



# Method Actors' Training Centre

## AN INTRODUCTION TO ACTING

### 2017 INFORMATION SHEET

The Introductory Course will suit persons who have never studied acting before yet wish to ascertain whether the acting industry is the right path for them before they commit to further studies.

Method techniques are not taught in the Introductory Course. This Introduction to Acting, however, builds a strong foundation for those who may wish to apply to enter the Method Course at a later date.

Students will gain vast amounts of information about acting techniques, communication through language and practical story-telling while doing these most delightful classes.

It has been proven that public speaking is a much feared activity! This course will prepare and assist those who need to give talks, do presentations or deal with the public as part of their jobs.

Some students may simply wish to develop their creativity and have an outlet for their artistic and imaginative abilities while enjoying an interesting and informative activity!

### VENUE

Brooklyn Theatre, Greenlyn Village Centre, Shop 21/Theatre, corner of Thomas Edison and 13<sup>th</sup> Streets, Menlo Park, Pretoria.

### CLASS TIMES

This course is part-time.

Classes take place on Saturdays from 10h00 - 13h00.

### COURSE DATES

- 11 Feb – 25 March (6 sessions)  
(18 March – long weekend, no class)
- 22 April – 1 July (10 sessions)  
(29 April – long weekend, no class)
- 29 July – 30 Sep (9 sessions)  
(23 September – long weekend, no class)
- 14 Oct – 11 Nov (5 sessions)

### PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

Introductory students need to:

- ➔ have Grade 10
- ➔ be 15 years or older
- ➔ speak, read and write English
- ➔ fees are payable in full upon registration

### FEES

**R7,900**

Fees are non-returnable and payable in full, upon registration. Payment is to be made in cash, by bank guaranteed cheque or bank transfer. Non-guaranteed personal or business cheques will not be accepted. Documented proof of bank transfers must be presented. Students may not pay off in installments.

A fee of R100-00 is payable upon arrival for an Information Session with Stephanie van Niekerk (+2 hours), should the prospective student wish to attend same. Whereas it is not required that Introductory Course students attend an information session, it will definitely be to his/her advantage to find out as much as possible about the course before making the decision to register. In order to reserve a place in class, a deposit of R2,000.00, which will be deducted from the course fee, is payable upon completion of the Application and Registration Forms. The full amount, less the deposit, is payable before or at the first class. Students may not commence their studies unless the tuition fee has been paid in full.

## THEATRE DISCIPLINE AND RECOGNITION REQUIREMENTS

### Class attendance

A certain number of classes have to be done in order to pass the course. Classes cannot be made up since there is only one session per week. Classes missed during the theatre games period at the beginning of the course must be made up by attending enough Method workshops on Thursday evenings to cover the class hours missed on Saturdays. This rule also applies to students who register late, after classes have commenced. A workshop schedule will be provided. Voice / reading and improvisation classes missed cannot be made up by attending Method workshops, however, which means that these classes cannot be missed! Introductory Course students may only miss two classes throughout the year. If a student misses more, s/he will be expelled for infrequent class attendance, forfeiting the fees paid, unless due to proven serious illness, accident or severe catastrophe.

The director or teacher is to be informed telephonically beforehand by yourself, should you be unable to attend a class. Excuses made via someone else – family / friend / fellow student – will not be accepted and Theatre Discipline Points will be deducted. Please communicate with the Director / teacher personally. Should circumstances necessitate that two classes are missed in a row, one of the following documents should be produced for inspection by the instructor at the next class: a doctor's certificate or a note from your employer or a written explanation of the absence.

### Late arrival

Late arrival for class cannot be tolerated. Such behaviour is disrespectful of the teacher and the other students. It causes disruption and wastes everybody's time and money since instructions and information must be repeated to bring the tardy student up to speed. One Theatre Discipline point will be deducted each time a student arrives late.

### Satisfactory development in and understanding of the work

Practical work must be of a standard acceptable to the Director / teacher. An assessment will be made based on the quality of practical assignments, as well as self-discipline, attitude and willingness to work. Students do not get to choose which of the prescribed work they wish to do. They either do it all or cease attending classes forthwith, forfeiting the fees paid. Persons who are "not interested in getting a piece of paper at the end of the year" or "don't have time to do all the work" need not apply for acceptance into the course.

### The completion of all required practical assignments

A voice test and reading test (after completion of the voice and reading sections), improvisations and a final exam scene based on improvisation and involving the whole group will form part of the course and must be passed, proving that the student has worked hard enough to deserve a Testimonial.

