped back to safety, but her beautiful hat came off in the wind and right into oncoming traffic. By the time she could go out to retrieve it the hat was little more than shambles. The woman looked about desperately for somewhere to help, and wonder of wonders, there, right in front of her, was a small boutique, with a sign above the door that said "Hats, accessories and alterations." The woman went inside.

"You've got to help me! My hat is ruined and I'm going to be late for tea!" she cried.

The old man behind the counter took the hat in his hands.

"I don't think there's much we can do for this," he said.

"But I must have something for tea!"

"Let me see what I can do."

The old man took a piece of yellow ribbon off of a spool and a silver safety pin from a jar on the counter. He passed the ribbon over itself again and again, in odd-looking knots and intricate patterns until, eventually, a lovely, multi-layered bow appeared. The old man stuck the pin in the middle of the bow and handed it to the lady.

"That's wonderful!" she exclaimed. "Thank-you."

"Twenty dollars," the old man said.

"Twenty dollars! Are you crazy? It's just a piece of ribbon!"

"No ma'am," replied the old man, removing the pin. "The ribbon is free."