### A marking of a minimum of 2 out of 12 points for Theatre Discipline

Students start out with 12 points to their credit for Theatre Discipline. Points are deducted for infringements and unacceptable behaviour. Persons who have lost 10 points or more will fail the course. When 6 points have been lost due to late arrival, the student will be expelled from the course for disrespectful and inconsiderate behaviour.

**“Work for the actor lies essentially in two areas: the ability to consistently create reality and the ability to express that reality.”**

**Lee Strasberg**

## THEATRE DISCIPLINE AND RECOGNITION REQUIREMENTS

### Preparing for Method Certificate

Those who wish to apply to be accepted into the Method course the following year, will need to do a language test and, if required, classes in vocabulary, spelling, grammar, reading and comprehension throughout the year, unless they pass both English and Afrikaans language exams at Grade 12 level.

Theatre discipline rules and regulations have been set up by the Director after experiencing disruptive and inconsiderate behaviour by numerous students over the years. These rules and regulations may seem harsh and restrictive to some. It has, however, been proven that a happy, caring and positive environment, within which our goals can be achieved, is created when students adhere to them. Creative work can only take place within a safe atmosphere where all are treated with consideration and respect. Hard work and discipline bring about measurable results of which all can be proud.

### POINTS WILL BE DEDUCTED FOR

Late arrival for classes, rehearsals/workshops	1
Late arrival for projects that involve the whole group	2
Not informing instructor beforehand when unable to attend class	2
Not attending group performances you've committed yourself to	3
Infrequent class attendance	3
Not doing preparation for class as required by the tutor	3
Bad attitude/gossip/inconsiderate/demanding/threatening/unacceptable behaviour	3
Upon receipt of written warning/class dismissal	3

### SUGGESTED DRESS

Please wear loose, comfortable clothing - no short, tight skirts, tight jeans, hipsters, low-cut tops, belts, buckles or heavy jewellery. They either impair movement or are inappropriate in a school setting.

Women are requested to refrain from dressing in a seductive manner when attending class.

Students should wear pants to class, since free movement is impossible in a skirt or dress.

Wear flat, comfortable shoes – running shoes or tackies.

Please: no bare feet, dress shoes, sandals or platforms!

Hair should be tied or pinned back from the face. No wigs, caps or hats that can fall off during movement, please.



*Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.*

**Frederick Douglass**

## STEPHANIE VAN NIEKERK - TRAINING & EXPERIENCE

### ACTING - DIRECTING - WRITING - TEACHING

Stephanie van Niekerk has been teaching Method, voice, theatre games, improvisation, scene writing, directing and text analysis in Pretoria as director of the Method Actors' Training Centre since 1991, gaining extensive experience in artistic and technical directing, producing, writing and actor training. During this period she has directed thirty-three stage-productions as well as two radio dramas, *Berg van die Digtors* and *Die Paddas*, written by her father, Dolf van Niekerk, and broadcast by five radio stations throughout South Africa.

Original dramas written and directed by Stephanie van Niekerk:

*Die Sewende Dag* (1995) -

(winner of the FNB Pick of the Windybrow Festival Award for Most Outstanding Ensemble Work in 1996);

*Beuselpraatjies* (1997);

*Binnereis* (1999);

*Dubbelspraak* (2006);

*Ladies' Night* (2008);

*Daydreams and Nightmares* (2010)

Stephanie van Niekerk started pursuing a career in entertainment as a child of eight, acting in radio dramas and children's programs for the South African Broadcasting Corporation. As a teenager she took part in productions for Volksteater (The National Theater) in Pretoria and in 1973 joined the Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal as a member of its high school touring company.

After receiving a B.A. Drama degree from the University of Pretoria (1976), she continued her involvement in acting, stage management, technical directing and props / costume construction on a part-time basis at the Hart House and Glen Morris theatres in Toronto (1977 - 1980), and as a student of Method Acting (theatre, film, TV) at the Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute in New York (1981 - 1984). In 1983 she was one of a select group of Method students invited to become a member of the Second Studio for Actors in New York. She pursued an acting career in Toronto through 1985. From 1986 to 1991 she focused her attention on studies and work in the field of holistic psychology and healing.

In 1979 and 1980 she taught drama, creative movement and communication skills to emotionally disturbed and learning disabled children in Toronto. In 1988 and 2004 the Drama Department of the University of Pretoria invited her to lecture on and teach classes in the Method as a guest lecturer to their second and third year students. During 1999 she lectured on The Method to the members of the Speech and Drama Guilds in Pretoria and Johannesburg and presented classes on "Acting as Therapy" to the third year Psychology students at the University of Pretoria in 2001.

## EDUCATION - STEPHANIE VAN NIEKERK

1974 - 1976	B.A. Drama: University of Pretoria
1979 + 1980	B.A. Courses in Philosophy, Logic, English: University of S.A.
1981 - 1984	Theatre, Film & TV Acting: Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute, New York
1983 + 1984	Theatre, Film & TV Acting: The Second Studio for Actors, New York
1985 + 1986	Certificate in Shiatsu Therapy: Shiatsu Clinic and Education Center, Toronto
1986 + 1987	Diploma in Holistic Psychology: Natural Health Institute, Toronto.



## RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Method Actors' Training Centre is a private teaching institution, run and owned by **the Director, Stephanie van Niekerk**, who is ***the authority in charge and has sole discretion and decision-making powers***. The Centre is not a social club, group therapy / AA meeting or a place to "be yourself" or "blow off steam". Students pay for and attend classes in order to become the best actors they can possibly be!

Alcohol and drugs: The taking of non-prescription drugs or alcohol, and the smoking of marijuana before or during class, cannot be permitted. Persons with a history of drug and/or alcohol abuse need not apply for admittance to the Centre. Such persons cannot be accepted and/or will have to be suspended since successful completion of the course is highly unlikely and teachers / students will be inconvenienced.

**The following should further clarify unacceptable and disruptive behaviour:**

Disagreeing with and/or arguing about the prescribed or suggested exercises / work / acting choices to be done or corrected or adapted with regard to class or scene work / performances while in the process of being instructed by the Director or teacher in the acting skills, stage techniques, theatre games, improvisations, scene writing, directing, reading skills, voice development etc.

Wasting time by disagreeing with and/or arguing about what is being taught and why it is being done in a certain way, since students lack an overall view and understanding of the techniques, especially in the beginning. Let's not talk about it, let's do it! Insight will come with time. *Acting is doing!*

Making excuses and/or arguing when the Director or teacher points out mistakes, erroneous techniques and/or problems with regard to the development of the student's instrument / exercises / performance.

Continually arriving late for class / rehearsal, not attending same and not doing preparation as required, thereby inconveniencing others.

Not following through on promises / responsibilities undertaken to the Director, teachers or fellow students.

Lack of self-discipline – being irresponsible, inconsiderate and untrustworthy.

Not switching off your cell phone the moment you enter class. Phones are only to be switched on again at the end of the session. Please do not smoke or chew gum either.

Making demands or inciting others to make demands or protesting against the director and/ or teachers. Demands will never be met and militant and/or politically / racially inspired behaviour will lead to your immediate dismissal from the school. Your fees will be forfeit.

Bringing your own personal issues to class / rehearsal and projecting same onto others – blaming and finding fault. Your personal anger, sadness, resistance, frustration etc. should not be blamed on others. You need to focus on your work when in class. Projecting personal fears, concerns, low self-esteem, judgements and personal psychological problems (control issues, refusal to admit to being wrong, unfair expectations of others, denial etc.) onto either a single individual or the class as a whole, is counter-productive and also wastes your own precious time!

Desist from finding fault and blaming others. Please learn to become aware of and recognise any emotional, psychological or addiction issues you may have and consult a trained therapist to help you deal with same. Acting class is not the place – we have acting work to do and very little time to do it! Desist from gossip, malicious talk, back-stabbing, sexual harassment / innuendo and name calling.

Students should please ask how the techniques are to be developed and/or used. Any questions or discussions that promote and further focused learning and the development of technique, acting and voice skills, are very welcome.

## TREATING THE DIRECTOR / TEACHER WITH DISRESPECT

- ➔ ignoring requests and/or suggestions re: work and discipline;
- ➔ confronting / attacking / blaming / criticising / yelling at / insulting / badgering / intimidating the Director or teachers or fellow students whether inside or outside of class;
- ➔ wasting valuable class time by telling jokes, chatting, being disruptive, having your cell phone on, not working; creating a disturbance or arrogantly “taking over”;
- ➔ insisting on making decisions that involve fellow students / school matters / school projects;
- ➔ refusing to do the exercises / scene and/or related work as requested;
- ➔ being resistant to being taught / directed, performing or doing required work - whether through blanket refusal, bursting into tears, refusing to communicate, arguments, emotional blackmail, making demands, inciting opposition, threatening to leave the class or course if you don't get your way or throwing a tantrum.
- ➔ getting angry with the instructor when it is pointed out to you that there are things you do not know. Your ignorance is not the instructor's fault and it has to be pointed out to you in order that you may learn!

## CONTACT DETAILS – Stephanie van Niekerk - Director – Method Actors' Training Centre

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*“Seventy-five percent of great art is hard work. Only about twenty-five percent is great talent.”*

Lee Strasberg

